



PLAISIR DE MERLE

EST. 1693

CABERNET FRANC 2015

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Residual sugar: 2 g/l
Alcohol: 13.91% by volume
Total acidity: 6.2 g/l
pH: 3.57

Winemaker: Niel Bester
Appellation: Paarl
Grape Varietal: Cabernet Franc

BACKGROUND

Established by the French Huguenots in 1693 on the slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains between Paarl and Franschhoek, 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. About 400 hectares are planted with a variety of noble grape cultivars such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc, Shiraz and Malbec, and an area of only about 80 hectares of prime vineyards has been set aside for the Plaisir de Merle cellar. Winemaker Niel Bester attributes the success of his wines to being able to work with great fruit coming from a very unique terrain and the invaluable input from his viticulture team.

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, the grapes were harvested on the 19 February 2015 from a single, 17 year old vineyard, situated about 230 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: Freddie le Roux

THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were crushed at 24.5 degrees balling. The juice was fermented at 24°C and 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 week. The young wine was racked off the skins and transferred to 300-litre French oak barrels where malolactic fermentation was completed. After another racking the wine was matured in the barrels for a further 16 months.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

COLOUR: Bright ruby

BOUQUET: Aromatic nose with fragrant sweet wood notes, violets and hints of red berries.

TASTE: Raspberry with hints of black currant and sweet vanilla oak flavours.

FOOD PAIRING: Very versatile, this wine would compliment all red meat dishes from peppered fillet to a hearty ragout and roast pork.

AGEING POTENTIAL: Ready to drink now but will gain further complexity if left to age for a further 5 to 8 years.

