

LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT

MUSCADEL



Can you remember your first sip of wine?? For many South Africans, this may well have been a Muscadel, sweet and warming, served on a chilly winter's evening by your parents or grandparents. Muscadel has a long history in SA, dating back to the very beginnings of winemaking. Although it is becoming somewhat unfashionable, it is still part of SA's winemaking history and traditions. The drop in popularity has ensured that only the very finest versions are still made, preserving this heritage for future generations to relish and enjoy.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Muscadel is the South African term for Muscat Blanc à Petit Grains – literally, the 'white Muscat with little berries' and we have two kinds in SA, the classic white version and a widely accepted and warmly appreciated red mutation as well. Although some people do allow it to make a natural sweet wine, the majority of Muscadel is made into a fortified wine. Fermentation starts as normal and then stopped halfway through by the addition of a grape spirit. This raises the alcohol level to between 15 and 22% which effectively kills the fermentation yeast before it's done its job of eating all the sugar to turn it into alcohol. The result – a sweet wine.

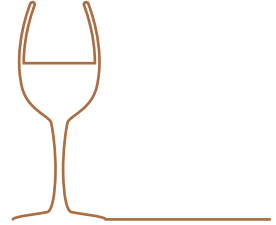
WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE?

A lot of Muscadels are made for early drinking and in their youth have plenty of grapey, musky, floral aromas flavours. But the best ones are allowed to age, often in barrels, and become incredibly complex and interesting. Expect to taste fruit cake, caramel and toffee, roasted nuts, honeyed fruits coming at you in waves as you savour each sip. A truly underrated flavour sensation!

**OPTIMAL SERVING
TEMPERATURE:**

15-20°C

* according to wine.co.za



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WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

If a wine is labelled as a Muscadel, it has to be made from Muscat Blanc à Petit Grains, but this isn't the only Muscat variety we have in SA. Hanepoot is the SA name for Muscat d'Alexandria, a lesser-quality grape and one which is often used to make sweet wines as well. Sometimes these are labelled as Jerepigo which is grape juice which is fortified with spirit – these can be Hanepoot or any other grape variety as well.

The very finest examples of Muscadel are those which have been kept in dark cool cellars for decades – it's an incredibly long-lived wine. Muscadels of 30, 40, 50 years are some of the finest wines in the world and are

deservedly celebrated alongside the greatest sherries, ports, Madeiras and other fortified wines.

WHAT SHOULD WE EAT WITH IT?

Youthful versions can be poured over crushed ice and enjoyed by themselves as an apéritif, but the finest aged Muscadels deserve only the finest foods. The classic match is cheese where the tangy umami and saltiness of aged Cheddars and Gruyères are beautifully-offset by the raisined sweetness and lively acidity of the perfectly-aged wine.

