



ZONNEBLOEM MERLOT 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, Kunneburg, 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 years, 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. This wine is made entirely from Merlot grapes.

VINEYARDS

(viticulturist: Annelie Viljoen)

The grapes were sourced from trellised, dryland vineyards in the Devon Valley, Stellenbosch Kloof and Jonkershoek areas. 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.

WINEMAKING

(cellar master: Deon Boshoff, winemaker: Bonny van Niekerk)

The grapes were harvested by hand in March at 24° to 25° Balling, when fruit and tannins were fully ripened but the berries and skins were still firm. The different vineyards blocks were separately vinified. Fermentation on the skins took place for 10 to 12 days at 27°C. After malolactic fermentation, the wine was matured in a combination of wood (55% in 300-litre barrels - 80% French and 20% American oak) and stainless steel tanks (45%) for 12 months.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

Colour: Ruby red.
Bouquet: Delectable chocolate and a combination of mixed red berries and underlying fruit cake aromas.
Palate: A medium- to full-bodied wine with delicate fruit and well-integrated wood flavours. Perfectly balanced with accessible tannins and a satisfying finish.

FOOD PAIRING

Excellent enjoyed on its own or served with rich oxtail stews, chicken curries, game and red meat dishes.

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Alcohol: 14.02% by volume
Residual sugar: 2.07g/l
Total acidity: 6.00g/l
pH: 3.48

