



— Professor Black 2016 —

Varietal information

The Professor Black Sauvignon Blanc is made of 96% Sauvignon Blanc grapes from the SB 317 and SB 11 clones. There is 4% Sémillon also blended into the wine for palate weight, texture and ageing ability.

Wine of origin

The Sauvignon Blanc is predominantly sourced from Warwick Estate, where we used blocks 2, 12 (which is the oldest), 16 and 24 (the youngest vines). In order to create diversity in flavour profile, we also included small parcels of high quality grapes from selected vineyards that we manage with our viticulturist in Elim, Elgin and Walker Bay.

History

Block 12 is the oldest of all the Sauvignon Blanc blocks and was planted in 1982. It was the original named Professor Black vineyard. Block 2 was planted in 1993, block 16 was planted in 1992 and block 24 was planted in 2004. The original Sauvignon Blanc vineyard was called Professor Black because it was originally planted to a type of peach called by that name. (the peach was named after Professor Black, the horticulturalist which developed the hybrid) When the late Stan Ratcliffe pulled out the peaches and planted the Sauvignon Blanc, which was pioneering at the time, many people said they could still taste peaches in the wine.

All the Sauvignon Blanc vines are on Richter 110 rootstock.

It is a rootstock that is suited to dryland farming and this rootstock was first developed in France by Franz Richter in 1889. It is a combination of *Vitis Berlandieri* and *Vitis Rupestris* and was first imported into South Africa in 1927. Richter 110 is particularly well suited to the soils of the Simonsberg and Oakleaf and Hutton being ideal.

Vintage

The youngest vines (block 24) ripened first and the grapes were harvested early in the morning of the 26th of January, ten days earlier than normal. The older vines followed shortly and all the Sauvignon Blanc grapes had been harvested by the 26th of February. The old vines on the farm have no irrigation but due to the dry, cold winter and dry summer the vines naturally yielded grapes with great concentration of flavour and a very low yield.

The 2016 growing season started out similar to the 2015 season, good reserves were accumulated during the post-harvest period in April and May after which leaf fall generally occurred at the first week in May. A cold winter led to the accumulation of sufficient cold units for the full breaking of dormancy. We had 290 mm of rain during the winter period June to August, the lowest recording since 1998. After August we had no significant rainfall and ended the season on a total rainfall of 454 mm, the lowest recorded rainfall on Warwick to date. The long term average rainfall for Warwick is 695 mm a year.

Spring was on time and the weather conditions was good which led to even bud break on all varieties. We experienced our first heatwave towards the 26th of October with extended periods of above normal temperatures. This contributed to some negative effect on flowering and set which resulted in lower production on all varieties during harvest. A warm dry and windy summer followed keeping vineyard growth under control and accelerating ripening by two weeks which brought the harvesting season forward by one week. Water management was critical during January and February on the later ripening vineyards as the dam ran very low towards the end of the season. One positive about the dry season was that we experienced no disease pressure and our vineyards stayed healthy through the season.

Towards the end of January just before harvest we also experienced one of the worst fires in the last decade as the whole of the Simonsberg burnt down. Luckily Warwick escaped most of the smoke damage and no fires on our property.

Winemaking

The different vineyards and parcels were hand-picked in the early morning. The bunches were destemmed and crushed and passed through a mash cooler to a pneumatic press. Two hours of skin contact with enzymes and vitamin C after which reductive winemaking techniques were followed. (CO₂ used as blanketing). Cold settled for two days and inoculated with *saccharomyces* yeast for aromatics and wild yeast strains for palate weight. Fermented at 13-16 degrees Celsius in stainless steel tanks for 15-21 days. Kept on the gross lees for four months with weekly less stirring. A light filtration and fining was done just before bottling in June 2016.

Tasting profile

A beautiful delicate colour of pale yellow-green with a vibrant shimmer. The nose is lime zest, passion fruit, nectarine, spearmint, flint and fresh oregano. The palate has a crisp entry with a mouth-watering unison of kiwifruit, tropical fruit salad following through to a dry lingering finish.

Ageing potential

This wine is best drunk young, but if you do like your Sauvignon Blanc slightly aged, then the Sémillon component will reward you with flavours of preserved lemon and lanolin, and will allow the wine to age for up to 5 years.

Food match

Try seared tuna encrusted in sesame seeds with a honey, citrus and ginger sauce or freshly shucked oysters, served French style with red wine vinegar and shallots. This wine goes with almost any food on the planet, it's really your mood that depends. Fresh seafood on the braai, it all just tastes sumptuous when you add this versatile wine.

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