



2017 Chenin Blanc, Steen-op-Hout Mulderbosch, Stellenbosch, South Africa

Product details

Vintage:	2017	Drinking:	
Producer:	Mulderbosch	Alcohol:	
Region:	Stellenbosch	Variety:	Chenin blanc
Country:	South Africa		

About the producer

MULDERBOSCH WINE

Located in the hills outside the town of Stellenbosch, Mulderbosch is one of the best regarded producers of white grape varieties in South Africa - although, with forays into red, dessert and a fascinating Cabernet Sauvignon rosé, the winery's expertise is certainly not limited to white wines.

The Mulderbosch winery is found in the Koelenhof area of Stellenbosch. The Cape Winelands already have an almost Mediterranean climate, with dramatic temperature changes between winter and summer, day and night, and gentle sea breezes. The periods of cooling help preserve acidity and aromatics. Koelenhof has an additional wind tunnel effect, which increases the cooling of the vines during long, hot summers.

However, it was only recently that this perfect parcel of South Africa was put to its proper use - a surprise, given that Stellenbosch is the second oldest European settlement in the country and wine has been produced here since the 17th century. In 1989, a dilapidated farm was purchased and renovated. Only then were vines planted, and the first vintage (the 1992) was released in 1994. Those first wines were brought to the UK by Armit Wines and we are proud to have been the exclusive agency for Mulderbosch ever since.

Mulderbosch wine has undergone various changes in ownership since the beginning, the most significant being the injection of major American investment in 2011. Along with the financial boost came an increased energy and sense of adventure. Most of the credit for that is due to the team of chief winemaker Adam Mason, assistant winemaker Mick Craven and the vineyard manager James Sodom. Mason transferred from Klein Constantia, which he had run for eight years, having previously gained experience in France, Spain and Napa Valley. The Australian Craven is equally well oenologically travelled, while Sodom is one of the most influential black South Africans in viticulture.

In the 1990s, they quickly gained a glowing reputation for Mulderbosch Sauvignon Blanc, with South Africa's leading wine guide, Platter's, describing it as the country's most celebrated Sauvignon Blanc. It remains excellent, ageing remarkably well (as do all Mulderbosch wines), with great finesse. Mason has also introduced an occasional special release, Sauvignon Blanc 1000 Miles, selected from the best parcels of a particular year. The Noble Late Harvest Sauvignon captures the grape's character in sweet form, giving a botrytis twist to the canned peaches, fresh hay and dried mango notes of the original grape.

Under Mason, however, Chenin Blanc has become Mulderbosch's flagship wine. This grape - the Cape's signature variety - probably more than any other, bears out the

vineyard's current philosophy: maintaining its original ethos of quality over quantity, but now pushing the frontiers of winemaking and viticulture alike. The single-varietal wine maintains great acidity and succulence on the palate, but Mason takes things further with a collection of single vineyard releases, which explore the different nuances of Chenin Blanc. The names of the parcels may not be inspiring, but the resultant wines are. Block A emphasises the wonderful summer stone and tropical fruit characteristics of the grape; Block S2 is planted on shale soil and has a richer spectrum of flavours, with minerality and a slicker texture; and Block W, closest to the coast, has salinity, complex structure and sun-dried hay and confectionary notes balancing precariously but successfully on a knife edge of acidity.

Mulderbosch also produces Chardonnay, both steel- and barrel-fermented, the former all ripe fruit and nuts, the latter's acidity balancing the oak richness perfectly. But it is not only white wine where Mulderbosch has had success. While many vineyards have produced a rosé Cabernet Sauvignon as a byproduct of their red wine operation, Mulderbosch wine has planted an entire parcel of the grapes specifically destined for vinification as a rosé wine. They are picked early and treated as, for example, a Chenin Blanc would be, to produce a particularly fresh, aromatic style of Mulderbosch rosé.

Mulderbosch has acquired vineyards in Franschhoek and elsewhere across the Cape Winelands and, thanks to these, has a second label, Faithful Hound, producing Bordeaux-style blends, which the terroir lends itself to. The white is the traditional marriage of Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc, while the red is a more orgiastic mingling of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Malbec and Petit Verdot.

Push the boundaries, Mulderbosch wine may, but it does not pressurise the environment. It is a member of the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative, which aims to conserve marginal habitats overlapping the Cape's vineyard footprint. James Sodom and his team have introduced cover-cropping to preserve and increase topsoil condition, and the entire grape production is returned to the land as compost. So, the emphasis on quality would appear to be guaranteed for future generations too.

To find out our Mulderbosch wine prices, browse our full selection of Mulderbosch Sauvignon Blanc wines and more online.