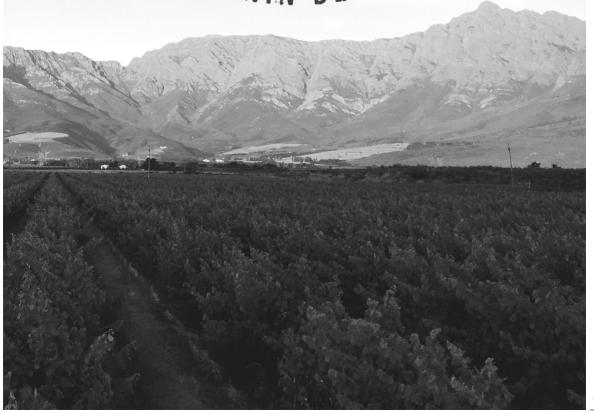
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BREEDEKLOOF

on MAKERS on

CHENIN BLANC



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Breedekloof Makers

Over the years the Breedekloof Wine Valley has established itself as an area for slow ripening vines. Key to this is the late bud break and long hanging time on the vines. The geography, climate, mountains, rivers and varied geology all contribute to a unique winemaking potential, essentially establishing the area as perfect for producing Chenin Blanc.

Chenin Blanc represents 18% of all South Africa's vineyards and the Breedekloof Wine Valley has 16% of all Chenin Blanc plantings and supplies 21% or one-fifth of all the wine made from Chenin in South Africa.

The varietal has found its true home in this region, with deep alluvial soils containing smooth river pebbles, which is ideally suited to Chenin Blanc. Chenin Blanc is probably the world's most versatile variety, ideally suited to many wine styles. This has prompted the Breedekloof winemakers to produce small quantities of Chenin Blanc using innovative winemaking methods and expressing terroirs, especially old vineyards, which has resulted in the Breedekloof Chenin Blanc Initiative.



@BreedeMakers / @Breedekloof_Wine_Valley #Anderkantdieberg #BreedeChenin

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State of the Breedekloof Chenin Blanc:

Winemakers take an optimistic view on vintage 2017.

WRITTEN BY MARTHÉLIZE TREDOUX

They have a saying in Afrikaans that rings "hier kom 'n ding" – generally meaning that something major is about to happen. When asked about the state of Chenin Blanc in the Breeekloof Wine Valley in 2017, Nicolaas Rust from Daschbosch, one of the key producers said: "Keep an eye on the Breedekloof – hier kom 'n ding!"

Judging from feedback from wine producers in the Valley, this major development is the quality of Chenin Blanc that the Breedekloof producers have in their cellars.

This is a statement that should bring joy to Chenin Blanc lovers everywhere:

Over 50% of the world's Chenin Blanc is grown in South Africa, and 18% of all Chenin Blanc plantings in South Africa are found in the Breedekloof Valley, and the wineries here produce a fifth of all the Chenin Blanc made in the country. It therefore follows that the state of Chenin Blanc in this valley goes on to set the tone for determining the quality of grape, nationally.

It is safe to say that these winemakers truly have a handle on crafting this cultivar.

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This dedication to Chenin Blanc led to the formation of the Breedekloof Makers – winemakers from the area, focused on advancing and promoting their exceptional quality wines made in the region and crafting small, boutique and limited volume productions of Chenin Blanc.

With the 2017 harvest long since wrapped up, and the grapes quietly resting in tanks and barrels, there is time to take a moment and look back on the excitement – at times even frenzy – of the past harvest.

Most - if not all - of our wine regions, offers positive speculations about the astounding quality and potential of this vintage. The Breedekloof Valley, and the Chenin Blanc from Breedekloof Makers has not escaped this selfsame speculation.

Talking to a few of the Breedekloof Makers gave a few insights on the harvest that was, and a few made a daring glimpse into the crystal ball to predict the place of the 2017 vintage in history.

In broad strokes, the harvest was challenging for many – for several reasons. A slow, somewhat late start in some areas coupled with an early ending, shortened the harvest period considerably. This put a lot of pressure on the cellar to deal with the incoming grapes efficiently to avoid a backlog. The shortened window kept the cellar teams on their toes, but everyone seems to have come out shining, with no major problems reported.

Despite various complications, the grapes were healthy and the dry conditions ensured low or no instances of Botrytis. The dry conditions presented their own demands though, with water management challenging the vineyards. Good vineyard practices ensured pristine grape quality and minimised plant stress. High natural acidity and incredible fruit purity seem to be characteristics of this year's crops, especially in the white wines. Attie Louw from Opstal is satisfied with the harvest in the Slanghoek valley: "Quality has been consistently good for most cultivars, with acids high at the time of picking. These higher natural acids bring a freshness and fruit purity to the wines, which is something the valley's white wines are especially known for."

For some winemakers, asking them to choose between red and white wine is like asking them to choose between their children. Similarly, this year they insist that both red and white are showing amazing potential, though the white wines seem to be pulling ahead ever so slightly.

The resounding consensus is that this year, Chenin Blanc is set to be the superstar of the vintage. Lieza van der Merwe from Merwida describes the white wines as "stellar".

"The Chenin Blanc wines are particularly good this season. They are bursting with flavour – passion fruit in particular – and are a definite improvement on 2016."

The resounding consensus is that this year, Chenin Blanc is set to be the superstar of the vintage, showing complexity, balance, fruit-forward characteristics and notable aging potential. Many of these attributes are also seen in other cultivars, with Sauvignon Blanc getting a few special mentions as a varietal to watch. Some lesser-known gems are also set to make an appearance this year, with Opstal looking forward to their first ever vintage of Roussanne.

It is often said that the harvest is truly created in the preceding year, and the year leading up to this harvest was certainly not without problems.

The upper Breedekloof escaped most of the harsh weather conditions, with even less wind than they are used to, which led to a welcome decrease in the expected wind damage. Other areas were less fortunate, with black frost affecting many vineyards during October 2016. The frost was relatively widespread, with a few isolated vineyards severely hit. On average, yields saw a 12-15% loss compared to previous years, though there were farms that experienced a much higher percentage of loss.

There were also a number of wildfires in the Breedekloof Valley, but vineyards were mostly spared, with no notable damage from either fire or smoke taint.

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The continuing drought had a mixed effect on the harvest. Bergsig reported their usual issue of wet soil (which limits root proliferation) was not a problem this year due to the dry conditions. This led to a direct improvement in vineyard health and grape quality.

With the drought in mind, many wineries were proactive. Stofberg Family Vineyards worked to prepare their vineyards by systematically decreasing irrigation to prevent the vines suffering shock during water shortages.

The dry conditions ultimately brought a decrease in total yield, but an increase in concentration of flavours within the berries, which is a boon for total wine quality. The concern now is about the ability of the vineyards to recover and replenish, with sufficient rainfall in the coming winter season crucial to ensuring the longevity and health of the vines.

Compared to the 2016 vintage, this year seems to bring a fuller style of wines, possibly with more complexity.

Looking ahead, the winemakers are cautiously optimistic, although they largely refrain from making bold claims about the future of this vintage, but when pressed, most seem delighted at the potential patiently developing in their cellars.

Analysis of the wines suggest a prodigious aging potential, largely thanks to the high natural acid and balanced sugars.

Watch this space: Hier kom 'n ding!

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Badsberg

CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES:

Straw coloured with elegant soft aromas of tropical fruit with an oak undertow. Well balanced palate and excellent structure. Fresh and fruity with a crisp finish.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

Fermented in new French oak barrels. Then matured on lees for further 5 months. The grapes were harvested middle February at 22.5° Balling. Yield: 11 tons/ha.

TERROIR:

Climate: Mediterranean

Rainfall: 800mm - 1000mm per year

Soil: Rock, hill

Trellis system: Extended Perold

Irrigation: Drip

Cellar price: R110.00

Analysis 2015: Alc: 12.83% | RS: 4.5 g/l | TA: 6.1 g/l | pH: 3.17

www.badsberg.co.za | +27 23 344 3021

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Bergsig Estate

CHENIN BLANC RESERVE



TASTING NOTES:

Rich aroma of dried apricots and ripe citrus complemented by a touch of wood. This is an elegant, yet complex wine with excellent maturation potential. The full creamy texture of this wine makes it a great food companion.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

Handpicked early in the morning from single vineyard on 20 February 2016. Left on the lees for 60 days for added complexity. A careful approach to wood maturation was followed, and meticulously tried and tested to ensure optimum elegance and mouthfeel. The wine was fermented and matured for 12 months in a combination of new and used 300f barrels.

TERROIR:

Mediterranean climate with \pm 980mm rainfall per year. The Estate is located on the upper slopes of the Breede River Valley at 240 to 350m above sea level. Winters are cold with snow until late in Spring. Temperatures during Spring are low resulting in slower ripening. Harvest usually starts 2-3 weeks later than other wine areas. Significant temperature variation with warm days ensures good sugar development while the drop in temperature at night preserves the balance of natural acids in the grapes. The soil is defined by a major geological fault, the Worcester Fault, which runs through the valley. Hills are composed of weathered sandstone and the valley floor is sedimented by a diversity of soil parent materials.

Cellar price: **R145.00**

Analysis 2016: Alc: 14.7% | RS: 2.5 g/l | TA: 5.6 g/l | pH: 3.6

www.bergsig.co.za | +27 23 355 1603

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Botha Kelder

BARREL FERMENTED BUSH VINE CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES:

Vibrant green-gold colour with multidimensional aromas of lemon, ripe peach, spring flowers and Breedekloof sunshine! Rich and mouth-filling, but very elegant with a smooth creme brulée and caramelized nut finish.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

Grapes were handpicked, destemmed and crushed, and spent 28 days in 60% first-fill barrels. Fermented in barrel and then maturated on the lees for a further 10 months.

TERROIR:

Fern wood- sandy with medium organic content 12 tons/Ha Bush Vines 24 years dry land.

Cellar price: R75.00

Analysis 2014: Alc: 14.97% | RS: 2.3 g/l | TA: 6.0 g/l | pH: 3.58

www.bothakelder.co.za | +27 23 355 1740

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Daschbosch

STEEN



TASTING NOTES:

Distinctive notes of yellow apple alongside with green melon and lime on the nose. This wine is beautifully structured on the palate, bursting with fresh yellow and white fruit flavours and finishes subtly, yet distinctive.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

Fermented in 3rd and 4th fill barrels for about three weeks with commercial as well as wild yeast. The wine was left on the thick lees for 6 months and matured in barrel for 8 months. Sorting of grapes, de-stemmed and crushed, cold soaking and slow fermentation at 13-15 °C to enhance flavours and colour.

TERROIR:

Age of vines 25 years. Rootstock: R110 and Paulsen. Vineyards grow in Glenrosa soil.

Cellar price: R130.00

Analysis 2016: Alc: 14.4% | RS: 3.0 g/l | TA: 6.5 g/l | pH: 3.33

www.uniwines.co.za | +27 23 349 1110

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Deetlefs

RESERVE CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES:

Aromas of pineapple, granadilla, apricots and butterscotch complemented by subtle oak spiciness. Aromas carry through to the palate with the pineapple and apricots dominating. Good balance between fruit and oak. This wine has a long and smooth, creamy finish.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

Vine canopies were left open to expose bunches and leaves to sunlight and ensure fruit-driven wines. Fermentation was started in a stainless steel tank and was finished in barrels. 100% of the wine was matured on full lees in French barrels (60%) and Hungarian barrels (40%) for 10 months with regular stirring of lees. The barrel regime was comprised of 20% new barrels, 40% second fill and 40% 3rd fill barrels. Only 500° barrels were used to optimise balance between fruit and oak flayours.

TERROIR:

Alluvial soil with high loam content. Moderate Mediterranean climate. Vineyard area is 3.25ha and yields at 8.4 ton per hectare. Vines are 28 years-old.

Cellar price: R175.00

Analysis 2015: Alc: 13.31% | RS: 3.0 g/l | TA: 6.1 g/l | pH: 3.31

www.deetlefs.com | +27 0 23 349 1260

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Jason's Hill

BEATRIX BARREL FERMENTED CHENIN BLANC 2016

TASTING NOTES:

A wine of profound complexity with hints of honey, lemon and white fruit, showing lots of bright natural acidity and a slight creamy texture. Build to age.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

Grapes were hand harvested at 23 Balling and sorted, skin contact was allowed for 12 hours. Only free run juice used, and then settled and inoculated with yeast in stainless steel tank. It was then fermented in stainless steel tank down to 15 Balling and then transferred to new 300lt Hungarian oak barrels where it fermented dry and left on lees. Batonage was done the first 3 months and left for 13 months in barrel before bottling. Aged in bottle for 3 months before release. The acidity of this wine is natural acidity and was not adjusted in the winery.



TERROIR:

Vineyards planted on a slope with a northerly aspect, on North-West and South-East slopes in Slanghoek Valley. Clone SN24 planted inPlanted in colluvium soils. Age of vines average 13 years.

Cellar price: R180.00

Analysis 2016: Alc: 13% | RS: 3.4 g/l | TA: 6.5 g/l | pH: 3.4

www.jasonshill.co.za | +27 23 344 3256

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Lateganskop

THE ZAHIR



TASTING NOTES:

A delicately layered wine with good complexity and a balanced acidity. It shows subtle tones of citrus and banana with some dried peach flavors on the palate. The wine is lightly wooded and finishes with a nuttiness and hints of coconut.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

Made from hand-selected selected grapes from a block of bush vines that are 23 years-old. The grapes were cold soaked for two days and then fermented in small oak barrels. Spontaneous fermentation was used and most of the barrels went through malolactic fermentation.

Cellar price: R130.00

Analysis 2016: Alc: 11.77% | RS: 6.1 g/l | TA: 3.5 g/l | pH: 3.52

www.lateganskop.co.za | +27 82 378 3575

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Merwida Family Vintners

CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES:

This silky, fruit driven wine has prominent passion fruit flavours and a lingering, slightly oaked aftertaste from fermentation in 3rd fill French oak barrels.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

This is the winery first premium 'estate' wine - with 100% of the Fairtrade-accredited grapes sourced from the farm's vines (W.O. Breedekloof). The crop for this wine was harvested from a block of 15-year-old vines. Winemaker experimented with some extended skin and lees contact before transferring it to stainless steel tanks. Midway through fermentation it was transferred to first-, second- and third-fill French oak barrels. For lighter wood influence, cellar practices include use of some bigger 500° French oak barrels.

TERROIR:

Glenrosa and Sandstone.

Moderate Mediterranean climate. Vineyard area is 20ha and yields at 18 ton per hectare.

Cellar price: R120.00

Analysis 2016: Alc: 14.21% | RS: 3.0 g/l | TA: 5.8 g/l | pH: 3.38

www.merwida.com | +27 23 349 1144

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Olifantsberg

CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES:

The nose shows hints of crisp apples, pineapple and stone fruit with subtle oak notes. Rich and full of coated acidity and good depth of fruit. A wine rich in character and depth.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

All the grapes are hand harvested and cooled down overnight in a temperature controlled cold room. Bunch sorting takes place to select only the best grapes. Fermentation in French oak 2000 °C foudres to give this wine its beautiful depth. The wine is aged on its full lees in French oak barrels for 9 months to add to the complexity and mouthfeel.

TERROIR:

The grapes are grown using sustainable viticulture from older vines (average 35-year-old bush vines) in unique sites to create a wine with concentration of flavour.

Cellar price: R90.00

Analysis 2015: Alc: 13.5% | RS: 3.6 g/l | TA: 5.0 g/l | pH: 3.48

www.olifantsberg.com | +27 76 474 8232

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Opstal Carl Everson

CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES:

The beauty of this wine is even though it stays the same each year (as it's harvested from the same Single Vineyard classified block on the farm), each year is different. The 2016 vintage shows some restraint at first, even a bit shy, but then opens up to show quince and pineapple notes with a freshness and finesse ever present on the palate as yellow peach flavours run through your mouth.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

As were the case in 2015, the 2016 ripening and harvest season was a very dry and healthy one which actually proved a challenge for spontaneous fermented wines. The yeast populations in the vineyard were smaller and available nutrients (food for yeast cells) also less. As a result of this patience was key (lots of patience...) as alcoholic fermentation only finished after 8 months in the barrel where after the wine spent a further 2 months in those old French barrels (400 & 500L), before bottling in January 2017.

TERROIR:

The Slanghoek Valley has an average annual rainfall in excess of 1200mm over the last 10 years. With ice cold winters and dry, hot summers our Chenin has the optimum growing environment in a soil that is in total balance and mostly self-reliant.

Cellar price: R175.00

Analysis 2016: Alc: 13.9% | RS: 3.4 g/l | TA: 5.4 g/l | pH: 3.6

www.opstal.co.za | +27 23 344 3001

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Slanghoek

LEGENDS BARREL FERMENTED CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES:

A full-bodied wine that shows refined fruit expressions of pineapple, lime and apricots interlaced with nuances of butterscotch on the nose. Fermented and aged in 100% new French oak barrels that complement a lingering velvety finish on the palate. Only 500 bottles made.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

This wine showcases the efforts of the winemaking team in the vineyard and in the cellar to craft an elegant and perfectly balanced product. Grapes were harvested at 23.8°B. Fermented and aged in 100% new French Oak Barrels. Batonage was done twice a month for the first 3 months, thereafter once monthly. Total time in barrel, 16 months.

TERROIR:

Well drained Clovelly soils. Yields at 16 ton a hectare. These vineyards are trellised and 28 years old.

Cellar price: R190.00

Analysis 2015: Alc: 13.36% | RS: 4.7 g/l | TA: 5.9 g/l | pH: 3.63

www.slanghoek.co.za | +27 23 344 3026

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Stofberg Family Vineyards

MARIËTTE CHENIN BLANC



TASTING NOTES:

A pale straw colour with a bright golden tinge. Soft floral and tropical fruit aromas such as honeysuckle and melon on the nose, as well as lightly wooded elegance with undertones of vanilla and spice. The palate is loaded with stone fruit, figs and a hintt citrus, which culminate in a crisp acidity and long finish. A truly well-balanced beauty that makes this the winemaker's choice.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES:

The grapes are hand-harvested during the morning and then cooled before 60% of them are lightly crushed and pressed, the rest is pressed whole bunch. The free-run juice was allowed to settle overnight at 8°Celsius using pectolytic enzymes. The juice is covered with carbon dioxide blankets to prevent oxidation. The wine is then inoculated and fermentation took place in 225 litre Burgundy barrels at a constant temperature of 18 - 20°C for approximately 15 days.

TERROIR:

Well drained Clovelly soils. Vineyards are trellised and 33 years old. Back in the eighties the plant material got mixed up because the block consists of two different clones. We marked the clone with the open bunches which do not rot and only use that for this special wine. The experts believe it is the first plant material of the now popular clone 24.

Cellar price: R175.00

Analysis 2015: Alc: 14.36% | RS: 4.9 g/l | TA: 7.50 g/l | pH: 3.03

www.stofbergfamilyvineyards.co.za | +27 82 867 6958

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FOR ORDERS CONTACT:

Melody Botha

CEO: Breedekloof Wine & Tourism

E-mail: melody@breedekloof.com

Phone: +27 (0) 23 349 1791 / Mobile: +27 (0) 83 639 3138

www.breedekloof.com



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