



PLAISIR DE MERLE

PLAISIR DE MERLE CABERNET FRANC 2006

Winemaker: Niel Bester

Appellation: Paarl

Grape Varietal: Cabernet Franc

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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. Winemaker Niel Bester attributes the benefits of not only working with great fruit coming from a very unique terrain, but also getting the valuable input from Dr Paul Pontallier, MD at Chateau Margaux.

The vineyards

The diversity of the soils, slopes and elevations is closely linked with the quality of Plaisir de Merle wines. Well-drained weathered granite soils with good water retention allow minimal interference in irrigation with most vineyards dry land.

Situated on the east and north-east facing slopes of the Simonsberg Mountain, Plaisir de Merle is bordered by the towns of Stellenbosch, Franschoek and Paarl. The vineyards, averaging 19 years in age, are located from 175 - 350 m above sea level where high mountain peaks shade the vineyards from the hot, late afternoon sun. This slows down ripening, resulting in wines with a rich fruit complexity.

Viticulturist: Hannes van Rensburg

The winemaking

The grapes were crushed at 25.5 degrees balling. The juice was pumped over the skins daily to extract colour, tannins and flavour. Upon completion of fermentation the wine was left on the skins for a further eight days. The wine was racked off, transferred to 225-litre new French oak barrels where malolactic fermentation was completed. After another racking the wine stayed in the barrels for a total of 16 months.

Winemaker's comments

Colour: Deep ruby.

Bouquet: Rich nose with plums, prunes and fruitcake followed by oak spices in the background.

Taste: Full-bodied with plum and fruitcake and a ripe solid tannin structure.

Ageing process and potential: Ready to drink now but will gain in complexity. Further cellaring for 5 - 8 years.

Food pairing

Very versatile, this wine would compliment all red meat dishes from peppered fillet to a hearty ragout.

Chemical analysis

Residual sugar: 1.7g/l

Alcohol: 13.85 % by volume

Total acid: 5,9 g/l

PH: 3.6