



FRANS K Smit



WINEMAKER

Frans K. Smit

ORIGIN

Coastal Region:
Helderberg and Tygerberg

PEAK DRINKING

6 - 7 years after harvest

2018

Frans K. Smit White Blend

77% Sauvignon Blanc

23% Sémillon

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc: 13.53 % vol TA: 6.2 g/L

RS: 1.9 g/L pH: 3.35

EAT & DRINK

The white asparagus undertones in this wine goes well with soft scallops in a creamy asparagus sauce, or with a delicate but flavourful risotto. Prawns with a mild chilli bite is also a good call.

THE WINE & THE MAKER

Frans Smit and his Stellenbosch winemaking team have harnessed 3 centuries of winemaking history, to transform Spier into an internationally acclaimed Stellenbosch wine farm. Crafting blends of distinction, and identifying regional vineyards that are some of the Cape's best kept secrets. His philosophy: 'Respect what the vineyard hands you.'

'Rounded, creamy and super-concentrated, with an extended finish that makes an explosive, mouthwatering impression. The sensation on the nose is bold but balanced. Tropicals, a little elderflower, interesting hints of citrus, a touch of smokiness from wood extraction. On the palate, a flash of vanilla and bright, integrated acidity. We got to this, as we always do, by picking from two prized parcels in two dryland vineyards that deliver the kind of surprises we like. This is the tale of two very special vineyards - like gold, to me.'

- Frans K. Smit, Spier



SOIL & TERROIR

‘The Sémillon hails from a vineyard on the south-eastern slopes of the Helderberg in Stellenbosch, and Sauvignon Blanc from the cool south-south-west facing slopes of Tygerberg. Dryland cultivation ensures the vines strive their hardest for water. In so doing, they absorb superb minerality and distinctive berry flavours from deep, rich soil strata - Malmesbury shale, in the case of the Sauvignon Blanc, and Oakleaf/Clovelly, in the case of the Sémillon. The crafting hinges on constant tending in the vineyard. We opened up the Sémillon canopy during the growing season, removing some of the leaves early in the season to let the sunlight in. These grew back during the course of the summer, providing cooling during the hottest period. We pick selectively, in stages, choosing riper bunches which we identify by colour. Both vineyards are close to the sea and the afternoon summer breezes allow the grapes to hang longer on the vine - the result: slow, intense flavour development.’

THE CRAFTING

‘We picked selectively, in stages, in the cool of pre-dawn. The grapes, packed in small 8kg lugs, went directly to the winery where they’re chilled further, before destemming, hand sorting and crushing. This vintage of Sauvignon Blanc was allowed 8 to 9 hours of skin contact in a refrigerated drainer above the press, extracting the best of the skin flavours at icy temperatures under highly controlled conditions. To prevent oxidation, the grapes and mash were covered with dry ice. Most of the juice was transferred to a stainless steel tank, with just a small quantity reserved for barrel fermentation. In the Sémillon batch, there was no extended skin contact - the free-run juice went straight into barrels for fermentation.’

MATURATION

‘After initial fermentation in stainless steel, we transferred into 2200L foudres and sent a portion into 268L untoasted pipe barrels, allowing 12 months in the barrel before blending. We followed the same process with both varieties. We kept a portion of the Sémillon and some Sauvignon Blanc in barrels, but the bulk of the wine was held in the large 2200L foudres. We made barrel selections then sent our final blend back to settle in the stainless steel tank for a good 2 to 3 months. It's a simple but very precise process.

Using untoasted barrels and foudres was less to add wood characteristics to the flavour than rather, to prime the juice for ageing. Extracting wood tannins gives the wine superb ageing potential.’

COLOUR

‘Straw yellow with a light green rim around the edge.’

NOSE & PALATE

‘Potent creaminess, with a slightly green edge, a little elderflower, tropical and limey citrus tones, followed by a smokiness from the barrel. The mouthwatering after-effect is a stayer. The fruit and the freshness, and the asparagus-loaded flavours of the Sauvignon Blanc component, make this a vintage that’s going to be a memorable one, for me.’
