



PLAISIR DE MERLE

EST. 1693

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Residual sugar: 2.8 g/l
Alcohol: 14.26% by volume
Total acidity: 6.0 g/l
pH: 3.67

CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2015

Winemaker: Niel Bester

Appellation: Paarl

Grape Varietal: Cabernet Sauvignon 85%; Petit Verdot 4%; Shiraz 11%

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 is closely linked with the quality of Plaisir de Merle wines. Situated on the east and northeast facing slopes of the Simonsberg Mountain, Plaisir de Merle is bordered by the towns of Stellenbosch, Franschhoek and Paarl. The vineyards for this wine, between 12 and 23 years of age, are all located on the Plaisir de Merle farm on south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg Mountain planted in weathered, decomposed granite soils where high mountain peaks shade the vineyards from the hot, late afternoon sun. This slows down ripening, resulting in wines with a very typically rich fruit complexity and well-ripened tannins.

VITICULTURIST: Freddie le Roux

THE WINEMAKING

The Cabernet Sauvignon grapes were hand-picked from two vineyards at between 24.3° and 25.3° Balling. At the cellar the grapes were destemmed, then sorted and pumped into stainless steel tanks and fermented at 24 °C. The juice was pumped over the skins daily to extract colour, tannins and flavour. On several occasions the juice was emptied from the tanks and then pumped back over the skins of the same tank (rack and return). Once fermentation was completed, the wine was left on the skins for a further 5 to 11 days to macerate. The wine was racked off the skins and malolactic fermentation was completed, partially in barrels and in tanks. The wine was then racked and transferred back to French oak barrels (60% new, 25% 2nd fill and 15% 3rd fill) to mature for 12 to 16 months. Small percentages of Malbec and Petit Verdot were added to complete the final blend for this typical Plaisir de Merle style.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

COLOUR: Dark red

BOUQUET: Aromatic nose with red berry fruit, sweet spice and hints of vanilla and oak.

TASTE: Full-bodied, fruit-driven wine with blackcurrant fruit, cassis, dark chocolate and some herbaceous notes. Subtle tannins linger with sweet red berry fruit on the finish.

AGENING POTENTIAL: This wine will mature well for ten years and more.

FOOD PAIRING: Very versatile, this wine would best complement all red meat dishes.

