



PLAISIR DE MERLE

EST. 1693

CHARDONNAY 2016

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Residual sugar: 2.6 g/l
Alcohol: 13.61% by volume
Total acidity: 5.8 g/l
pH: 3.23
TOTAL PRODUCTION:
4 600 cases

Winemaker: Niel Bester
Appellation: Western Cape
Grape Varietal: Chardonnay

BACKGROUND

Established by the French Huguenots in 1693 on the slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains between Paarl and Franschhoek, Plaisir de Merle is a rare gem. A Distell showpiece, this 974-hectare estate in Simondium, Paarl, has earned international acclaim for its white and red wines. About 400 hectares are planted with a variety of noble grape cultivars such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc, Shiraz and Malbec, and an area of only about 80 hectares of prime vineyards has been set aside for the Plaisir de Merle cellar. Winemaker Niel Bester attributes the success of his wines to being able to work with great fruit coming from a very unique terrain and the invaluable input from his viticulture team.

THE VINEYARDS

The diversity of the soils, slopes and elevation is closely linked with the quality of Plaisir de Merle wines. Well-drained, weathered granite soils (predominantly Tukulu and Hutton), with good water retention, allow minimal irrigation with most vineyards grown under dry land conditions. Grapes were sourced from three vineyards ranging from 5 to 15 years in age, and situated between 250m and 450m above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg. The fourth vineyard is situated in the Robertson Valley.

VITICULTURIST: Morné Steyn

THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were harvested by hand at 22.4° to 24.6° Balling. The juice of each vineyard was kept separately, clarified, and fermented in 300-litre French oak barrels. A combination of first-fill (60%), second-fill (20%) and third-fill (20%) barrels were used and the wine remained on the lees for 12 months. The barrels were rolled or stirred regularly to suspend the lees in order to gain complexity, better integrated oak flavours, and to add to the mouth-feel of the wine. Partial malolactic fermentation also contributed to the wine's complexity and fuller mouth-feel. The individual barrels were then tasted and the blend composed.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

COLOUR: Light straw with a green tint.

BOUQUET: Roasted almonds, dried peach and touches of fynbos

TASTE: Crisp flintiness, white pear, citrus and mineral notes. Toasted nuts balanced with creaminess ending in a lingering aftertaste.

FOOD PAIRING: Enjoy on its own or with fish, white meats and salads.

