

CABERNET SAUVIGNON



Cabernet – the King of Grapes. A bold statement and one sure to upset the Shiraz –lovers and the Pinot-philosophers, but it's undeniable that Cabernet Sauvignon has a hand in some of the most celebrated wines in the world and that it has done so for a long time. The perfect blending partner, Cab brings class and elegance to many lesser-quality grapes and all over the world of wine, you'll find winemakers creating their own versions of Bordeaux blends.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

When it comes to Cabernet Sauvignon in South Africa, there is no doubt that Stellenbosch is the place to be. The grape likes sunshine, but not too much and it can't bear to have wet feet, so well-drained soils are a must. The combination of cool breezes sweeping in from False Bay and the many slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains and more make for lots of different micro-climates within the realms of Stellenbosch, all of them well-suited to growing the finest Cabernet. Further afield, there are great examples coming from up the West Coast in Durbanville as well.

WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE?

There are a whole range of classic descriptions for Cabernet ranging from blackcurrants and cassis to cedar, cigar box and tar. A lot depends on how ripe the fruit is allowed to get – in South Africa, winemakers walk a careful line between letting the fruit get too ripe and become jammy and picking it a bit too young, in which case it can remember its parent, Sauvignon Blanc, and show signs of greenness which are not at all nice. The very best wines balance the black fruit with freshness, backed up by lively acidity. It ages really well too, with lots of interesting flavours such as tomato leaf, olive tapenade and savoury notes turning up in Cabernets of ten years age and more.



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WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

Cabernet Sauvignon is the most famous grape of Bordeaux even though it is only really found on the Left Bank in famous appellations such as Margaux, St Estephe and Pauillac. It is often regarded as the most important grape in Bordeaux blends because it gives the wines great ageing potential – a combination of high tannins and acidity with lots of pronounced flavours mean that the greatest Cabernets and Cabernet-led blends can last for 40 years and more. It's also the most popular black grape in California with nearly 25% of all vineyard plantings. There it is allowed to make big, full-bodied wines and to contribute to Bordeaux blends, often labelled 'Meritage.'

WHAT SHOULD WE EAT WITH IT?

Cabernet is a big, bold yet elegant wine and seems to demand the very finest foods to accompany it. Many people go for a great steak but Cabernet also goes very well with roast lamb and roast duck as well. The high acidity works beautifully with really mature cheddar or gruyere cheese whilst the high tannins can be softened by the salt, making Cabernet a great wine to end your meal with if you don't like the sweetness of a port or a muscadel.



How does the flavour develop?



VINEYARD INFLUENCE:

Blackberry, Black olive, Cinnamon, Cloves, Nutmeg, Eucalyptus, Raspberries, Cooked beetroot

WINE MAKING INFLUENCE:

Almonds, Bacon, Coconut, Cashew, Burnt

BOTTLE AGING INFLUENCE:

Chocolate, Cigar box, Leather, Soy, Tobacco leaf, Coffee, Earthy