

DE WETSHOF BATELEUR CHARDONNAY 2021

AN INTRODUCTION TO DE WETSHOF ESTATE

De Wetshof is a third generation wine estate in South Africa's Robertson Valley, where wine has been made for over 150 years. Here Danie de Wet, proprietor and cellar master, is assisted by sons and co-owners Johann (viticulture and marketing) and Peter (winemaker). De Wetshof Estate is a pioneer of noble white wines in South Africa and has also introduced superior red cultivars to the Robertson Wine Valley.

On De Wetshof a firm belief prevails, namely that one cannot know where you are going unless you know where you have come from. This is why the history of De Wetshof's vineyards plays a profound role in determining present and future wine quality. Since the early 1970's meticulous records have been kept on each vineyard as to the plants' reaction to soil-types, irrigation and the vagaries of climate, as well as their development and progress over the years. Each vineyard is thus vinified separately during the wine-making process, the wine-makers having a clear understanding of what the fruit of each vineyard's labour is going to deliver during a specific year.

This commitment to discovering and determining the various terrains on De Wetshof, as well as an absolute focus on site-specific vineyard management and wine-making, has been an integral part of the De Wetshof ethos from the outset and remains a vital and non-negotiable aspect of all the Estate's wines.

THE BATELEUR VINEYARD

This premier vineyard, one of the oldest Chardonnay vineyards in South Africa, was planted in July 1987 from a very special selection of plant material which had been imported from Burgundy some years before. The size of the vineyard is 3,51Ha on which 13,668 vines are planted.

VINIFICATION

The grapes are picked in the coolness of morning to capture the beautifully elegant complexities of pear-drop and citrus fruit flavours characterising this vineyard's fruit. Once de-stemming, pressing and overnight settling have been completed, the juice is racked off from the sediment and moved into French oak barrels specially selected by Monsieur Christian Radoux to enhance fruit quality during barrel-fermentation and maturation. After fermentation, the wine remains on the lees under controlled temperatures. Weekly stirring (battonnage) of the lees in the barrels ensures maximum depth of flavour is released into the wine. After some months the wines are racked off the lees and returned to barrels to complete the wood-maturation until it has reached the desired standard for bottling.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The Bateleur (*Terathopius ecaudatus*) is one of Africa's most majestic birds of prey. This wine was named after an eagle that is rare in both its beauty and occurrence as a tribute to the power and grace of a creature synonymous with our great continent.

Gravel soils originating from mountain rock rich in limestone and clay with a high pH allow this single vineyard Chardonnay to portray a spectrum of flavours framed in elegance and complexity, typical features of a classic Chardonnay. Citrus and pear-drop notes are complemented by an intriguing nuttiness, with elegant citrus on the finish. The Bateleur improves in dimension and complexity with age and under the correct storage conditions it can mature in the bottle for many years.

An elegantly muscular wine, Bateleur can be enjoyed with leg of lamb and other roasted red meat dishes, as well as with certain cheeses.

ORIGIN

Vineyard block No: 18B. Wine of Origin De Wetshof Estate, Robertson, South Africa.

CLIMATE

The Robertson Valley is characterised by cold winters and sunny summers, with an average annual rainfall of 350 - 400mm. In summer a fresh southerly breeze from the Cape L'Agulhas coast has a cooling effect on the vineyards, allowing the grapes to ripen evenly and in perfect balance. Nights are chilly and during summer months a mist often shrouds the vineyards until late morning. The dry climate and the bracing breeze keep pests to a minimum, resulting in sparse spraying programmes.

IRRIGATION

Computerised irrigation systems linked to weather station data and the monitoring of soil moisture-content ensures the vines are given the correct amount of water needed to produce grapes of optimum ripeness and developed flavours.

SOILS

Rocky mountain gravelly soil with an abundance of free limestone and a very high pH mixed with a pronounced clay content giving a substantial water retaining capacity ensures superb growing conditions allowing optimum varietal expression from this vineyard.

VINEYARD INFORMATION:

Age of the vines	34 years
Vines per hectare	4000
Rootstock	Richter 99
Planting row	2,40m x 1,0m
Soil pH	7,7 - 8,3
Trellising style	6 wire fence system cordon with spur pruning.
Yield	4-6 tons per hectare
Barrel maturation	12 months
Maturation potential	6-12 years



CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Cultivar	100% Chardonnay
Vintage	2021
Alcohol	12.95%
Total Acidity	6.8%
pH	3.41
Sugar	2.9 g/l
SO ₂ at bottling	52/124

