

ZONNEBLOEM LAURÉAT

CABERNET SAUVIGNON | MERLOT

ZONNEBLOEM LAUREAT 2010

BACKGROUND

Zonnebloem is a long-established leader in South African winemaking with a history dating back to the late 17th century and a reputation for honouring tradition in the way its wines are made.

The Stellenbosch farm, Kunnenburg, from which Zonnebloem as a separate farm originated, was transferred to Willem van der Merwe in 1692 by Governor Simon van der Stel. After changing hands over several generations, in 1856, the owner at the time, Petrus Jacobus Malherbe divided the farm between his two sons, Daniël Francois Malherbe and Willem Andries Malherbe. Willem named his portion Zonnebloem. In 1893 the farm was bought by the Furter family, and over three generations established an award-winning track record on local wine shows and also won several important export contracts.

As in earlier days, nothing is rushed at Zonnebloem and each wine is allowed to take its time, from the growing of the fruit to its vinification to produce generous-bodied flavours rich in varietal expression. Zonnebloem wines are accessibly styled with a soft palate, and in the case of the reds, structured to last five to ten years.

From the 2010 vintage onwards, Zonnebloem Lauréat - the South African brand's flagship red blend - features a new label that pays homage to those who have shaped its history. The new look, strikingly different from its earlier iterations, better distinguishes the specialty wine from the core range.

This specialty wine is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (45%), Merlot (40%), Shiraz (10%) and Petit Verdot (5%).

VINEYARDS (viticulturist: Annelie Viljoen)

The grapes were sourced from trellised, dryland and irrigated vineyards in the Jonkershoek, Devon Valley, Stellenbosch Kloof and Helderberg areas. Some of the vines are grown under dryland conditions while others are irrigated. Mostly south-west facing, they derive the maximum benefit from cooling maritime breezes that contribute to slow ripening of the grapes and concentrated fruit flavours. Yields averaged 8 to 10 tons per hectare.

WINEMAKING (cellar master: Deon Boshoff; winemaker: Bonny van Niekerk)

The grapes from the four cultivars used in the blend were harvested at 24° to 25° Balling and vinified separately. After crushing, the juice was cold-soaked for a few days to ensure maximum colour extraction while limiting the extraction of harsh tannins. During the first three days of fermentation, the skins were vigorously punched down while from the fourth day the fermenting wine was aerated. After fermentation the free-run wine was drawn off into 300-litre barrels and allowed to undergo malolactic fermentation. Thereafter the different wines were tasted and the type of wood for maturation selected based on the style of the wine. The barrels were a combination of first-and second-fill French and Hungarian oak. After 14 months a final selection of the best barrels was made and the wine blended and bottled.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

Colour: Deep and intense ruby red.
Bouquet: Blackcurrant and dark chocolate aromas followed by hints of oak spice.
Palate: Full-bodied with big and bold cherry and blackcurrant flavours and hints of dark chocolate. It has a well-balanced structure, firm tannins and a long, satisfying finish.

FOOD PAIRING

Excellent enjoyed on its own or served with game or red meat dishes as well as mature cheeses with robust flavours.

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Alcohol: 14.54% by volume
Residual sugar: 2.67g/l
Total acidity: 6.18g/l
pH: 3.57

