

CIRCUMSTANCE

CHENIN BLANC 2018



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Circumstance Chenin Blanc is produced from low-yielding, bush vines, situated approximately 5 kilometers as the crow flies from the Atlantic Ocean. These conditions ensure a cooler and longer growing season and allow for ripe fruit with good concentration and a higher natural acidity. The soils are of sandstone origin, with medium-sized stones helping with drainage. They also have a very good ability to retain moisture. Production was approximately 4 t/ha.

At Waterkloof, we use organic and biodynamic methods based on Old World, sustainable practices in our vineyards to ensure that the vines are nourished, healthy and in balance. Our soils are free of chemicals and are kept healthy by using plant extracts, fungi and bacteria from our own organic compost. These vineyard practices, allied with a natural approach to winemaking, give us wines that truly reflect the terroir and the vintage.

A GENTLE HAND

The winemaking philosophy is the same for all of Waterkloof's premium white wines. We follow a traditional, minimalistic approach which means that we interfere as little as possible with the winemaking process. This allows the flavours prevalent in that specific vineyard to be expressed in the bottle. All grapes are hand-picked to ensure that only the finest berries are brought to the cellar by our horses. We harvest according to taste and spend most of our time in the vineyards to see how the flavours develop.

All grapes are sorted by hand and then whole-bunch pressed in our modern basket press to extract the juice in the gentlest way. The juice is then settled naturally for 24 hours, after which it is racked from the settling tank into 600-liter barrels. The naturally occurring yeasts or "wild yeasts" are allowed to start the fermentation process. This leads to a longer fermentation process with a slow release of aromas and a more structured palate. The natural fermentation process took 4 months to complete, after which the wine was left on the gross lees for a further 6 months. We do not employ battonage nor do we add any acid or enzymes during the winemaking process, with only a light filtration and a small addition of sulphur added as a preservative prior to bottling.

AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE: THE 2017/2018 GROWING SEASON

The Cape experienced a very dry growing season from the end of the 2017 harvest and also during the beginning of 2018. The 2017 winter was not exceptionally cold but still colder than the previous three years, which helped to ensure an even budburst. The rainfall was the lowest that we have experienced in the last 10 years on the farm.

Budburst started earlier than usual seeing that the winter was not very cold. We could see some of the first buds appear early in September. From there on the vines were struggling to grow due to the dry conditions and veraison only took place in early January. The dam levels were also low and we were only able to irrigate the younger blocks. The best practice during dry conditions is to always have a complete weed-free vineyard to prevent excessive water usage and to limit stress on the vine by suckering if needed- sometimes this also happens naturally.

In early January we did receive rain and also a bit in early February. We believe that this was the saving grace for our vines to help them ripen the fruit more evenly. During this time, we did not see excessive heat spikes and had lovely cool evenings which helped to have a longer growing season and have all the flavours develop over a longer period.

Harvest started about 10 days later than in 2017. We saw a decrease in berry size on some blocks. Fortunately, little to no rot was found on the grapes, which helped to have a stress-free sorting table. Overall, we are more than happy with the quality of the 2018 harvest.

TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA BARNARD

An exceptionally well-balanced wine that shows floral notes, stone fruit, a kiss of honey and a slight hint of sage. The palate has a great length, lovely roundness and a balanced acidity that adds to the complexity. Enjoy it with a variety of dishes ranging from a cheese platter (especially cheddar) to a butter chicken curry!

THE NUMBERS (3 560 bottles produced)

Alc: 13.5 %

RS: 3.7 g/l

TA: 5. g/l

pH: 3.37