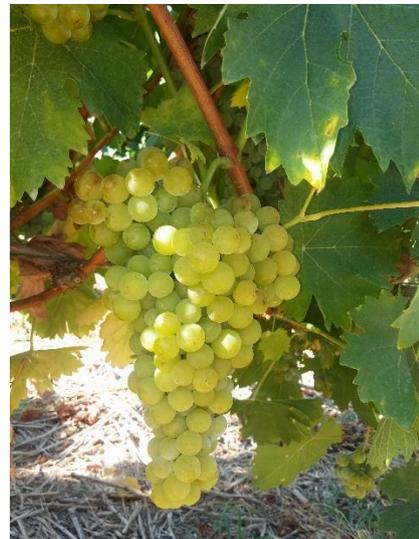


2017 Harvest Report

Riebeeck Cellars will remember the 2017 season as one of the earliest in years, starting on the 10th of January, even earlier than 2016. Although the 2017 season may be seen as cooler than 2016, water was still a problem and the drought had its effect, especially on the early varieties.



White muscadel grapes were ripe very early on in the season, mostly because of the drought. The base wine for the Montino light is showing elegant muscat flavours with a natural low alcohol. On average the early varieties like Bush vine Chenin blanc and Sauvignon blanc are down in yields, but we are very excited about the quality of the wines. Chenin blanc are again showing off with its distinct tropical flavours. We experienced early on a lower acid concentration in the grapes and had to make quite a few adjustments before fermentation, but although the acids were very low, the grapes had very low pH's as well, and that shows for good quality grapes. Very little rot or sunburn were experienced and even for the later white varieties, the grapes are of superb quality. Most of the white varieties are harvested already, with only some Chenin blanc and Colombar left.



Pinotage grapes came in with beautiful analysis, although the tonnage was down 10% from what was expected. Small berries full of colour and concentration promise wines with intense black and red fruit flavours and fine, chalky tannins. Lookout for the 2017 Kasteelberg Pinotage – this one will take big medals!



The cooler night temperatures - more likely the difference in night and day temperatures - that we experienced until the end of February, helped with good colour concentration in all the red varieties so far. Even Cinsault, which are known for its lesser colour, delivered black coloured grapes. Shiraz is once again our star varietal with a deep purple colour and an abundance of black berry, liquorice and spice aromas. This varietal once again showed why we are known as Shiraz Country.





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Again, there were some pH/TA imbalances in the red grapes, but luckily this could be adjusted before fermentation. We heard some rumours in the industry about fructose/glucose problems, but all our fermentations went smoothly, without any problems thus far. As a fact, the natural YAN or assailable nitrogen levels in all the grape varietals, on average, were very high this year. Most of the red varietals are already harvested, at the moment we are busy with the last Shiraz, Mourvedre and Cabernet sauvignon grapes. We aim to be finished by middle March, after a very long 10 weeks of harvest.



To summarise, 2017 have been a very long, outstretched and dry season, with lower yields – producing once again excellent quality wines from the Swartland region.

Regards,

Riebeek Cellars Production Team