



FRANS K Smit

WINEMAKER
Frans K. Smit

ORIGIN
Coastal - Stellenbosch and Tygerberg

PEAK DRINKING
4 – 6 years after harvest

AWARDS
John Platter Wine Guide
2020 - 4.5 stars



2017

Frans K Smit White Blend
47% Sauvignon Blanc (Tygerberg)
38% Sauvignon Blanc (Helderberg,
Stellenbosch)
15% Sémillon (Helderberg, Stellenbosch)

WINE ANALYSIS
Alc: 14.03 % vol TA: 6.1 g/l
RS: 2.4 g/l pH: 3.33

EAT & DRINK

Delightful with a chilled baby squid salad in a very tart, lemony dressing and a smattering of spice, like chopped fresh chilli.

'This blend delivers on my intention to rein in all the best qualities of a Bordeaux-style white, using the fruits of uniquely Cape terroir. This wonderfully flinty white has all manner of unripe tropical flavours; gooseberries, passionfruit and hints of elderflower, the upshot of a characteristically warm Cape summer. Bringing in a small component of rare Sauvignon Blanc berries from Stellenbosch was just the ticket.'

- Frans K Smit, Cellar Master, Spier



THE WINE & THE MAKER

Frans Smit and his Stellenbosch winemaking team have harnessed 3 centuries of winemaking history, transforming Spier from a small cellar in the eighties into an internationally acclaimed producer. Crafting blends of distinction, and identifying regional vineyards that are some of the Cape's best kept secrets.

His mantra: 'Respect what the vineyard hands you.'

FKS: 'Of note, this vintage was slightly riper than the previous year and presents as tropical, at first. With ageing, I expect it to open its latent herbaceous heart. The first impression is one of clean flintiness, and chalk.

Although it shows signs of wood at first, time in the bottle will temper the tropical and bring in a greener profile - perhaps with asparagus making an entry.'

SOIL & TERROIR

FKS: 'Most of the Sauvignon Blanc was cultivated on the cool south-south-west facing slopes in Tygerberg. These vines, which benefit from cool nights, are planted in deep, rich, water-retentive Malmesbury shale. In this dryland situation, the roots strive to absorb subterranean moisture and minerality, producing a berry with very distinctive flavour. Added to this was 38% of Sauvignon Blanc from a different clone and a different vineyard, in the Helderberg of Stellenbosch. The east-facing Helderberg Oakleaf soils produce a remarkably more tropical style of Sauvignon Blanc. The Sémillon grew on steep Helderberg slopes on the cool, hospitable eastern side. Being on a steep aspect, the rich Hutton and Clovelly soils catch plenty of run-off from winter rains. The grapes from these coastal locations enjoy beneficial afternoon sea breezes that take the edge off - with Tygerberg being the coolest. This allows the fruit to mature in its own time, developing full phenolic ripeness and flavour concentration.'

THE CRAFTING

FKS: 'Timing was certainly of the essence. It had been a very warm summer.

We had to deal with rapid ripening and so we harvested about a month early. The Sauvignon Blanc was picked at optimum ripeness, while the berry showed excellent natural acidity and strident tannins. The Sémillon came off the vine at 22-22.5° Balling - at peak acidity. Also crucial to the taste profile, ultimately, was allowing about a day of skin contact on the press, using only free-run juice, and then a long stint on the lees. Similar to our process in 2016, we barrel-blended to exact percentages before beginning fermentation.'

MATURATION

FKS: 'Fermentation took place in one large, lightly toasted foudre barrel, before ageing on the lees for 14 months. The blend was nicely integrated before bottling.'

COLOUR

Pale straw yellow with nuances of green at the edges. Light straw yellow with a hint of green.

NOSE & PALATE

FKS: 'This vintage opens with elderflower, blackcurrant and citrus on the palate, with some evidence of wood – which I expect will eventually recede. Gooseberries, passionfruit and fig leaf add to the abundance of yet-to-ripen tropical flavours. I'm certain this wonderful Bordeaux-style blend will turn greener with age, and is likely to develop asparagus flavours that are so typical of the pocket of Helderberg Sauvignon Blanc used.'