

2020 Cape South Coast Semillon Sauvignon Blanc

RANGE: GPS Series

VARIETAL INFORMATION: 52% Semillon; 48% Sauvignon Blanc.

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

TOTAL VINEYARD PRODUCTION: 4.56 tons split 2.3 tons Sauvignon Blanc (Elgin) and 2.2 tons Semillon (Hemel-en-Aarde).

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. It made sense to blend these 2 grape varieties to form a Semillon/Sauvignon Blend and the GPS Series is testament to these special parcels.

VINTAGE: Hand-Picking Dates: 19th March (Semillon); 7th March 2020 (Sauvignon Blanc)
Brix at Harvest: 23.2 (Average)

SEASON: The winter preceding the 2020 vintage was cooler than average helping leaf-fall occur later and enabling a proper accumulation of nutrient reserves. The premature onset of winter in Elgin saw an early awakening of the vines from dormancy, and early budding. However, total cold units for winter were below average and milder conditions in July and August led to soils warming up, budburst up to 14 days earlier in some blocks, and uneven initial growth in September. In Hemel-en-Aarde overall conditions during the flowering and berry set period in mid-October were significantly better than the previous season's extreme temperature fluctuations, with moderate temperatures that promoted the fertilisation process.

In early summer, there were constant blustery conditions in Elgin and Hemel-en-Aarde with regular drizzle, showers and cool conditions. These controlled the vigour and had a positive restriction on vegetative growth and berry size. Everything slowed down in December though, and cool, wet conditions resulted in some downy mildew pressure, in particular on bunches and young leaves, with canopy management needed. In January we finally saw the back of the 4-5-year drought, with the Hemel-en-Aarde receiving more than 140 mm of rain and Elgin 90mm over two days. This helped replenish soil reserves but coupled with relatively cool day and night temperatures also delayed the ripening process significantly, but the extended hang time allowed for the retention of more acidity and better flavour accumulation. Both parcels of grapes were picked towards the middle of March.

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 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 2019 20% was new oak; and the remainder split evenly between 1st and 2nd fill barrels.

ALCOHOL: 13.22 %

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 3950 bottles were produced.

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 & ginger or Asian dipping sauce; Oysters (Walvis Bay here are fab); Asparagus & peas in a pasta primavera work well or Goats cheese, white asparagus & chorizo (lightly spiced) pizza; alternatively, a 'posh' Fish pie or Poached salmon with peas & frothy hollandaise (not too heavy on the butter), Cod & 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).

TASTING PROFILE: Pale lemon-green, the nose is heady and penetrating with notes of jasmine, ripe cut apple, clementine segments and pomelo. A light, ethereal spice lingers as the wine opens further. On entry, the palate is juicy with a core of energetic fruit veering from mineral-edged pear juice, apple puree and ripe Valencia orange to bags of ripe yellow grapefruit, chilled lime wedges, sweet spices, and orange derivatives. There is a focus and purity with a blade of acidity that keeps the wine tight and a gentle whiff of oak spices that adds complexity. Bone dry, there is a tremendous concentration, and finish to what is a harmonious and moreish wine. Drinking beautifully now but will evolve further if allowed to develop in the bottle over the next 3-5 years.



Kershaw

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Semillon: ///portals.dance.believe

Sauvignon Blanc: ///reliability.enclave.luxurious

 WHAT3WORDS

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