

Pilgrim Wines Chenin Blanc 2021

Terroir & Site:

Situated roughly 10km out of Wellington and Paarl, the Voor Paardeberg Region is a warm growing climate region. Prevailing winds from the West Coast keeps the vineyard cool during the summer, allowing for aeration in the canopy and air flow through the bunches thus preventing mildew from developing.

The soil is made up of mostly decomposed Paardeberg sandstone and some granitic clay materials. The perfect soils for the Chenin blanc!

Harvest conditions:

Like the previous year, 2021 was also earlier ripening than expected, added the fact that these Voor Paardeberg vines are all dryland, there was never a doubt that it would be an early vintage for Chenin blanc.

While the rains in winter of 2020 were good, it was also later, and filled ground levels till later in the year, giving a result of lower soils temperatures and delayed budburst in Spring of 2020.

With a few less growing-, or ripening days under the belt, the Chenin blanc came in perfectly ripe at 22.5 balling, together with a fantastic natural acidity!

Harvesting started on the 26th of February 2021, all by hand. The grapes were transported in fruit bins to the Pilgrim cellar for vinification.

Vinification method:

After the grapes were cooled down, we proceeded to press 50% of the production as whole bunch clusters, the resulting juice was then naturally fermented in 300L and 500L neutral French oak barrels. 40% of the production (same grape lot) we destemmed, crushed and fermented – on the skins until dry. We had daily punch downs and concentrated extraction of the flavour in the skins. The wine was left on the skins for an additional 7 days after a complete fermentation. The remaining 10% of the production we left as whole clusters in the fruit bins and after crushing them by foot, left then to ferment naturally in the bins together with everything they brought directly from the vineyard. After completely dry, this portion also made its way into a 225L barrel.



These 3 portions were kept separate to continually taste, coupled with analysis. This made for some insightful notes on flavour evolution. The maturation lasted for 9 months after the wine was bottled and stored for another 9 months prior to release.

Tasting notes:

Color: Golden light yellow with a slight green tinge

Nose: Primarily, this wine is a step ahead its predecessors, as it has more sweet notes and even some interesting earth tones emanating from the 10% whole bunch fermentation.

Skin ferment aromas are very prevalent like some toffee and caramel, but even more perfumy notes like jasmine and elderflower.

The “youthful” skin component of tilled earth and freshly cut hay is key, then with some age you can expect the usual suspects – marmalade, blood orange, lemon rind – to give their amazing display!

Palate: My intention was to pick slightly earlier to harness more natural acidity and in so doing give the wine a more succulent core.

I think this wine is perfectly balanced, with sweet marmalade and bright pith on opposites, underpinned with a finely tuned tannin, and the acidity that remains is just enough to make this wine end off focussed and long.

This wine is going to be a belter! Perfect for aging, amazing to drink now!

Analysis:

Alc: 12.5 %

pH: 3.51

TA: 5.6 g/l

VA: 0.50 g/l

RS: 2.3 g/l