

2021 Cape South Coast Sauvignon Blanc Semillon

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 56% Sauvignon Blanc; 44% Semillon.

WINE OF ORIGIN: Cape South Coast (Elgin & Hemel-en-Aarde), South Africa.

OVERVIEW: As a winemaker, I visit a variety of vineyards that offer something different to those I normally use in Elgin where I'm based, and occasionally I come across something so fascinating that it deserves a closer look. In 2019 I discovered an old parcel of Semillon in Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge that showed elements of Semillon Gris grapes. This was followed up in 2020 by a lower-yielding Sauvignon Blanc parcel in Elgin that is trellised Smart-Dyson, opening up the canopy and allowing better aeration.

VINTAGE: Hand-Picking Dates: 29th March (Semillon); 15th March 2021 (Sauvignon Blanc)
Brix at Harvest: 23.2 (Average)

SEASON: Overall, 2021 will be seen as an outstanding vintage cooler and later than the ten-year average. Winter rainfall was significantly higher than the previous season by around 50 mm in Elgin and 150 mm in Hemel-en-Aarde. Cold units eventually started to accrue, but more slowly and ultimately lower than the previous season. 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. Veraison occurred 2-3 weeks later than average across all the grape varieties. Important points to make about the 2021 vintage were that fungal diseases and downy mildew were particularly high; from December to ripening, powdery mildew also occurred. This led to smaller crops across those varieties most susceptible, with Sauvignon Blanc particularly affected. During harvest, frequent rain showers and, in some cases, high rain events in March brought about challenges concerning botrytis and sour rot. Swift action, though, did inevitably help us avoid most of these threats. With plentiful groundwater supplies, irrigation mainly was unnecessary, and dryland vineyards performed exceptionally well. The wines themselves have a fabulous pH with high acidity and perfumed flavour profiles. In the whites, Sauvignon and Chardonnay stood out. Alcohols are also somewhat lower than average and the lowest since I began making wine. Tannin ripeness was fabulous and very even as the phenolic ripeness took place over such a long time and at lower sugar levels. We started picking Sauvignon only in mid-March, the very latest I have ever picked it, whilst the Semillon came in late March and mid-April!

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. Meanwhile, the Semillon grapes were destemmed and crushed before being gently pressed into a stainless-steel tank. Natural fermentation started and after 2 days the fermenting Semillon juice was racked into oak barrels, of which 2/3rds were new and the 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 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 bâtonnage 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 with a light fining and bottled.

BARREL SELECTION: A small number of artisanal coopers were selected, all from Burgundy and only French oak was chosen. Importantly, this wine was micro-vinified as a separate batch. Over the years we have developed an algorithm to ascertain which coopers work best and how many new and used barrels are utilised. In 2021 22% was new oak, and the remainder split evenly between 1st and 2nd fill barrels.

ALCOHOL: 12.42% **TOTAL PRODUCTION:** 2598 bottles were produced.

TASTING PROFILE: Pale Lemon, the aromas are lifted with pronounced notes of nettle, apple blossom, tangerine peel, khakibos, yellow pepper and some jasmine. On entry, the wine is creamy and juicy underpinned by a bracing, vivacious acidity. Flavours of green mango, lime marmalade, fresh herbs, mange tout and lemon curd circulate in the mid-palate, providing a saline, celery stick and saliva-inducing mouthfeel. The delicate spice of oak is only just there adding complexity to a focused, delineated wine. Bone dry, there is a freshness and zesty spine to this concentrated wine that finishes long and satisfying. Will keep nicely over the next 3-5 years.



WHAT3WORDS

Semillon: [///portals.dance.believe](#)
Sauvignon Blanc: [///reliability.enclave.luxurious](#)

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