



# PLAISIR DE MERLE

EST. 1693

## CHARDONNAY ESTATE 2017

### CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Residual sugar: 2.7 g/l  
Alcohol: 14.24% by volume  
Total acidity: 5.6 g/l  
pH: 3.32

TOTAL PRODUCTION:  
3 700 cases

Winemaker: Niel Bester  
Appellation: Simonsberg Paarl  
Grape Varietal: Chardonnay

### 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 elevation is closely linked with the quality of Plaisir de Merle wines. Well-drained, weathered granite soils (predominantly Tukulu and Hutton), with good water retention, allow minimal irrigation with most vineyards grown under dry land conditions. Grapes were sourced from three vineyards ranging from 6 to 7 years in age, and situated between 250m and 450m above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg.

VITICULTURIST: Paul Laas

### THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were harvested by hand at 23° to 24.9° Balling. The grapes were divided into five different parts and each crushed, clarified and fermented separately in 300-litre French oak barrels. A combination of first-fill (65%), second-fill (25%) and third-fill (10%) barrels were used and the wine remained on the lees for 10 months. The barrels were rolled or stirred regularly to suspend the lees in order to gain complexity, better integrated oak flavours, and to add to the mouth-feel of the wine. Partial malolactic fermentation also contributed to the wine's complexity, softened the acidity and contributed to the sweet, rich and full finish. The individual barrels were then tasted and the blend composed.

### WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

COLOUR: Light straw with a green tint.

BOUQUET: Floral, vanilla, tropical notes and sweet toasted nuts

TASTE: Crisp flintiness, white pear, floral, peach and pineapple ending with a sweet creamy finish.

FOOD PAIRING: Enjoy on its own or with fish, white meats and salads.

