



PLAISIR DE MERLE

EST. 1693

MÉTHODE CAP CLASSIQUE 2015

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Residual sugar: 4.4 g/l
Alcohol: 12.21% by volume
Total acidity: 6.1 g/l
pH: 3.21



Winemaker: Niel Bester

Appellation: Western Cape

Grape Varietal: Chardonnay (45%), Pinot Noir (55%)

BACKGROUND

Established by the French Huguenots in 1693 on the slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains between Paarl and Franschoek, 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 elevations is closely linked with the quality of Plaisir de Merle wines. Well-drained weathered granite soils (predominantly Tukululu and Hutton) with good water retention allow for minimal irrigation and most vineyards dry land. This is the fifth vintage of Plaisir de Merle MCC. The Chardonnay grapes were selected by Niel Bester from a single 18-year-old vineyard at Plaisir de Merle situated 325m above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg. Due the Pinot Noir vines on the farm being still too young, the grapes were sourced from two different 15-year-old trellised vineyards in Stellenbosch, one on the north-eastern slopes of the Helderberg and the other on the southern slopes of the Stellenbosch Mountains.

VITICULTURIST: Freddie le Roux

THE WINEMAKING

This elegant and distinctive Méthode Cap Classique is made in the classic French tradition and is a blend of 55% Pinot Noir which imparts distinctive body, flavour and maturity, and 45% Chardonnay for a clean flintiness. The grapes were hand-picked with the Chardonnay grapes harvested at 19.3° Balling whilst the Pinot Noir grapes were harvested at 20.1° Balling. After whole bunch pressing with minimal skin contact, the clear grape juice was left to settle before it was pumped into steel tanks for cold fermentation. After the first fermentation and malolactic fermentation, the wine was prepared for secondary fermentation in the bottle. The wine was left on the lees for approximately 24 months before the sediment was removed in the traditional process of *remuage* and *dégorgement*. The bottles were then corked and laid down in a cool cellar for a further 2 months.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

COLOUR: Pale gold with a fine beady mousse

BOUQUET: Delicate yeasty tones, layered with lemon, citrus and brioche. A persistent bead makes this MCC particularly attractive, enlivened by a firm, well integrated mousse.

TASTE: A foamy mouth-feel with toasty notes, citrus and crisp green apple freshness imparted by the Chardonnay whilst the Pinot Noir provides the flavours of red fruit. It has a long lingering mature finish.

AGEING POTENTIAL: This timeless MCC is ready to drink now and will develop well in the bottle for a further five to seven years

FOOD PAIRING: Enjoy with exotic seafood such as oysters, scallops and seafood platters. Enjoyable on its own when served chilled and will add pleasure to any occasion.