

Pilgrim Wines Bastardo do Castello 2017

Terroir & Site:

For the record: this is the first certified Bastardo do Castello/Trousseau ever bottled in South Africa – and this is its story:

Perched on top of a North Eastern sloping hill, nestled between other isolated patches of hard to find vines, these vines enjoy prime views over Stellenbosch and its rolling hills toward Cape Town.

Manicured, and especially nurtured and kept isolated so as to keep safe from encroaching leaf roll virus off of neighboring farmlands, these vines produce amazing fruit. On the slopes of Stellenbosch Mountain – a landmark that epitomizes quality – its roots run deep into the decomposed red/brown granitic soils of origin.

Only 66 vines have been found in Stellenbosch – and in this bottle is the wine that flows from them.

Harvest conditions:

Before anything - 2017 will be hailed as the year of drought and fires.

Not only did we see the tail end of a debilitating drought, but to crown it all, a lot of producers lost their crops to devastating veld fires. No sooner had one area of Stellenbosch doused a fire, but another 2 were struck somewhere close by. Mercifully, our 66 vines remained unscathed.

The run into ripening in 2017 was very dry as you would imagine. We did not have sufficient winter rains and there was very little during budding.

Ferocious winds in November and December did not help the water retention of the small amounts of vapor falling (it also did not help the firefighters in their plight).

Towards the end of December and January the temperatures were scorching, and ripening accelerated. Bastardo do Castello is resilient. It has to be to survive. Heat it can handle, drought it can handle – but don't miss your picking window!

Sugar accumulation happens quickly – blink and you miss it. BdC is very early ripening, and I have been found out once.



In 2017 we got it spot on and the wine is fantastic! Smaller and looser bunches made sure there was a lot more concentration and flavor development to look forward to.

Vinification method:

66 Vines don't yield a lot of fruit, so this first vintage was fermented in a wooden fruit bin, with a bin liner. No tech was used in sorting, crushing, pumping or conveying of the fruit to the bin. Instead, the grapes were dropped into the bin as whole bunches and I got Christian and Jani to do a nice relaxing foot stomp. The addition of a bit of SO₂ helped to stave off the nasties.

Natural fermentation was quick and punch downs were the order of the day. This lasted for about a week. The wine was pressed quite quickly after fermentation and put into a small barrel. Over the next 24 months maturation, we racked the wine from barrel to barrel to improve the natural mechanical sedimentation and cleaning process. This wine never saw a filter in its life.

Please be aware that this wine is made in the most unobtrusive way I could imagine to do. There will be some degree of sediment or crystal formation which is totally natural in these styles of wines.

Winemaker's Notes:

Color: Beautiful bright red with a cherry hue. As you would expect from a Bastardo, the color is not a very deep dark red, rather more see-through and vibrant.

Nose: Lovely lighter types of berry flavors like raspberry, strawberry and cranberry dancing through with flowery hints of violets and lavender. Orange peel, lemon zest and umami/seaweed flavors with an interesting twist of meat, especially venison and some cheese as well. Also, an end note of herbs and spices, picking up by the beautiful lemony spice - Sumac.

Palate: Good cherry tartness invigorating the palate, followed by a hit of spice, coriander and ground black pepper ending off with the sweetness of the berries lingering. The mouthfeel is one of fine tannins contributing to this well-structured wine. Aging possibility of at least 5 to 10 years.

Analysis:

Alc: 14.5%

pH: 3.46

TA: 6.00 g/l

VA: 0.74 g/l

RS: 2.50 g/