



2017 Chenin Blanc Swartland Reserve

Delaire Graff, Swartland, South Africa

Product details

Vintage:	2017	Drinking:	
Producer:	Delaire Graff	Alcohol:	
Region:	Swartland	Variety:	Chenin blanc
Country:	South Africa		

About the producer

DELAIRE GRAFF WINE

Laurence Graff OBE knows a thing or two about making the most out of the potential in South African soil. From humble roots in the East End of London, his skill with and understanding of gems led him to form one of the world's most prestigious jewellery companies, Graff Diamonds.

Graff Diamonds is well known for acquiring historically large uncut diamonds from mines in Lesotho and South Africa and crafting them into exquisitely finished jewels of the highest carat, colour, clarity and cut. One of the most famous, unveiled in 2008, was the largest square emerald cut Fancy Vivid Yellow diamond in the world, at 118.08 carats - cut from a 221.81 carat rough diamond (low yields are a part of gemology, as well as the oenological world). Graff named the diamond the Delaire Sunrise, after the wine estate in the Cape Winelands he had acquired five years earlier and was in the process of transforming into a world-class winery, restaurant, hotel and spa.

From the Delaire Graff Estate's lofty position on the crest of the Helshoogte Pass, the views over the vineyards of Stellenbosch, the sunrises here are certainly a thing of wonder. As is the terroir for viticulture: the high-altitude terraces are located on the steep slopes of Botmaskop Mountain and frequently cooled by Atlantic breezes. A long, slow ripening season ensures an intensity of fruit that is the hallmark of Delaire Graff wines.

The estate - originally a farm called Avontuur - was originally established in 1982 by John Platter, the writer of the leading South African wine guide. It has gone from strength to strength under Graff's ownership, particularly since the completion in 2008 of a 450-tonne gravity-fed winery. Since 2010, Delaire Graff wines have regularly won international and national awards (including high praise from the former owner's guide) and the estate has become established as one of the best in South Africa. Armit Wines began importing many of Delaire Graff's bottlings to the UK in 2012.

Most of the credit should go to young winemaker Morné Vrey, who began his career in Stellenbosch, had stints working in France, Germany and New Zealand, then returned home. His philosophy of "letting the grapes do the talking" belies the hard work he does and the time spent among the vines, getting his timings just right.

The Delaire Graff Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve is produced with meticulous care - hand sorting, whole-berry fermentation, gentle extraction of fruit and basket pressing. It is matured in 80% new French oak barrels for 18 months. Complex layers of dark fruits are woven together with threads of spice. It's a wine which lingers in the mouth or in the cellar.

Vrey's policy of allowing true flavour to emerge is notable in Delaire Graff's

Chardonnays, where there is minimal oaking - partial fermentation in third or fourth fill barrels and ageing in steel. What comes through is sumptuous and zesty - white peach and tropical fruit - with a refined minerality on the finish.

Delaire Graff Botmaskop shows off Vrey's blending skills. It combines Cabernet Sauvignon with Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Shiraz in a South African reinterpretation of claret. After sorting, the grapes are simply de-stemmed, not crushed, before whole-berry fermentation and gentle punch downs. The wine matures in 50% new French oak barrels for

16 months, where malolactic fermentation takes place. It results in a gem-bright wine with rich aromas of cassis and spice, intense liquorice and blackberry flavours on the palate and fine, lingering tannins. It too welcomes ageing for five to eight years.

As well as the estate's own 20 hectares of Bordeaux reds and Chardonnay, Delaire Graff sources grapes from high-quality parcels around Stellenbosch and South Africa's other great vineyard regions, including Franschoek, Darling and Swartland.

The Delaire Graff wine estate is particularly renowned for its Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon blends, such as the Delaire Graff Reserve White - zesty citrus and minerality combined with an almond and pineapple lushness. The Coastal Cuvée is largely Sauvignon Blanc but its crisp acidity, gooseberry and tropical fruit notes are lifted by the additional body of the Semillon.

There are many gems to admire in the Delaire Graff wine range: the Shiraz; a fabulous Chenin Blanc Reserve from Swartland; a rosé made from the estate's own Cabernet Franc grapes; the polished ruby of a fortified Cape Vintage (Tinta Barocca and Touriga Nacional); and a Cremant de Loire-style sparkling Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay and Cabernet Franc blend, called Delaire Sunrise. Like the eponymous Fancy Vivid Yellow diamond, it effervesces with light and is crafted to achieve perfect harmony.

If you visit South Africa, the Delaire Graff Lodge and Spa, and its restaurant, is a highlight of any drive east out of Cape Town. Laurence Graff's patronage of the arts means there are sculptures and paintings to nourish the soul, as well as one of the finest gardens in South Africa. And, in the estate's wines, there are treasures drawn from the earth of this beautiful country.

Explore our full selection of Delaire Graff wines online today.