



LE VIN DE FRANÇOIS

20 OCTOBER 2012

Launch of 2011 Le Vin de François
Cape Winelands



Tasting Note Le Vin de François 2011

"Typical dark ruby-red colour. A bold and attractive nose of ripe berries, plum pudding and black cherry with whiffs of chocolate and spicy oak. The palate is complex, rich and juicy with fruit conserve, sweet spice and ripe plums all coming to mind. The perfect combination of sweet fruit and ample soft tannins makes this wine very drinkable when young, without sacrificing the maturation potential needed to develop it even further into something 'magic'."

Alc: 14,72 vol% T/A: 5,53 g/l pH: 3,60 R/S: 2,05 g/l

Vintage Report 2011

The 2011 season was characterized by considerable climatic fluctuations, especially unremitting drought and heat throughout summer. What appeared to be a large crop early in the season, systematically shrunk, also due to cold conditions during flowering and a windy December. Large-scale flood damage along the Orange River also impacted on the wine crop.

2010/11 Growing Season

The post-harvest period was dry and the 2010 Winter arrived late, with the first noteworthy showers occurring in May only. Both minimum and average temperatures at the end of May and beginning of June sufficed to ensure good bud burst. June rainfall was higher than the long-term average, whereas it was lower from July to September. Maximum and minimum temperatures were above average during this period, with the exception of July and August when minimum temperatures were lower. Bud burst was generally about one week earlier than in 2009 - depending on vineyard location - and proved to be even. The start of the growing season was cool, with quite a few overcast days and regular showers which required preventative spraying programmes due to fungal prevalence. Fortunately none of the customary gale force winds prevailed early in the season and the grapevines were able to flourish. December was characterized by a warm and dry climate with the most wind in 42 years. Early January was very hot with heatwave conditions and one of the driest seasons experienced in Stellenbosch in many years, which persisted in February and March.

The Harvest

During the warm, dry ripening period several cultivars ripened simultaneously, thereby placing severe pressure on cellar capacity at times - with the result that cellar managers and winemakers in particular were thoroughly challenged. Early and midseason cultivars ripened more or less at the usual time, while warm and dry climatic conditions caused later cultivars in general to be crushed earlier than usual. Grapes harvested at the beginning of the season had good analysis, especially in respect of pH. Good wine quality were expected from these early cultivars, in particular Pinotage. Average to above-average crops were obtained in the Stellenbosch area, with smaller berry sizes than previously, which had a positive effect on quality.

The Wines

The quality of the red wines in general looks very promising with better colour than anticipated. There are very few green flavours thanks to the warmer ripening period. Despite a difficult year for the producers, the smaller berry sizes in red grapes resulted in intense colour, soft tannins and good structure.

It was another challenging year where our producers once again delivered amazing components for our 2011 wine!

Tasting notes of the different Component Wines:

(All from Vintage 2011) Alphabetical order

1. Beyerskloof Pinotage (Anri Truter) (Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

Two wines from the home of the "red leaf" this year. The first wine, from 14-year old trellised Pinotage planted on the famous deep gravel soils in the Bottelary hills area. Handpicked at optimum ripeness and fermented in traditional open casks with punch downs every two hours. After MLF the wine matured in a new 'tight grain' small French oak barrel for 13 months.

"Very deep colour with an intense nose of ripe black fruit and sweet cookie dough. On the palate there's a complex array of flavours like black cherries, ripe plums, spice & mocha all intertwined with well integrated wood and perfectly balanced tannins"

The second, from 14-year old bush-vines, also from the Bottelary hills area outside Stellenbosch. Crop reduction done on this block by leaving only one bunch per shoot to intensify colour and mid-palate flavour. Matured in a second fill French oak barrel to retain the fruitiness for 13 months.

"Intense deep colour with a nose of fresh berries and Ribena. The lovely juicy fruit on the palate together with perfectly integrated wood gives a long aftertaste and an elegant dry tannic finish"

2. Delheim Pinotage (Brenda van Niekerk) (Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

For a record 5th time in the blend from the famous Protea block planted on Vera Cruz - the family's prime Estate for red wines. This 16-year old bush-vine block nestled on the lower slopes of the Klapmuts-kop, looks directly onto Table Mountain in the distance. Made in the Delheim cellar and matured for 17 months in two new 225 litre French barriques - one from Vicard and the other from Taransaud.

Vicard: "Deep colour with lots of dark fruit, cigarbox and hints of vanilla oak on the nose. Ripe plummy fruit combined with coffee & mocha flavours gives a complex taste which is rounded off by well integrated tannins"

Taransaud: "Similar deep colour with slightly more fruit, some 'fynbos' and less oak on the nose. The intense palate shows black cherry, ripe plums and black-berry with perfectly integrated wood and a long, well balanced aftertaste"

3. Kanonkop Pinotage (Abrie Beeslaar) (Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

Another wine from these 45-year old, dry-land bush-vines growing on the upper slopes of the Simonsberg mountain. Planted at 250-300 metres above sea level, to catch the cool evening breezes of the nearby Atlantic Ocean. Fermented in traditional open fermenters with two-hourly punch-downs over a period of 4 days. Matured in a new small French oak barrel for a period of 16 months.

"Deep crimson colour as always. Typical intense Pinotage fruit with a touch of perfume on the nose. The complex and intense palate of dark fruits and spice combines perfectly with the well integrated wood flavours and structured ripe tannins to ensure a long and lingering finish"

4. Lanzerac Pinotage (Wynand Lategan) (Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

Also here for the 5th time and with three different components.

The first two, from the same vineyard grown high up on the North-Western slopes of the Bothmaskop mountain in the Jonkershoek valley. No.1 - Made in the traditional way and matured in a new 300 litre French oak barrel to retain purity of fruit; and No.2 - 'Naturally' fermented for more complexity and matured in a new 225 litre French oak barrel for 16 months.

300 litre: "Deep ruby colour. A mixture of ripe plums, black- and red berries with slight whiffs of dried banana. Lovely intense fruit on the palate with soft ripe tannins that gives a long and elegant aftertaste"

225 litre: "Intense ruby red colour. Complex nose of ripe black fruits and herbs with a touch of oak. The palate is full and intense with black cherries, blackberry and spice all coming to mind. The well integrated wood and firm tannins gives a long and lingering aftertaste - a 'great' component!"

The third wine originates from one of the highest vineyard blocks on the Northern slopes of the Bottelary Hills. Old bush-vines exposed to the wind that produces low yields of deeply flavoured grapes. Made in the Lanzerac cellar, also with 'natural' fermentation and after MLF in a new 'thin stave' 225 litre French barrique, matured for a further 15 months.

"Deep inky colour with sweet berry-fruit, vanilla oak and dried apricots on the nose. Sweet juicy fruit and spicy oak fills the mouth and are complemented by fine balanced tannins"

5. L'Avenir Pinotage (Tinus Els) (Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

The last of the "fabulous three" that have made it into the final blend every year! Again from the oldest bush-vine block which I planted 19 years ago, looking over the picturesque town of Stellenbosch. Situated on a South-Western slope at an altitude of 200 metres above sea level to benefit from the cooling effect of the evening sea breezes from the nearby Atlantic Ocean. Low-yielding vines ensure small berries with intense flavours. Matured in a new small French oak barrel for 15 months.

"Deep & dark intense purple red. Lovely mix of black- and red berries, spice and chocolate on the nose. A big wine, rich & ripe in character, full of flavour with notes of coffee and chocolate and supported by a firm tannin structure. Gives 'backbone' to the blend"

6. Simonsig Pinotage (Johan Malan) (Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

The fourth wine from this famous brand to 'make the cut'. From a 16-year old bush vine block, planted on weathered shale soil. Bleeding of the juice was done at 79L/ton to enhance concentration and taken to an open top fermenter. Inoculation took place after two days of cold soaking and punch downs were done every two hours and towards the end every three hours. MLF occurred in a small second fill French oak barrel where the wine matured for a total of 17 months.

"Typical dark red Pinotage colour with plums and berry fruit on the nose. The wine shows lots of juicy fruit, well integrated wood flavours and soft tannins with superb balance. This component brought a lot of elegance to the blend"

François Naudé

François, a proud old "Affies" boy qualified and then practised as a pharmacist for 18 years in his home town of Pretoria, before making the break to Stellenbosch and turning a passionate hobby into an extremely successful career. He first tried his hand at winemaking in 1991 and joined L'Avenir Estate in 1992.

This past chairman of Les Chevaliers du Tastevin de Pretoria (one of the first wine Guilds in South Africa & currently the oldest) and self-taught winemaker has used his unerring instinct and skills as a pharmacist to take on the best winemakers in the world and has proved himself their equal.

He has earned many awards and collected an enthusiastic following at home and abroad, where he has excelled in competitions such as the Chardonnay du Monde and the International Wine and Spirit Competition in London, from which he has brought home the Perold Trophy (for the best Pinotage in the world) three times.

François' L'Avenir Pinotage have also been a winner in the ABSA Top 10 Competition for a record 7 times.

Since his retirement as full time winemaker, he has become a consultant for some of the top wineries in the country and has exclusive access to some of the top Pinotage production for his creation Le Vin de François. Over the past five years since it's launch it has gained the reputation as one of the best, if not the best and most exclusive Pinotages in the world.

He is an honorary member of the prestigious Cape Wine Makers Guild, after 10 year's active involvement where his wines made it to the 'Auction' every year!

He is also an honorary member of The Pinotage Association and is the current Chairman of the Stellenbosch Wine Circle (the second oldest wine Guild in S.A.)

Last year the "magic man" as he is often referred to, launched two new ranges of family wines under the "nuts about" and "The Wingnut" labels to complete the picture in the Chateau Naudé Wine Creation stable.



The wing nut symbolizes the actions of the founder - clamping together ideals of his family with different wines from a variety of terroirs to create a product that contains all the properties of something great, unique, exclusive and a touch of 'magic'!

FRANÇOIS NAUDÉ

