



PLAISIR DE MERLE

EST. 1693

SHIRAZ 2015

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Residual sugar: 2.4g/l
Alcohol: 14.62% by volume
Total acidity: 5.4 g/l
pH: 3.69



Winemaker: Niel Bester
Appellation: Paarl
Grape Varietal: Shiraz

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 all add to the quality of Plaisir de Merle fruit. Well-drained weathered granite soils (predominantly Tukulu and Hutton) with good water retention allow minimal interference in irrigation with most vineyards being dry land. There are two vineyards that contribute to this wine: the first was planted in 1993 and is situated between 250 m and 300m above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg; the second is five years younger and situated on the lower slopes of the Simonsberg at about 150 m above sea level.

VITICULTURIST: Freddie le Roux

THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were hand harvested from an older vineyard producing wine with an abundance of spice and white pepper whilst the younger vineyard contributes berry fruit and concentrated plum flavours. The grapes were harvested at 24.2 and 24.8 Balling. After destemming and crushing, fermentation took place on the skins for 8 and 9 days respectively. The juice was pumped over the skins daily to extract colour until fermentation was completed. The wine was left on the skins for a further week to macerate, racked and transferred to barrels for further maturation. The wine was matured in a combination of new and second-fill American and French oak for 12 to 16 months.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

COLOUR: Dark ruby

BOUQUET: Ripe plum fruit, violets and pepper spice.

TASTE: Full-bodied wine with upfront sweet, ripe dark red fruit, elegant and soft-textured. It's mouth-filling with spicy and smoky oak flavours that linger on the aftertaste

AGEING POTENTIAL: Although the wine is ready to enjoy now it will gain in complexity and character with further cellaring for 3 to 7 years.

FOOD PAIRING: This wine is an ideal partner for a juicy steak or Osso Bucco.