



# Grüner Veltliner

2026

## TERROIR & SITE

Grüner Veltliner is Austria's most widely planted grape variety and one of Central Europe's great white grapes. Its roots are commonly traced back to Roman times, and it has endured centuries of European upheaval to become a defining Austrian variety. The style can range from light and peppery to deeply textured, age-worthy wines with the stature to stand alongside serious Chardonnay. Citrus and white peach are typical, joined by the variety's signature peppery spice and, at times, a subtle tobacco-leaf savouriness.

The grapes for this rare South African expression originate from a small block in Kapteinskloof, near Piketberg in the western reaches of the Swartland. Although the broader Swartland is known for heat and dry conditions, Kapteinskloof is a deep, enclosed valley. This particular block is sheltered from much of the midday sun and from the late-afternoon sun, creating a distinctly cooler mesoclimate and allowing a slower, more measured ripening curve. It is precisely the kind of site that gives us the opportunity to explore how this remarkable European variety can speak in a South African voice.

## HARVEST CONDITIONS

The 2026 Swartland season followed a cold winter with excellent chill accumulation, although winter rainfall reached only around 60-70% of the long-term norm. Because the rainfall events were evenly spread, soils were replenished sufficiently and bud break was generally uniform. Warm conditions in November and December encouraged strong early growth and good fertility, while the dry season produced smaller berries and naturally concentrated flavours.

January and February were comparatively moderate, with fewer hours above 35 °C than is usual for the Swartland. Light rain and drizzle in mid-February briefly slowed the pace before a severe March heatwave accelerated the final stages of the regional harvest. White cultivars generally showed generous fruit expression, while natural acidities were lower across the district. In Kapteinskloof, the cool, sheltered position of the Grüner Veltliner block helped protect freshness and allowed flavour, texture and spice to build without losing definition.

## VINIFICATION METHOD

The wine was made as simply and transparently as possible. A portion of the stalks was retained during fermentation, bringing an additional savoury, peppery spice and a fine structural edge to the wine. Fermentation occurred naturally in a single seasoned 300 L neutral French oak barrel. The vessel was chosen as a quiet fermentation environment rather than as a source of oak flavour, allowing the character of the variety and the Kapteinskloof fruit to remain at the centre of the wine.

Only one barrel was made. Working on this scale allowed us to follow the wine closely and preserve the remarkable weight and texture that developed naturally through fermentation, with minimal intervention.

## TASTING NOTES

**COLOUR** Bright straw-gold with a subtle green glint.

**NOSE** Fruit-driven yet detailed, opening with ripe lemon, yellow citrus and white peach, followed by pear skin, cracked white pepper and gentle dried spice. A restrained tobacco-leaf note and faint savoury herb character sit beneath the fruit, giving the nose both warmth and intrigue.

**PALATE** Broad, full and deeply textural. Peach and ripe citrus fill the mouth, while the partial stalk fermentation contributes peppery spice, a fine pithy grip and a gently savoury line. The scale of the wine is striking, yet the fresh acidity keeps the palate composed and carries the flavours into a long, layered finish.

This single-barrel Grüner Veltliner captures exactly why Pilgrim seeks out varieties beyond the familiar. It is something genuinely different: expansive, flavoursome and texturally compelling, yet still true to the citrus, stone-fruit and spice that define the grape. Wines like this broaden our understanding of flavour expression and remind us how much possibility remains unexplored. We are both amazed and humbled to have had the opportunity to make it.

## ANALYSIS

|               |             |                |      |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|------|
| ALCOHOL       | 12.5 % Vol. | PH             | 3.37 |
| TOTAL ACIDITY | 6.3 g/L     | RESIDUAL SUGAR | 2.0  |

BOTTLED July 2026 · PRODUCTION One 300 L barrel