

RADFORD DALE

WINE	RENAISSANCE CHENIN BLANC	
VINTAGE	2009	
APPELLATION	Stellenbosch (Helderberg), South Africa	
ANALYSIS	alcohol	14 % by volume
	total acidity	5.7 g/l
	pH	3.54
	residual sugar	2.7g/l
PRODUCTION	242 (12 x 750ml) cases	



Barossa born Ben Radford and Burgundian raised Alex Dale form a wonderfully unique partnership. Modern winemaking and traditional values combine to create one of the finest and rarest gems of the Cape of Good Hope

VINEYARDS & HARVEST

The fruit for this wine is grown in a single block of old, un-irrigated bush vine Chenin on the foot slopes of the Helderberg Mountain, facing south across False Bay and the Southern Atlantic Ocean. These vines, grown in Clovelly soils (decomposed granite), are mature and virus free, yielding about 30 - 32 hl / ha (4.5 T / ha), with deep root systems plunging into the granite sub-rock and providing wonderful intensity of flavours in the fruit. The 2009 vintage (the maiden-release of our Renaissance Chenin, after a decade of experimentation and trials) benefited from high winter rainfall and cooler summer median temperatures than usual. This translated into wonderful balance, purity and freshness. The 2009 harvest is recognised in South Africa, as in many regions around the world, as an outstanding vintage. In the 2nd week of February, the grapes were all hand-picked, at first light, into small lug-bins and hand-sorted over a sorting table.

VINIFICATION

Whole bunch pressed, with the free-run juice settled for two days before being gravity-fed into barrel. Alcoholic fermentation entirely carried out in barrel (using entirely natural ambient yeast) for 8 – 10 weeks. Cellar maintained very cold at about 10° Celsius (fermentation peaking at about 18 °), then temperature dropped to 7°. Malo inhibited, by the cold. Battonnage applied weekly during the first two months, then monthly or periodically for the following months. Racked out of barrel after about 10 ½ months, assembled and then settled for a month. Bottled at the end of January 2010 –the same week in fact that we started harvest of the following vintage.

BARRELS

100% of the wine was barrel fermented & matured, using only artisanal Burgundy cooperages Allier & Vosges 228 L barrels. A mix of 4th, 3rd, 2nd fill and new, with under 20% being new.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

The over-riding characteristic given to this wine by its vines and its environment is its complex minerality and its persistent and yet elegant intensity. Notes of lemon pervade the quenching beam of acidity, penetrating and weaving through the ripe glycerol and lifting the gentle spice and biscuit flavours, carrying them on the citrus palate long after the wine is gone. Such natural attributes would be wasted on the too-habitual crutches of over-oaking and dollops of residual sugar, so popular among winemakers who seem to put chemistry, medals and ego before the individual character and intrinsic qualities of this, South Africa's most noble grape. Often shunned and disrespected by winemakers and consumers alike, there is, in certain worthy quarters, an ascending realization of the tremendous potential of this grape, Chenin Blanc. As devotees of true character and finesse often swim upstream against the populous tide, a fresh generation of Chenin producers is bringing to the surface some of the most interesting, bright, mineral and idiosyncratic wines of the Cape. The Radford Dale Renaissance Chenin Blanc is in the spirit of these terrific new wines and is all about the Renaissance of the great grape that is Chenin Blanc.