

# Sauvignon Blanc 2021

**VARIETAL INFORMATION:** 88% Sauvignon Blanc; 12% Semillon

**WINE OF ORIGIN:** Western Cape (although sourced from the Cape South Coast)

**HISTORY:** In 2014, The Smuggler's Boot wines were first released. The name derives from the time of trade embargoes in South Africa when growers & winemakers smuggled grapevine material into the country by hiding the cuttings in Wellington boots. The Smuggler's Boot range celebrates that ingenuity.

**VINTAGE:** Hand-Picking Dates: Sauvignon Blanc: 13th March 2021 (Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge) to 19th March 2021(Elgin)

**SEASON:** Post-harvest in autumn 2020, there were reasonable water reserves in the soil going into winter, and winter rainfall was significantly higher than the previous season by around 50 mm in Elgin and 150 mm in Hemel-en-Aarde. Early winter temperatures were moderate and cold units started to accumulate about 14 days later than usual but over the winter season were fewer and accumulated slower than the year before. Budding began slightly earlier in late August and was very even for both Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. During the cooler early Spring, wetter conditions meant the soils remained cool, leading to a delayed growth of the immature shoots by up to three weeks. Flowering and fruit set was characterised by continuous cool conditions with frequent rain showers. Fortunately, the winds were moderate and didn't break some of the immature canes, as often happens. As November set in, the often-present gale-force winds that can damage shoots and leaves, were absent, meaning leaves remained intact. This, combined with good groundwater levels, allowed for a lush canopy. The Sauvignon Blanc needed some leaf plucking to provide canopy aeration as well as remove the potential for unwanted greener methoxy pyroxene characters. Veraison occurred 2-3 weeks later than average, giving the advantage of a much longer hangtime. We only started picking Sauvignon in mid-March (the latest we have ever picked it) whilst the Semillon came in late March. The wines themselves have a fabulous pH with high acidity and perfumed flavour profiles. Overall, cooler and later than the ten-year average, 2021 is being hailed as an outstanding vintage.

**WINEMAKING:** Grapes were hand-picked into small lug baskets. The Sauvignon Blanc was whole bunch pressed using a light sparkling wine pressing cycle before going to tank for 2 days of cold settling. After racking off the clean juice a small amount of light fluffy lees was added back, and the wine inoculated using a mix of yeasts. The Sauvignon Blanc was fermented cool, between 12-14°C enabling a long, cool ferment to preserve all the delicate volatiles that exist in the must. A light sulphuring followed to stop malolactic, and the lees was stirred using heavy dry ice blocks on the Sauvignon Blanc tanks. All together the wine stayed on its lees for around 4 months after which the batches were tasted and blended with a light fining and bottled.

**ALCOHOL:** 13.37%

**TOTAL PRODUCTION:** 2157 bottles

**TASTING PROFILE:** Light green-lemon in colour, the nose displays stimulating aromas of Meyer lemon, nettle, apple and mandarin that slowly open further to thiols of blackcurrant leaf and English gooseberry. A soft, inviting palate entry with a juicy core of fruit balanced with a fresh line of zingy acidity. A hint of Semillon adds a little weight and depth to the core. Plenty of fruit, ripe apple slices, grapefruit, hints of granadilla run alongside a gentle dusty, lime/lemon combination and a lick of sherbet. The finish is long and surprisingly soft.

**FOOD PAIRING:** Seafood is always a winner – Fresh crab with cracked pepper & a squeeze of lemon juice on crusty wholewheat bread, Smoked salmon on rye bread, Prawn kebabs marinated in lemon, garlic and parsley and grilled on the BBQ or shake it up with lemon, dried juniper berries & fresh rosemary, Grilled white fish with a mango & chilli salsa or look to Asian inspired dishes such as Thai fishcakes, Sushi/sashimi and Steamed dim sum. Chicken, done modestly, works very well with Sauvignon Blanc – Roast chicken with rosemary and garlic is a simple but delightful pairing as is a classic chicken Caesar salad. Although red meat is not Richard's first option to pair with Sauvignon Blanc, there are a few options for those committed carnivores! Lamb chunks marinated in lemon and dill on the BBQ, Grilled pork chops with fennel, and Seared rare Thai beef salad with tahini and lemon dressing will all work. The Smuggler's Boot Sauvignon Blanc is also eminently suitable for vegetarians and vegans. Try Goat's cheese and rocket salad (add chickpeas and sundried tomatoes for a heartier dish), Pasta with pesto sauce and shavings of Parmesan, Cheese (not blue cheese) Soufflé, and Caprese salad. Vegan options include Risotto with peas & mint, Artichokes roasted with lemon & mint, Gazpacho, and Avocado & black sesame seed sushi.

