



# PLAISIR DE MERLE

EST. 1693

## MERLOT 2016

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### CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Residual sugar: 2.6 g/l  
Alcohol: 14.33% by volume  
Total acidity: 5.4 g/l  
pH: 3.63

Winemaker: Niel Bester  
Appellation: Paarl  
Grape Varietal: Merlot

### 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 all add to the quality of Plaisir de Merle's grapes. Well-drained weathered granite soils (predominantly Tukulu and Hutton) with good water retention allow minimal interference in irrigation with most vineyards being dry land. The grapes were selected and handpicked from two vineyards. They are situated between 140m and 370m above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg.

VITICULTURIST: Morne Steyn

### THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were harvested at 24 and 25.6° Balling and were fermented in stainless steel tanks at 24°C for around 7 to 9 days. The juice was pumped over the skins daily until fermented dry. Upon completion of fermentation the wine was left on the skins for 6 to 8 days. The wine was racked off the skins and malolactic fermentation was completed in the tanks and barrels. The wine was matured in 25% new, 50% second-fill and 25% third-fill French oak barrels for periods ranging from 14 to 18 months. All the individual barrels were tasted and evaluated to select the final blend.

### WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

COLOUR: Bright red

BOUQUET: Fragrant red berries and floral notes with hints of spice and mint chocolate.

TASTE: Cherries, hints of cloves and mocha and sweet tannins on the palate ending with a soft, velvety finish.

AGEING POTENTIAL: Accessible now and with careful cellaring will mature for a further five to ten years.

FOOD PAIRING: Versatile wine that will pair well with venison, pot roasts and other lightly spiced meat dishes.

