

Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2019

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 52% Sauvignon Blanc, 48% Semillon

WINE OF ORIGIN: Western Cape (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: 22nd February (Upper Hemel-en-Aarde) to 5th March, 2019 (Elgin); Semillon: 19th March, 2019 (Elgin & Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge)

SEASON: As a vintage 2019 started off well with a return to average winter rainfall that continued well into spring. In tandem, cold units, which allow much needed respite for the vines to sleep, were the best in 5 years. The cooler spring resulted in a late budbreak for the Sauvignon Blanc and although there were some unusually warm conditions at the end of October, Spring was milder than average with quite a high amount of liberally sprinkled rainfall – 200mm between October and December. The wind surged on several days damaging some of the young shoots and flowers but was sporadic, leaving us with lower yields on some parcels and average on others. The cooler November weather also meant some flowers failed to pollinate correctly resulting in millerandage in which fewer berries appear on the eventual bunches. As New Year came and went, summer was also cooler than average and maximums during the hottest months never got above 34°C. This cooler weather helped the vines accumulate flavour more gradually. As harvest approached, whilst there were some pleasant sunny days in February, nights started to cool early in March. We started picking Sauvignon from the last week of February, about a week after the warmer weather had subsided, with the crop size lower due to the flowering, cool and windy conditions. The cooler weather in March meant the Semillon was picked very late towards the third week. This cooler weather also brought about higher Malic acids that give more bite and freshness to the wine. Equally, the cooler conditions allowed synchronous ripening of sugar and secondary metabolites.

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. Meanwhile the Semillon grapes were destemmed and crushed before being gently pressed into a stainless steel tank. Natural fermentation started (with no yeasts added) and after 2 days the fermenting, the Semillon juice was racked into oak barrels, of which 2/3rds were new and 1/3rd had only been used previously for 4 months. The Sauvignon Blanc was fermented cool, between 12–14°C enabling a long, cool ferment so as to preserve all the delicate volatiles that exist in the must. The Semillon fermented between 15–20°C to allow better oak integration and allow some of the norisoprenoids to release. A light sulphuring followed to stop malolactic and the lees was stirred using heavy dry ice blocks on the Sauvignon Blanc tanks and a batonnage rod for the Semillon. All together the wine stayed on its lees for around 4 months after which the batches were individually tasted and blended together with a light fining and bottled.

ALCOHOL: 13.56%

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 7965 bottles

TASTING PROFILE: Pale lemon colour, the nose is redolent with pronounced aromas of blackcurrant leaf, pomelo and apple purée at first and then khakibos, lemon and chalk dust kick in, adding incredible complexity to the aromatic profile. Bone dry, the palate entry has vibrant, enduring acidity underpinned by a delicate, creamy mid-palate richness. With excellent concentration, the wine evolves through grapefruit and lemon to lemon curd, boxwood and a grapefruit pithiness towards the elongated finish. Perfect for drinking now, this has the power to stay for the next 4–6 years.

FOOD PAIRING: Its fresh, citrus profile and mineral texture makes it perfect with seafood dishes, fish and spring vegetables. Richard enjoys it with tuna sashimi with a delicate lime and ginger or Asian dipping sauce; Oysters (Walvis Bay here are fab); asparagus and peas in a pasta primavera work well or goats cheese, white asparagus and chorizo (lightly spiced) pizza. Alternatively, a 'posh' fie pie or poached salmon with peas and frothy hollandaise (not too heavy on the butter), Cod and chips, or beer battered haddock. For meat lovers, gammon on the bone with broad beans in a parsley sauce. A light Thai green curry with pork or chicken (but go easy on the curry spice).

