

Plaisir de Merle Chardonnay 2008

Colour: Light straw colour with a green tint.

Bouquet: Ample citrus and stone fruit with roasted nuts.

Taste: Round and full with citrus fruit and apricots followed by subtle wood spices. The combination of the grape and oak flavours reflect the influence of the Plaisir de Merle characteristics and its distinctive terroir

Enjoy on its own or with fish, white meats and salads.

variety : Chardonnay | 100% Chardonnay

winery : Plaisir Wine Estate

winemaker : Niel Bester

wine of origin : Coastal

analysis : alc : 13.94 % vol rs : 1.7 g/l pH : 3.39 ta : 6.2 g/l

type : White **style :** Dry **taste :** Fruity **wooded**

pack : Bottle **closure :** Cork

International Wine Challenge 2010: Silver Medal

in the vineyard :

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. Well-drained weathered granite soils (predominantly Tukulu and Hutton) with good water retention allow minimal irrigation with most vineyards dry land. Grapes were sourced from vineyards in Simondium. The vines, ranging in from 10 to 22 years in age, are situated between 200 m and 500 m above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg. Over the years the vineyards have been renewed, replanted and new locations chosen. Although the old stalwart vines still form the nucleus of the blend, the younger vineyards, planted in the late 1999/2000s and introduced into the blend in the last four years, have added the freshness and crispness that makes all the difference.

Viticulturist: Freddie le Roux

about the harvest: The grapes were harvested by hand at between 22.7° and 24.3° balling

in the cellar : The grapes were fermented in 300 litre French oak barrels at approximately 22°C for seven to eight days. The wine then remained on the lees for a further seven months. A combination of first-fill (50%), second-fill (20%) and 30% third and fourth-fill barrels were used. The lees were stirred regularly and allowed to settle again in order to gain complexity and add to the mouthfeel of the wine. Malolactic fermentation occurred in about 60% of the barrels

