



## PLAISIR DE MERLE

### PLAISIR DE MERLE MERLOT 2011

*Winemaker:* Niel Bester

*Appellation:* Paarl

*Grape Varietal:* Merlot

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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. 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, who in 2012 celebrated 20 years as cellar master at Plaisir de Merle, has gained fame in producing classically styled yet accessible wines, and 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 all add to the quality of Plaisir de Merle's grapes. Well-drained weathered granite soils (predominantly Tukululu and Hutton) with good water retention allow minimal interference in irrigation with most vineyards being dry land. The grapes were selected and handpicked from three vineyards situated between 140m and 370m above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg. The harvest period lasted from February 7 until February 28.

*Viticulturist:* Freddie le Roux

#### **The winemaking**

The grapes were harvested at between 23.9 and 25.9° Balling and were fermented in stainless steel tanks at 24 - 26°C for around ten days. The juice was pumped over the skins daily until dry. Upon completion of fermentation the wine was left on the skins for between 2 - 8 days. The wine was racked off and malolactic fermentation was completed in the tanks and barrels. The wine was matured in 55% new, 20% second-fill and 25% third-fill French oak barrels for periods ranging from 12 to 16 months. Finally all the individual barrels were tasted and evaluated to select the final blend.

#### **Winemaker's comments**

**Colour:** It has a youthful bright ruby red colour.

**Bouquet:** The wine has an aromatic nose of red fruit, cherries, strawberry jam with floral hints, and cedar and cloves.

**Taste:** On the taste it is well-structured with a pleasant soft and velvety palate, layered with ripe sweet red berries and prunes, and supported by cedar and vanilla oak flavours. It has a rich, lingering aftertaste.

**Ageing process and potential:** Accessible now, this wine has good maturation potential of five to eight years.

**Food pairing:** Made to complement most food dishes, this Merlot pairs well with venison, pot roasts and other lightly spiced meat dishes.

#### **Chemical analysis:**

**Residual sugar:** 2.5 g/l

**Alcohol:** 14.03 % by volume

**Total acid:** 5.6 g/l

**pH:** 3,52

**Extract:** 30,2 g/l

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 3000 CASES

