



— Professor Black 2017 —

Professor Black back.

The Professor Black 2017, a wine in the style of white Bordeaux is a classic blend comprised of Sauvignon Blanc (65%) and Semillon (35%).

The Sauvignon Blanc hailed from a 17-year-old vineyard site in Darling growing on deep-red Hutton and Clovelly soils. The block is situated in the well-known Darling Hills on a western slope, 13 kilometres from the Atlantic Ocean.

The Semillon component was harvested from a 14-year-old block in Elgin. The site was chosen for its South-Western aspect as well as for the soils comprising of gravelly topsoil with some ferricrete (iron rich) deposits, on top of clay subsoil from weathered shale.

Growing season

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Although drip irrigation is available, for the 2017 vintage this block has been farmed dryland due to the ongoing drought and thereby lack of irrigation water. The block however handled the drought exceptionally well thanks to the extremely deep Hutton and Clovelly soil types. At harvest the grapes were in excellent condition and showed highly expressive flavours.

SEMILLON

Conditions were very cool and dry in the early part of harvest as well as during ripening. The Semillon was of superlative quality, with the fruit offering that sought-after freshness.

Winemaking

SAUVIGNON BLANC

The fruit was handpicked in the early morning, and the grapes were transported to the winery still cold. There they were crushed and destemmed in reductive environment and pressed in a pneumatic press. Dry ice was used extensively to 'blanket the juice' as to prevent oxidation and preserve flavour. The juice was cold settled for 48 hours in tank and then racked to tank for fermentation. Some tanks were inoculated with aromatic yeast strains while 25% of the juice was racked dirty to tank and allowed to ferment spontaneously to build texture. Juice was fermented at 16 degrees to optimise thiol formation (grapefruit, passion fruit characteristics). After fermentation the wine was racked with its fine lees to older 225L barrels. These barrels were

used in order to build complexity in the wine but not to impart oak flavours. Wine was left in barrel for 10 months before blending. The wine was fined, but not filtered.

SEMILLON

The Semillon was handpicked riper at 24.3 brix in order to express a citrus character instead of herbaceousness—a typical Semillon characteristic. Grapes were transported to the winery still cold. The grapes were gently whole-bunch pressed to minimise phenolic extraction, after which the juice was allowed to settle overnight before being racked to 400L oak barrels. Wild yeast fermentation took place and fermentation lasted two months. The Semillon was batonaged during fermentation to help keep the wild yeast in suspension to build structure. This wine spent 11 months in barrel before blending. The wine was fined, but not filtered.

Barrel selection

The wine is matured in 100% used French oak. The barrels used were 400L Semillon/225L Sauvignon.

Tasting profile

The wine shows flavours of blackcurrant, which is typical of a white Bordeaux blend as well as passion fruit, litchi and citrus. There's a hint of white florals such as winter lilies, with an edge of minerality calling up wet slate. The Sauvignon Blanc component brings the aromatics, and in turn the Semillon offers structure and body. Subtle French oak flavours complement the blend.

Ageing potential

White Bordeaux blends age very well. Recommend drinking after 3 years in bottle but can be aged for up to 10 years or more.

Food matching

Yellowtail tartar with citrus zest and avocado. Steamed shellfish in a saffron-scented broth. Buttermilk fried chicken served with vegetable pickles. Roasted veal cutlets with lemon and caper sauce. Gnocchi with burnt butter and crispy sage.

Technical Analysis

Alcohol: 14% | RS: 2.4g/l | pH: 3.2 | TA: 7.2g/l

