

THE GRAPESMITH MEDITERRANEO 2019

Wine of Origin Stellenbosch

Style of Wine: Dry white blend.

Grape varieties: Marsanne 39% | Roussanne 37% | Grenache Blanc 22%
Verdelho 2%

Barrels: 9 Barrels

Background:

Stellenbosch is situated close to the Atlantic and benefits from the cooling maritime effect breezing in from the ocean. The Western Cape around Cape Town and the southern tip of Africa is blessed with a Mediterranean climate with winter rainfall and long, moderately warm and dry summers. Ideal conditions for growing wine. The white grape varieties that have distinguished themselves in the south of France and Spain in a Mediterranean climate, have only recently started to gain popularity in the Cape. The Grapesmith Mediterraneo 2019 utilises these varieties and their wonderful affinity for Mediterranean conditions to create a first for the Cape.

The increased effects of global warming are becoming more and more visible and Mediterranean grape varieties have proven that they are perfectly adapted to warmer and drier conditions. This is evident in their drought resistance and also the retention of acidity and low pH during ripening.

Roussanne Winemaking

Roussanne ripens very rapidly and requires meticulous monitoring to ensure harvest is done at optimal ripeness. Grapes were harvested at 22.5° balling on 19 February 2019 and showed beautiful flavour, body and texture. Grapes were harvested from a vineyard located high up on the cool south-west facing slopes of Simonsberg, then cooled overnight in picking crates. The grapes were whole bunch pressed early the next morning with only the gentlest pressing in order to yield delicate juice with refined flavours. The wine was fermented naturally in older 225 and 400 litre French oak barrels. The fermentation was quite warm to allow the yeast to make abundant glycerol. The wine spent a total of 11 months on the primary lees with occasional battonage to stir up the lees. No MLF was allowed and after a light filtration the blend was bottled in March 2020.

Marsanne Winemaking

Harvested on 12 February 2019 at 22.6° balling from a cool site overlooking False Bay. The grapes were cooled down overnight to 5°Celsius. Grapes were whole bunch pressed early the next morning with the juice taken directly into 225 and 400 litre French oak barrels for a spontaneous fermentation, utilising the yeast strains naturally occurring on the berries. The wine was left in barrel with minimal interference, apart from stirring the lees and topping up when needed. No malolactic fermentation was done, in order to preserve the primary fresh fruit aromas.

Grenache blanc Winemaking

Harvested on 27 February 2019 at 21.2° Balling and crushed directly into the press and given skin contact for 3 hours. Thereafter, grapes were pressed directly to barrel and completed natural fermentation in 225 litre French oak barrels. The Grenache Blanc spent 11 months in barrel on primary lees before blending took place.

Verdelho Winemaking

Picked on 7 February 2019 on 21.7 21.2° Balling and fermented in barrel. This Verdelho was made from the oldest planting in South Africa (1996), when Frans Malan decided to plant 7 rows on Simonsig Estate. Originally from the Island of Madeira it is known to make vibrant, tangy and refreshingly dry white wines with lively acidity.



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The Blending

The blending process started by finding the sweet spot in the ratio between Roussanne and Marsanne, after which the crisp and zesty Grenache blanc was added to contribute elements of citrusy verbine and wet river stone minerals. Clairette Blanche further contributes delicacy, elegance and complexity. The 2% of Verdelho looks insignificant, but using more started to show dominance over the other components. Despite the thimble full of Verdelho it does make a positive and noticeable contribution to the flavour and freshness.

Tasting Notes

This complex white blend displays a pale straw colour. Expressive floral top notes are complimented by aromas of lemon tart and tropical fruits. Fresh stone fruits, citrus and subtle oak on the palate follows into a focused mineral finish. Good structure and freshness with lovely tension and crispness. A wine that will only gain in depth, flavour and complexity for several years.

Food Pairing

Crayfish, grilled fish. Poultry in rich creamy sauces. Blue cheese and goat's cheese. Foie gras. Also worth a try with spicy dishes and mild curries.

Serving Advice: Serve in large glasses and allow to breathe. Do not over-chill. 10 to 12°C.

Analysis:

Alcohol:	13.12% by volume
Residual Sugar:	1.93 g/l
Total Acidity:	5.5 g/l
pH:	3.2

