

Plaisir de Merle Chardonnay 2012

Colour: Light straw with a green tint.

Bouquet: Lime, pear, almonds, notes of oak and a smoky toastiness

Taste: Round and full with stone fruit, citrus and sweet, ripe tropical flavours and a light toastiness layered with creaminess in a lingering aftertaste. Sweet vanilla oak flavours enrich the taste experience.

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 : Paarl

analysis : alc : 14.03 % vol rs : 2.5 g/l pH : 3.52 ta : 5.6 g/l

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

pack : Bottle **closure** : Cork

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 13 to 20 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 22.1° and 24.8°B.

in the cellar : The juice was clarified and then fermented in 300-litre French oak barrels. The wine remained on the lees for a further eight months. A combination of first-fill (45%), second-fill (25%) and third-fill (30%) barrels were used. The barrels were rolled or stirred regularly to suspend the lees in order to gain complexity, better integration of oak flavours and to add to the mouthfeel of the wine. About 65% of the wine completed malolactic fermentation to increase complexity which adds for a fuller mouthfeel.

