



Craven 'Karibib Vineyard' Chenin Blanc

Stellenbosch – South Africa 2017

Craven Wines is a winemaking collaboration between husband-and-wife team Mick and Jeanine Craven. Mick is an Aussie currently working as lead assistant winemaker at Mulderbosch during the day; Jeanine is a Saffa, and they met in California 'dragging hoses' in Sonoma for harvest in 2007. After travelling across the world together for four years and learning about wines in Australia, Europe, the States and South America, the couple returned to South Africa in late 2011. They feel Stellenbosch has such an amazing array of sites and terroir, and that it is perfect for what they want to do. Which is make site-specific, honest wines. Let the grapes do the talking....

In the vineyard the 'less is more' attitude is definitely implemented. They are 'working toward organics' but that term, according to Mick, makes him want to vomit as it is completely overused and rarely implemented. To try and achieve the wines they want to make, he feels the best methods are being hands off, while still being very hands on. In other words paying serious attention to the wine but not manipulating it. They believe the best way to express site and fruit is to show just that. There is no use of cultured yeasts, enzymes, fining agents, etc. throughout the winemaking process. They only use older oak and try to only find larger format barrels. Essentially a minimal amount of SO₂ (which is a dear friend) is the only thing added to the wines.

Chenin Blanc is a variety that Mick has always wanted to work with but was waiting for the right vineyard to land in his lap. Towards the end of 2015, Mick came across a beautiful site up on the Polkadraai Hills. The terroir in this unique pocket is characterized by hilly topography and subsequently varying elevations, providing sites on elevations from 60 to 400 meters above sea level. Besides the differences in elevation, the layered soils vary from granite-based on the higher elevations to the more lighter, sandy soils in lower lying areas. Planted in 1982, this east-facing block is grown on lovely, weathered granite soil. Initially trained on a single wire, it has been 'let go' over time and now grows more like a bush vine. Mick refers to it as a "faux bush vine" vineyard. All in all, this was the perfect site in Mick's eyes.

The grapes are whole-bunch pressed to neutral 500L barrels, where the juice is left to ferment naturally. It completes malolactic fermentation and is then left on the lees for approximately 4 months before racking. It spends a total of 9 months in barrel before bottling. The wine is bottled unfiltered and unfiltered, with nothing added during the winemaking process apart from a dash of sulphur.

Composition

100% Chenin Blanc

Soil Type

Weathered Granite

Vine Age

38 years old

Élevage

9 months in 500L barrels

Yields

3 tons per acre

Production

600 cases

Tasting Notes

“ The nose is incredibly aromatic, with hints of wildflowers and freshly cut grass. The palate has impeccable definition with layered minerality and bright acidity. It is very elegant with a full mouthfeel without being heavy. ”

Reviews

None