

# CIRCUMSTANCE

## CHENIN BLANC 2020



### IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Circumstance Chenin Blanc is produced from low-yielding, bush vines, situated approximately 5 kilometers as the crow flies from the Atlantic Ocean and also overlooking the ocean. These conditions ensure a cooler and longer growing season and allow for ripe fruit with good concentration and a higher natural acidity. The soils are of sandstone origin, with medium-sized stones helping with drainage. They also have a very good ability to retain moisture. Production was approximately 2.5-3 t/ha.

On Waterkloof we farm organic and biological, producing our own compost and microbial preparations. We then distribute these by utilising our draught horses, as opposed to heavy tractors. These practices ensure loose soil with more life, where the vines can spread their roots as they please; taking up everything they need from our rich and complex earth. We believe that regenerative farming helps to produce honest, terroir-driven wines that are truly made in the vineyard.

### A GENTLE HAND

The winemaking philosophy is the same for all of Waterkloof's premium white wines. We follow a traditional, minimalistic approach which means that we interfere as little as possible with the winemaking process. This allows the flavours prevalent in that specific vineyard to be expressed in the bottle. All grapes are hand-picked to ensure that only the finest berries are brought to the cellar by our horses. We harvest according to taste and spend most of our time in the vineyards to see how the flavours develop. All grapes are sorted by hand and then whole-bunch pressed in our modern basket press to extract the juice in the gentlest way. The juice is then settled naturally for around 12 hours, after which it is racked from the settling tank into 600-liter barrels. The naturally occurring yeasts or "wild yeasts" are allowed to start the fermentation process. This leads to a longer fermentation process with a slow release of aromas and a more structured palate. The natural fermentation process took 12 months to complete. We do not employ battonage nor do we add any acid or enzymes during the winemaking process, with only a light filtration and a small addition of sulphur added as a preservative prior to bottling.

### AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE: THE 2019/2020 GROWING SEASON

The current harvest is determined by the conditions of the previous years. With this taken into account, we could see that all of our hard work in 2018 certainly paid off in this year's harvest. The leaves were still green for more than a month after picking the grapes. We welcomed a bit of rain just after the 2018 harvest, which also helped the vine to build up some much-needed reserves.

The 2018 winter was cold and the vines could go into proper dormancy. During this time, we worked hard to build up the nutrients required in the vineyard for the summer growing period. At Waterkloof we are always tweaking the processes. One example, of many, is the deep bed system, where we put plant cuttings and manure into an area that used to be aerated by chickens scratching around. This time round, the chickens were substituted by three beautiful little pigs to dig channels into the compost to turn it. This mixture was especially beneficial during the drought, as it is a rich source of carbon that improves the water retention ability of the soils.

We experienced an even budburst during a cool spring but had a lot of wind during flowering which led to uneven berry set on some of the blocks. To help the vine ripen properly, we only kept the more developed bunches on the vine.

The summer growing season was fairly cool, except for a few warmer days in October. We were also very happy to welcome some rain in January, which accompanied by the wind, led to the soil receiving good moisture without having humidity build-up on the grapes that could cause rot.

The 2019 harvest commenced the last week of January but went into full swing from the first week of February. We picked our last grapes at the end of March. On the younger blocks, the yield was down by about 10%, but the older blocks produced more or less the same.

The whites showed a lot of concentration and vibrant acidity. With the reds, we had lovely small berries with thick skins. During processing, we once again worked gently to avoid over-extracting and let Mother Nature take her course with our natural ferments.

#### TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA BARNARD

A wine that keeps me going back to my glass to appreciate notes of white pears, florals a kiss of honey and a slight hint of raisins. The palate has a great length, lovely roundness and balanced acidity that adds to the complexity. Enjoy it with a variety of foods ranging from cheddar to butter chicken.

#### THE NUMBERS (7000 bottles produced)

Alc: 14.5%

TA: 3.4g/l

pH: 5.2g/l

RS: 3.5g/l