



PLAISIR DE MERLE

EST. 1693

## MALBEC 2015

### CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Residual sugar: 1.6 g/l  
Alcohol: 13.64% by volume  
Total acidity: 5.8 g/l  
pH: 3.51  
TOTAL PRODUCTION:  
346 cases



Winemaker: Niel Bester  
Appellation: Paarl  
Grape Varietal: Malbec

### BACKGROUND

Established by the French Huguenots in 1693 on the slopes of the Simonsberg Mountains between Paarl and Franschhoek, Plaisir de Merle is a rare gem. A Distell showpiece, this 974-hectare estate in Simondium, Paarl, has earned international acclaim for its white and red wines. About 400 hectares are planted with a variety of noble grape cultivars such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc, Shiraz and Malbec, and an area of only about 80 hectares of prime vineyards has been set aside for the Plaisir de Merle cellar. Winemaker Niel Bester attributes the success of his wines to being able to work with great fruit coming from a very unique terrain and the invaluable input from his viticulture team.

### THE VINEYARDS

The diversity of the soils, slopes and elevations is closely linked with the quality of Plaisir de Merle wines. Well-drained weathered granite soils (predominantly Tukulu and Hutton) with good water retention allow minimal irrigation with most vineyards being dry-land and situated on the south-eastern slopes of the Simonsberg.

VITICULTURIST: Freddie le Roux

### THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were hand harvested on 24 February from a single, 17 year old vineyard situated about 270 m above sea at 24.3° Balling.

The grapes were destalked and crushed into a small stainless steel fermenter and the juice was pumped over the skins at regular intervals to extract colour, flavour and tannins. Malolactic fermentation took place in 300-litre new and second-fill French oak barrels. After racking the wine off the lees it was returned to the barrels for a total maturation period of 16 months.

### WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

COLOUR: Vibrant red

BOUQUET: Red fruit, floral notes and hints of vanilla

TASTE: Black cherries and plums blend seamlessly with sweet vanilla, soft tannins and a creamy finish.

FOOD PAIRING: This versatile wine pairs beautifully with spicy Mexican, Cajun or Indian dishes, a variety of Italian tomato-based meals, semi-hard cheeses, h barbecue meat, chilli and sausage.

AGEING POTENTIAL: Although very enjoyable now the wine will benefit from further ageing for another three to five years.