

# THE GRAPESMITH MEDITERRANEO 2017

## Wine of Origin Stellenbosch

**Style of Wine:** A dry white blend.

**Grape varieties:** Roussanne 70% | Marsanne 14% | Grenache blanc 7%  
Clairette blanche 7% | Verdelho 2%

### Background:

Stellenbosch is situated close to the Atlantic and benefits from the cooling maritime effect breezing in from the ocean. The Western Cape around Cape Town and the southern tip of Africa, is blessed with a Mediterranean climate with winter rainfall and long, moderately warm and dry summers. Ideal conditions for growing wine. The white grape varieties that have distinguished themselves in the south of France and Spain in a Mediterranean climate, have only recently started to gain popularity in the Cape. The Grapesmith Mediterraneo 2017 utilises these varieties and their wonderful affinity for Mediterranean conditions to create a first for the Cape.

The increased effects of global warming are becoming more and more visible and Mediterranean grape varieties have proven that they are perfectly adapted to warmer and drier conditions. This is evident in their drought resistance and also the retention of acidity and low pH during ripening.

### Roussanne Winemaking

Roussanne ripens very rapidly and 2017 was no exception, with grapes harvested at 24.8° Balling with beautiful body and texture. Grapes were harvested on 28 February 2017 from a vineyard high up on the cool south-west facing slopes of Simonsberg, then cooled overnight in picking crates. The grapes were whole bunch pressed early the next morning with only the most gentle pressing in order to yield delicate juice with refined flavours. The wine was fermented naturally in 225 litre French oak barrels. Barrels were between 7 and 12 years old. The fermentation was quite warm to allow the yeast to make abundant glycerol. The wine spent a total of 12 months on the primary lees with occasional battonage to stir up the lees. No MLF was allowed and after a light filtration the blend was bottled in March 2018.

### Marsanne Winemaking

Harvested on 1 February 2017 at 22° Balling from a cool site overlooking False Bay. The grapes were cooled down overnight to 5°Celsius. Grapes were whole bunch pressed early the next morning with the juice taken directly into 225 litre French oak barrels for a spontaneous fermentation, utilising the yeast strains naturally occurring on the berries. The wine was left in barrel with minimal interference, apart from stirring the lees and topping up when needed. No malolactic fermentation was done, in order to preserve the primary fresh fruit aromas. Lower ripeness also keeps the alcohol low to balance the fuller and fatter Roussanne.

### Grenache blanc Winemaking

Harvested on 3 March 2017 at 22° Balling and crushed into the press before allowing skin contact for a brief two hours. Thereafter, unsettled juice was transferred to 225 litre barrels for natural fermentation to occur. The wine spent 12 months in barrel before 225 litres were added to the blend.

### Verdelho Winemaking

Picked on 3 March 2017 at 23.4° Balling and fermented in barrel, these grapes come from the oldest Verdelho planting in South Africa, seven rows planted in 1997 on Simonsig Estate by Frans Malan. Originally from the Island of Madeira, this grape is known for producing vibrant, tangy and refreshingly dry white wines with a lively acidity.



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## Clairette Blanche Winemaking

Picked on 22 February 2017 at 19.2° Balling. The Clairette was whole bunch pressed and the juice settled overnight, before being racked to 225 litre French oak barrels to undergo spontaneous alcoholic fermentation. The wine was matured in barrel for 12 months, with the lees stirred on a regular basis to add greater mouth feel to this delicate component. One 225 litre barrel was added to the blend, contributing freshness and finesse.

## The Blending

The blending process started by finding the sweet spot in the ratio between Roussanne and Marsanne, after which the crisp and zesty Grenache blanc was added to contribute elements of citrusy verbine and wet river stone minerals. Clairette blanche further contributes delicacy and elegance. The 2% Verdelho might look insignificant, but any more and it would dominate the other components. Despite the thimbleful added to this blend, Verdelho makes a positive and noticeable contribution to the flavour and freshness of the wine overall.

## Tasting Notes

Pale straw colour with glints of green. Perfumed fresh lime and verbena aromas fill the glass, followed by a clean chalky minerality. The wine opens over time, revealing acacia flower fragrances. Fresh and restrained on the palate with lovely tension and crispness that persists to the finish. Complex layered flavours with perfectly integrated oak complemented by subtle hints of oats and autolysed yeast add to the palate weight.

## Food Pairing

Crayfish, grilled fish. Poultry in rich creamy sauces. Blue cheese and goat's cheese. Foie gras. Also worth a try with spicy dishes and mild curries.

**Serving Advice:** Serve in large glasses and allow to breathe. Do not over-chill. 10 to 12°C.

## Analysis:

Alcohol:	13.9% by volume
Residual Sugar:	4.7 g/l
Total Acidity:	6.4 g/l
pH:	3.27
Extract	25.4 g/l

