

LAUNCH OF LE VIN DE FRANÇOIS 12TH VINTAGE:

14 April 2020 - Vintage 2018



Tasting Note:

A deep crimson colour and a nose of sweet black fruit like ripe cherries, ripe plum pudding and a touch of marzipan that is echoed on the palate. The fine tannins are perfectly balanced with well integrated wood flavours, that ensures a long and lasting aftertaste.

A great wine that will benefit continuously with perfect maturation over many years.

Wine Analysis:

Alc: 14,6 Vol %
pH: 3,47

T/A: 5,5 g/l
R/S: 2,6 g/l

Harvest Report:

The 2018 SA Wine Harvest was characterised as "Big challenges in the vineyard, big surprises in the cellar". The overall harvest was 15% smaller than

2017, although it was initially expected to be even smaller. Francois Viljoen, the manager of Vinpro's viticultural consultation service, said it was really challenging, due to prolonged drought which some believed to be the worst in 100 years and accompanied by water restrictions and frost damage in some areas. All regions in Le Vin de François' component suppliers reported a smaller wine crop. The dry weather throughout the season did however have its advantages as wines were healthy with little or no pests and diseases being recorded in most regions. The smaller berries which had a negative effect on crop levels, had a positive effect on very good colour and flavour intensity & this along with cooler weather during harvest time relieved some pressure on vines. The ongoing drought resulted in very challenging times for Pinotage producers in the

Cape – to put it mildly. Smaller berries, lighter bunches and lower yields will characterise the 2018 harvest, BUT the quality of the grapes were very promising – exceptional even in all our cases!

2017/2018 Growing Season:

Many areas kept their leaves for longer than usual in the past harvest period which was beneficial for the accumulation of reserves for the coming season. Winter arrived late in most regions and day temperatures were notably warmer and night temperatures colder than usual due to the dry conditions. Bud burst started later due to cooler weather and uneven flowering and berry set was common due to windy conditions, cold periods and precipitation in most areas. After slow shoot growth initially, vines picked up the pace as temperatures rose towards the end of November. The rest of the growing season and harvest were notably cooler than normal and the Harvest time kicked off seven to 14 days later in most regions.

The Harvest:

Although it was significantly smaller than 2017; the smaller berries which resulted in exceptional grapes with great tannin structure, good fruit extracts, fantastic colour and flavour, turned out to be a brilliant year for Pinotage, especially in our area. Abrie Beeslaar from Kanonkop concluded that "while the drought had made for challenging times, it was heartening to see how well the Pinotage vines were handling the adverse weather conditions – a true testament to how well this uniquely South African cultivar has adapted to the environment."

The Wines:

A great vintage for all our great component suppliers! Making the best of all the challenges and using the benefits of small & sound healthy berries, to produce fantastic wines for me and my son to pick from, to be able to deliver another fantastic vintage of the Le Vin de François, to end off our first dozen vintages of this unique family wine!

TASTING NOTES & INFORMATION OF THE DIFFERENT "COMPONENT WINES" & THEIR TERROIRS (ALL FROM 2018 VINTAGE IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)



1. Beyerskloof Pinotage:

WINEMAKER: ANRI TRUTER / W.O. STELLENBOSCH

Two barrels from the same 21 year old bush-vine block grown on the gravelly soils of Bottelary – delivering small berries this year. The first from a new special Nadalie barrel and matured for 15 months.

"Lovely fruit with a touch of oak on the nose – Full-flavoured and good wood integration with an intense aftertaste" The second from a new Vicard barrel with MLF in barrel and approximately 17 months in barrel. "Soft fruit on nose with well integrated oak. The palate is complex with soft and rounded tannins from the longer maturation in wood"

2. Delheim Pinotage:

WINEMAKER: ROELOF LOTRIET / W.O. STELLENBOSCH

From my favourite 21 year old Protea Pinotage block grown on the farm's Vera Cruz vineyard, made at Delheim and matured in a variety of new French oak barrels until perfect for blending.

"Deep intense dark colour. Lovely nose with touches of oak and dark fruit. The palate is full of fruit with a hint of savoury pepperiness mixed with touches of oak and tannins on the finish"

3. Grangehurst Pinotage:

WINEMAKER: JEREMY WALKER / W.O. STELLENBOSCH

From Jeremy's old and trusted block in the outskirts of Stellenbosch towards Somerset West. Matured in an older French oak barrel for 1½ years before catching my attention.

"Beautiful sweet Pinotage fruit and potpourri on nose, perfectly intertwined with subtle oak aromas. The palate is full of fruit, well balanced with a long and intense aftertaste."

4. Kanonkop Pinotage:

WINEMAKER: ABRIE BEESLAAR / W.O. STELLENBOSCH

Two slightly differently toasted new Vicard French oak barrels. Originating from the same 25 year old bush-vine block high up on the mountain to benefit from the cool evening sea breezes.

"Very deep in colour. Dark purple fruit with a touch of lead pencil on the nose. A full flavoured wine with complex fruit and tannins well integrated to ensure a long and intense aftertaste, beautifully balanced with the structure of the wine"



5. Lanzerac Pinotage:

WINEMAKER: WYNAND LATEGAN / W.O. STELLENBOSCH

A special new Vicard Chat Ferre barrel that received the wine which was fermented in a wooden tub before being pumped to the barrel for MLF and further maturation.

"Sweet fruit and subtle oak aromas on this very dark(nearly black) wine. The palate is filled with sweet fruit and integrated wood flavours with elegant tannins that ensures a lingering aftertaste"

6. L'Avenir Pinotage

WINEMAKER: DIRK COETZEE / W.O. STELLENBOSCH

Two new Vicard French oak barrels from this 'magic' farm where I learnt how to get the best from South Africa's unique Pinotage grapes. From their oldest 27 year old bush-vine block that I planted many years ago on the highest slopes of the farm overlooking the town of Stellenbosch.

"Very deep colour with ripe black cherries and blackberry jam on the nose. The wood so well integrated it is hardly noticeable. Sweet fruit with a touch of moca on the taste ends with perfectly balanced tannins and oak flavours in a long and continuous aftertaste."

7. Rijks Pinotage:

WINEMAKER: PIERRE WAHL / W.O. TULBAGH

Another two barrels from this, now famous winemaker and farm in Tulbagh. The first from an older bush-vine block, matured in a new French oak barrel with toasted heads.

"Deep red colour with excellent sweet and complex fruit on the nose and followed on the palate with well integrated oak flavours." The second, from a younger trellised vineyard and matured in a similar but 2nd fill French oak barrel. "Sweeter strawberry jam on the nose combined with the typical dark fruit aromas from Pinotage. The palate is soft and fruity with beautifully balanced flavours between the fruit and the tannins. A perfect match with the above wine"

8. Simonsig Pinotage:

WINEMAKER: DEBBIE THOMPSON / W.O. STELLENBOSCH

From the famous old Kriekbult block matured in various small French oak barrels for approximately 16 months.

"Beautiful perfumed fruit on the nose and well integrated oak characteristics. The palate shows complex fruit and spice with nuances of Strawberries and Blackberries; all perfectly balanced with the tannins, acidity and the wood"

FRANÇOIS NAUDÉ



François, the proud old "Affies" boy who qualified and then practised as a pharmacist for 18 years in his home town of Pretoria, before making the break to Stellenbosch where he turned his 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 by 2004 already.

He first retired as Full-time winemaker at the end of 2015; then as a consultant to some of the top wineries in the country in 2012, during which time he created Le Vin de François through his exclusive access to most of the top Pinotage production in South Africa. Over the last twelve years since its 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 has just retired as the Chairman after eleven years of chairing the Stellenbosch Wine Circle (the second oldest wine Guild in S.A.)

Nine years ago, 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; which was on hold for the last couple of years as his 'passion' lured him back into a permanent industry position. He eventually decided to retire at the end of 2018 when he 'called everything a day' except his passionate love called Le Vin de François, which will be the only thing, apart from his love for God, his family & dearest friends that will keep him alive until the time comes to say goodbye to this wonderful world and 'hello' to the hereafter & Heaven!



The wing nut symbolizes the Auctions of the founder - clasping 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"!

