

THIS QUIET EARTH

"I sought, and soon discovered, the three headstones on the slope next the moor: the middle one grey, and half buried in heath; Edgar Linton's only harmonized by the turf and moss creeping up its foot; Heathcliff's still bare. I lingered round them, under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heath and hare-bells; listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass; and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."

Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 1847

The inspiration for This Quiet Earth came from this poignant closing paragraph from one of the great love stories of literature. And literature and wine have been comfortable bedfellows for centuries.

For Emily Brontë, the contrasting moods of nature and the weather were central to the scenes and characters of her wild, melodramatic Gothic masterpiece. "Wuthering" is a Yorkshire term meaning "the roaring of the wind".

So too, the character and landscapes of our majestic Cape winelands have been sculpted by remarkably varied weather patterns since the dawn of time. These ancient slopes and valleys that contain so many rock and soil types, are characterised by magnificent sandstone mountains punched upwards from the restless shifting of tectonic plates aeons ago, with endless rounded granite foothills merging into undulating shale hillocks.

Just as there is truth in the old Cape saying that "a vineyard that can see the sea is a good vineyard," so too do the wines that are produced down at the foot of Africa in this rough-hewn Mediterranean climate lend credence to the adage that true character is formed in the crucible of adversity. This sweeping countryside is complemented by the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, with cool sea breezes leading to a slow, optimum ripening of the grapes to produce the full-bodied fruit flavours you will find in This Quiet Earth. This Shiraz comes from hand-picked bush vines in the Darling Wine Region, with 12 months in second fill oak barrels to add layers of vanilla and chocolate to the spicy notes of cloves and cinnamon.

After the blistering summer heat subsides and the roaring south-easterly winds abate, March and April bring idyllic weather, with autumn casting Van Gogh-yellow shades over vineyards that roll out from the mountains to the sea. In winter, the snow-capped peaks of the Boland on blue-sky days contrast with wild north-westerly winds that herald the onset of tumultuous storms and a deluge of rains. With the first push of spring the roots of the vines twist their way further into the quiet earth and bursting green buds signal the beginning of another harvest.

We wanted to capture these dramatic, intertwined themes of literature, nature, weather and wine in an evocative label, beautifully designed by local Cape Town artist Sezaria Grusch. It shows Haworth's Top Withins farmhouse as the inspiration for the setting of Wuthering Heights, yet in a stormy winelands landscape; Emily's pet hawk Hero flying above; the gnarly old tree whose branches scratched at the window pane, tormenting Heathcliff as the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw; and the gently melancholic "three headstones on the slope next the moor".

In whatever situation it is that you find yourself sipping a glass of our wine, we hope that you find solace in the sincere, tranquil emotions we seek to evoke with This Quiet Earth and that you feel a communion with nature.

