



**PLAISIR DE MERLE**

EST 1693

PLAISIR DE MERLE CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2012

*Winemaker:* Niel Bester

*Appellation:* Paarl

*Grape Varietal:* Cabernet Sauvignon

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**Background**

Established by the French Huguenots in 1693 on the slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains situated 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. 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. 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 (predominantly Tukul and Hutton) with good water retention allow minimal irrigation with most vineyards dry land situated on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg.

Situated on the east and northeast facing slopes of the Simonsberg Mountain, Plaisir de Merle is bordered by the towns of Stellenbosch, Franschoek and Paarl. The vineyards, between 11-22 years of age, are located between 180m and 400m 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 very typically rich fruit complexity and well-ripened tannins.

**Viticulturist:** Freddie le Roux

**The winemaking**

The grapes were harvested from five different vineyards at between 24.4° and 25.5° Balling. The grapes were destalked and fermented in 12 800 and 25 000 liter stainless steel tanks. The juice was pumped over the skins 2- 3 times daily to extract colour, tannins and flavour.

Once fermentation was completed, the wine was left on the skins for a further 6-11 days to macerate. The wine was racked off the skins and malolactic fermentation was completed, partially in barrels and in tanks. The wine was then racked and transferred to French oak barrels to mature for 12 - 16 months. Cellarmaster, Niel Bester, added small percentages of Cabernet franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot to the final blend.

**Winemaker's comments**

**Colour:** Dark red

**Bouquet:** Aromatic mulberry, spice and cedar notes on the nose.

**Taste:** Classic dark fruits, cassis and sweet notes of vanilla and blackberries. Rich and concentrated with ripe tannins that leads to a long soft and elegant finish on the pallet.

**Ageing process and potential:** Made for food, this wine will mature well for ten years and more.

**Food pairing:**

Very versatile, this wine would best complement all red meat dishes.

**Chemical analysis**

Residual sugar: 2.5 g/l

Alcohol: 14.09% by volume

Total acid: 5.7 g/l

pH: 3.66

