

WATERKLOOF

SAUVIGNON BLANC 2018



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Waterkloof Sauvignon Blanc was born on the southwest facing, low-yielding and windswept slopes of Schapenberg (overlooking False Bay). Here the blustery southeaster (and sometimes the northwest wind as well) churns up the vineyards with regularity. This not only allows for a very low yield, but the flavours intensify to a flinty minerality.

We use organic and biodynamic winemaking methods and adhere to Old World, sustainable practices in our vineyards to ensure that the vines are nourished and in balance. Our soils are free of chemicals and are kept healthy by using plant extracts, fungi and bacteria from our own organic compost.

When you drive through the entrance at Waterkloof you are welcomed by work-horses, angora goats, sheep, chickens and pigs. These animals form an integrated part of Waterkloof's philosophy to always use natural alternatives to feed our soil and to work the land.

The single vineyard block which we use, is approximately four kilometers from the sea and is planted at a height of between 270 and 300 metres above sea level. The soils are of sandstone origin with medium-sized stones, helping with drainage and moisture retention. The vines are 23 years old. Production was approximately 3 tons/ha.

A GENTLE HAND

We follow a 'less is more', minimum intervention winemaking philosophy for all our wines and the grapes are tasted at regular intervals to determine optimal ripeness and flavour development.

We pick our grapes early in the morning when they are still cool, which helps to preserve the flavours. Extracting juice from the grape skins is achieved through gentle whole-bunch basket pressing. This is the most delicate way to extract the juice. After settling at a cool temperature for 24 hours, the juice is racked to the fermentation vessels. We rely only on naturally present, wild yeasts to start and complete the fermentation process.

All of the juice was fermented in older 600-liter barrels. After a very slow fermentation process of approximately 8 months, followed by an extra month on the primary lees, the wine was racked off in preparation for bottling. An extended alcoholic fermentation ensures that the juice is continuously in contact with the gross lees, adding more complexity and weight to the palate.

In keeping with our philosophy of minimum intervention, Waterkloof Sauvignon Blanc was not protein stabilized and only a coarse filtration was allowed prior to bottling. It may form tartrate crystals if left under cold conditions for a prolonged time. This has no negative effect on the quality or taste of our flagship wine; the wine can simply be decanted if any appear.

AND A FEW PRAYERS TO MOTHER NATURE: THE 2017/2018 GROWING SEASON

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Cape experienced a very dry growing season from the end of the 2017 harvest and also during the beginning of 2018. The 2017 winter was not exceptionally cold but still colder than the previous three years, which helped to ensure an even budburst. The rainfall was the lowest that we have experienced in the last 10 years on the farm.

Budburst started earlier than usual seeing that the winter was not very cold. We could see some of the first buds appear early in September. From there on the vines were struggling to grow due to the dry condition and veraison only took place in early January. The best practice during dry conditions is to always have a completely weed-free vineyard to prevent excessive water usage and to limit stress on the vine by suckering if needed- sometimes this also happens naturally.

In early January we did receive rain and also a bit in early February. We believe that this was the saving grace for our vines to help them ripen the fruit more evenly. During this time, we did not see excessive heat spikes and had lovely cool evenings which helped give the vines a longer growing season, thus allowing more complex flavours to develop in the grapes.

Harvest started about 10 days later than in 2017. We saw a decrease in berry size on some blocks. Fortunately, little to no rot was found on the grapes, which helped to have a stress-free sorting table. Overall, we are more than happy with the quality of the 2018 harvest.

TASTING NOTES FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA BARNARD

I enjoy the complexity of this wine. It is packed full of flavour and keeps me going back to my glass to appreciate more of what it has to offer. The lime and stone fruit notes are very prominent on the nose and are complemented by a lovely minerality. The palate is well-structured and nicely balanced, with the natural acidity contributing to a long finish.

THE NUMBERS (3675 bottles produced)

Alc 14%

RS 4

TA 7

VA 0.7

pH 3.04