

CIRCUMSTANCE CHENIN BLANC 2022



IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT THE VINEYARDS

Circumstance Chenin Blanc is produced from low-yielding, bush vines, situated approximately 5 kilometres 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 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 3 t/ha.

At Waterkloof, we use organic and regenerative methods based on Old World, sustainable practices in our vineyards to ensure that the vines are nourished, healthy 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. These vineyard practices, allied with a natural approach to winemaking, give us wines that truly reflect the terroir and the vintage.

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 5 months to complete and we then left the wine on the gross lees for a further 3 months. 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 – 2020/2021 GROWING SEASON

A cool season with moderate weather conditions during the 2022 harvest. This gave the vine the opportunity to reach full phenolic ripeness and develop complex flavours.

The current harvest quality is dependent on the previous Winter conditions. The 2021 Winter started early and saw proper leaf fall during the month of May. The rest of the Winter was ideal and cold but we still did not have enough rain on the farm.

On the Waterkloof farm we decide to focus on a minimum tilling approach to try and build up the natural carbon percentage in the soil. Christiaan, our farm manager, started putting chipped plant cuttings down in between the vines going 30 to 40 cm high. Over this he would spray earth worm teas which will break the plant material down into a carbon source.

The legume and wild oats cover crop will only be rolled flat- only cleaning in between the vines with the aim of preserving the carbon in the soil and increasing the water holding capacity.

Due to a cold Spring budding was delayed by 2 weeks on average. Once flowering started the vine caught up and was only about 5 days later than the average year.

Luckily during flowering, we did not see strong winds and had an even berry set in the area. From December on the vine's growth was accelerated by the warmer growing conditions. We had a few heat peaks in December and in January.

As far as I remember this was one of the longest harvests! We started getting into full swing from around the second week of February and received our last grapes in on the 23rd of March. The quality looks good- we saw little rot and reached proper phenolic ripeness at lower sugar levels leading to fresher wines with slightly lower alcohols.

A TASTING NOTE FROM THE GLASS OF NADIA LANGENEGGER

A rich and structured wine with prominent notes of white pears, fennel, florals 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 but I like to enjoy it with scallops lightly fried in butter.

THE NUMBERS (6 500 BOTTLES PRODUCED)

Alc: 14 %

RS: 3.8 g/l

TA: 4.7 g/l

pH: 3.48