

Plaisir de Merle Chardonnay 2011

Colour: Light yellow with a green tint.

Bouquet: Oak spices and vanilla with tropical notes, citrus fruit and 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 :

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

pack : Bottle **closure :** Cork

2013 International Wine and Spirit Competition - Silver

2011 Concours Mondial - Gold Medal

in the vineyard :

Background

Established by the French Huguenots in 1693 on the slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains between Paarl and Franschoek, 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 12 to 19 years in age, are situated between 360 m and 450 m above sea level on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg.

Viticulturist: *Freddie le Roux*

about the harvest: The grapes were harvested by hand at between 23.1° and 24.5° B.

in the cellar : The grapes were fermented in 300-litre French oak barrels at approximately 20°C for nine days. The wine then remained on the lees for a further seven months. A combination of first-fill (56%), second-fill (32%) and 12% 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. A part of the wine completed malolactic fermentation to increase complexity and mouth feel.