

ZONNEBLOEM LAUREAT 2001

The history

Zonnebloem is one of South Africa's best known and biggest selling brands in the high-priced wine sector. It also has one of the longest histories of any wine label in South Africa. It dates back to the early part of the 18th century when wines were already made on the farm, Zonnebloem at Simondium. Since its absorption in the 1940s into SFW (merged with Distillers' Corporation in 2001 to form Distell), it has regularly earned international and local medals, as well as the support of consumers, locally and abroad. As early as the 1940s Zonnebloem wines were being imported by the UK and since the opening up of international markets by the mid-1990s, the range has been selling across Europe.

Produced at the Adam Tas cellars in Stellenbosch, the wines are made in close concert with supplier vineyards. Winemaker Louw Engelbrecht oversees the management of the vineyards and ensures a stringent selection of grapes.

Zonnebloem remains one of South Africa's most popular brands, offering outstanding value and excellent quality. The wines are generally accessible and easy to drink, with a soft palate but structured to show a prominent varietal character and, in the case of the reds, to last for five to 10 years.

The vineyards

The grapes for this blend were sourced from trellised, dryland vineyards in the Devon Valley, Stellenbosch Kloof and Helderberg areas. Mostly south-west facing, they derive the maximum benefit from cooling maritime breezes to ensure slow ripening and concentrated fruit flavours. Yield of 8 – 10 tons/ha.

The winemaking

The grapes were hand harvested at 23,5° - 24,5° Balling from mid-February to beginning of April. Each vineyard block was individually vinified and the juice was fermented for 10 to 12 days at 20°C. After malolactic fermentation was induced in stainless steel tanks, the wine was transferred in equal parts to first, second and third-fill French oak, where it spent 10 months.

The blend is made up of Cabernet Sauvignon (50%), Merlot (20%), Shiraz (10%), Cabernet Franc (10%), Malbec (5%) and Petit Verdot (5%).

Winemaker's comments

Winemaker Michael Bucholz describes this wine as medium to full-bodied with prominent fruit flavours. Rich and smooth, almost velvety with toasty and spicy undertones. While it can be enjoyed now, either on its own or with game dishes, red meat casseroles, roasts and robust cheeses, it has the structure to maintain its character, even enhancing in complexity with age, over the next several years.

Analysis

Residual sugar	2,64g/l
Alcohol	13,95% by volume
Total acidity	6,48g/l
pH	3,44