

Pilgrim Wines Carménère 2023



Vineyard Information:

Nestled between other isolated patches of hard-to-find vines (including some of the only Bastardo in the country!), 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.

Harvest Report:

Winter 2022 was cold and wet, as per normal, except that normal is not what we call an ever-changing climate system.

With a major El Niño climate event coming into play in the northern parts of the world, we knew going into the season we could expect the unexpected.

We started the picking season quite early, and so it seemed to continue throughout. As it turned out we had a very classic early vintage with fresh acidities and amazing fruit development. There was a very heavy early patch of rain which continued to become an early rainy season, catching a lot of producers unprepared.



Carménère, as it turns out is a bit of a late bloomer, but phenolically quite ripe from the get-go, so you don't have to wait till extreme ripeness levels. This vineyard is pretty low yielding, but that also depends on flowering conditions and pruning.

Winemaking Practices:

The grapes were picked early morning at the end of February, and fermentation started with 20% whole bunches in the ferment. Natural fermentation was quick, and punch-downs were the order of the day. This lasted for about two weeks. The wine was pressed quite quickly after fermentation and put into one small barrel.



Over the next 12 months of maturation the wine was continually assessed, as it was not quite a known entity in South Africa. There was good phenolic development after 12 months and we decided to bottle while the fruit was still fresh and pure.

Tasting notes:

Color: Being a listed Bordeaux varietal, the color is deep and dark, with rich, bright red hues.

Nose: The aromas are beguiling and lush. Very prominent sweet aromas of brambleberry and ripe plumb, sunrise toffee with mint and caramelized backed rhubarb. Also very spice driven and freshly tilled earth also comes to mind.

Pallet: Great elegance and plushness on the pallet, while the sweet fruit and toffee flavors still linger and continue to develop, intertwined with a fresh and focused acidity that is the perfect closing statement for this great wine!

This Carménère has had our attention from the start and throughout its life it has continued to surprise with its deft aromatics and complexities. Definitely a variety to watch for the future.

Analysis:

Alc: 13.5% pH: 3.59 TA: 5.6 g/l VA: 0.86 g/l RS: 2.5 g/l