

CIRCUMSTANCE

SAUVIGNON BLANC 2019



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

At Waterkloof, we use organic as well as biodynamic methods based on Old World, sustainable practices in our vineyards to ensure that the vines are nourished and in balance. When you drive into the farm you are able to see the cows, pigs, sheep, goats chickens and horses which we use for their manure as well as weed control and many other purposes. Our soils are free of chemicals and are kept healthy by using plant extracts, fungi and bacteria from our own, natural compost. Healthier soils mean vines with roots digging deeper than 5 meters, truly expressing the terroir.

These traditional methods, combined with a southwest-facing, windy vineyard site ensure a balanced and naturally low yielding vine that produces intense flavours. The vineyards are about 5 kilometers from the sea and are planted at a height of between 270 and 300 meters above sea level. The soils are of sandstone origin with medium-sized stones, helping with drainage and also with moisture retention. The vineyards are an average age of 21 years.

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 wine. To achieve this, all grapes are harvested on taste, picked by hand, sorted by hand and finally whole-bunch pressed in our modern basket press, so that we extract the purest juice in the gentlest way. The juice is then settled naturally for 24 hours. As we don't spray any chemicals in our vineyard, wild yeast is employed to ferment the juice in old 600litre barrels. This leads to a longer fermentation process with a slow release of aromas and a more structured palate. The natural fermentation process took 6 months to complete, after which the wine was left on the gross lees for another 2 months. We do not 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 2018/2019 GROWING SEASON

The current harvest is determined by the conditions of the previous years. With this taken into account, we could see that all of our hard work in 2018 certainly paid off in this year's harvest. The leaves were still green for more than a month after picking the grapes. We welcomed a bit of rain just after the 2018 harvest, which also helped the vine to build-up some much-needed reserves.

The 2018 winter was cold and the vine could go into proper dormancy. During this time, we worked hard to build up the nutrients required in the vineyard for the summer growing period. At Waterkloof we are always tweaking the processes. One example, of many, is the deep bed system, where we put plant cuttings and manure into an area that used to be aerated by chickens scratching around. This time round, the chickens were substituted by three beautiful little pigs to dig channels into the compost to turn it. This mixture was

especially beneficial during the drought, as it is a rich source of carbon that improves the water retention ability of the soils.

We experienced an even budburst during a cool spring but had a lot of wind during flowering which led to uneven berry set on some of the blocks. To help the vine ripen properly, we only kept the more developed bunches on the vine.

The summer growing season was fairly cool, except for a few warmer days in October. We were also very happy to welcome some rain in January, which accompanied by the wind, led to the soil receiving good moisture without having humidity build-up on the grapes that could cause rot.

The 2019 harvest commenced the last week of January but went into full swing from the first week of February. We picked our last grapes at the end of March. On the younger blocks, the yield was down by about 10%, but the older blocks produced more or less the same.

The whites showed a lot of concentration and vibrant acidity. With the reds, we had lovely small berries with thick skins. During processing, we once again worked gently to avoid over-extracting and let Mother Nature takes her course with our natural ferments..

TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA BARNARD

Sauvignon blanc is very versatile and also shows distinct terroir characteristics. In this wine, the Schapenberg comes through with great freshness, lime notes and also a bit of gooseberries. The palate is very elegant, refined and lingers well on the aftertaste. I enjoy this wine with a simple crab salad and it also pairs perfectly with a crayfish on the grill.

THE NUMBERS (21 270 bottles)

Alc: 13.5 %

RS: 4 g/l

TA: 6.8 g/l

pH: 3.1