

Testalonga

2023

‘CORTEZ’

Chenin Blanc | *Swartland - South Africa*

NATURAL ORGANIC VEGAN

Stats

Grapes: 100% Chenin Blanc
Vineyard: Paardeberg
Vine Age: 51-years-old
Soil Type: Granite
Viticulture: Practicing organic
Fermentation: Native – old 500L French barrels (60%) and stainless steel (40%) (100% whole-bunch pressed)
Aging: 12 months on gross lees in 20-year-old 500L barrels and stainless steel
Alcohol: 12%
pH: 3.2
Total Acidity: 6.3 g/L
Total SO2: 40 ppm
Total Production: 417 cases
UPC: 7070292744688

Reviews

The WineMag | 98 points

About

‘Cortez’ comes from an organically farmed bush vine site planted in 1972. The vineyard is a special one, as it has been farmed organically since 2001 and every year, good or bad, it provides incredible tension in the wine. Craig attributes this to the high percentage of quartz/silica in the soil. As for the label, Craig and Carla change it up every year to best suit the feeling they think the wine is giving. In 2023, the photo was taken by Craig of their dog, Bruce. Forever watching and by their side, he is now in their thoughts and memories. As for the vintage, it was a long dry spring followed by exceptional rains in December just before harvest. This helped to soften the acidity and lift the pH on all the wines. The name, ‘Cortez,’ is apparently named after the Dave Matthews & Neil Young song, ‘Cortez the Killer.’ “But they built up with their bare hands what we still can’t build today…”

The grapes were hand harvested and whole bunch pressed before fermenting spontaneously in 20-year-old 500L French puncheons and one 1500L stainless steel tank. After 6 months, the portions were blended and put back on their lees. After a year, the wine was bottled with a gentle filtration and sulfur addition. No fining.

Tasting Notes

Green apple, peach, and thyme with a brighter burst of citrus right up front. The palate leans into a stove-top popcorn meets cheese rind vibe in the best way. It’s smooth yet more lifted, with an energetic finish.