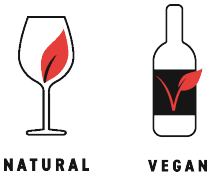
Lelie van Saron

2022

CHARDONNAY

Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley - South Africa



Stats

Grapes: 100% Chardonnay
Vineyard: DeBos Vineyard
Vine Age: 13-years-old
Soil Type: Cartref: a mixture of granite, sandstone and quartz
Viticulture: Sustainable - dry-farmed and no herbicides or pesticides
Fermentation: Native – whole-bunch pressed to 50% concrete tank and 50% neutral 225L & 300L French barrels
Skin Contact: None
Aging: 12 months in fermentation vessels (adding 5-10% new oak)
Alcohol: 12.96%
pH: 3.5
Total Acidity: 5.7 g/L
Total SO2: 73 ppm
Total Production: 392 cases
UPC: 6009820030451

Reviews

Tim Atkin MW | 91 points
Vinous | 91 points
Wine Spectator | 91 points

About

Now in its sixth vintage, this wine is definitely becoming a standard for minimally handled Hemel-en-Aarde Chardonnay. The Debos Vineyard is just on the north side of the dam for which it is named at the base of the Babylonstoren Mountains. It's located just 3 miles from the Atlantic ocean, and the vines are dry-farmed, guyot-trellised, and planted in a high-density fashion with 6,667 vines per hectare. Known for its granite soils, the one-hectare Debos Vineyard yields about 5.5 tons/hectare. The resulting wines are aromatic and elegant, with pure fruit expression.

The grapes were handpicked and then hand sorted at the winery prior to being whole-bunch pressed with an overnight settling to get the chunky stuff naturally filtered out. The following morning the wine was racked and spontaneous fermentation commenced within two days at the ambient cellar temperature in a mixture of concrete tanks and older French 225 & 300L oak barrels. Alcoholic and malolactic fermentation were completed gradually over two months with no battonage. It was then fined, coarsely filtered, and bottled with a small dosage of sulfur.

Tasting Note

The nose shows pithy citrus fruits with limestone minerality and subtle hints of vanilla. The palate has excellent varietal purity with a linear, mineral structure balanced by ripe mandarin and stone fruit. Lingering acidity.