

FACT SHEET:

Delheim Grand Reserve 1981 - 2006

The History

The Cellarmaster of Delheim, Kevin Arnold visited America in 1979 and brought back the idea of using small barriques in the cellar. A Bordeaux style wine was chosen and the name was debated and finally chosen: Grand Reserve – for simply the best. The maiden vintage was 1981. Each vintage has brought its own challenges but always based on cabernet sauvignon. The first three vintages were 100% cabernet sauvignon and since 1984 cabernet franc and merlot were introduced as blending components. In recent vintages only cabernet sauvignon and merlot make up the blend.

The philosophy in the vineyards:

Producing a classic style terroir based Bordeaux style wine from the Simonsberg Stellenbosch vineyards of Delheim. The vineyards are bush vine cabernet sauvignon (now 25 years old) with natural low production (2 – 3 tons/ha) yielding concentrated fruit. The cabernet vines are a mixture of clones 27, 37 and 46. The bush vine canopy is suckered to remove any excess leaves and shoots and to allow for good light penetration and airflow. The merlot grapes come from 1 of 2 trellised vineyard (11 and 7 years old respectively). All green bunches that are not main bunches are removed before veraison. (change of color of the grape berries). Vines are irrigated only when absolutely necessary. Picking is done very selectively and may require up to 3 times of picking.

Winemaking:

After fermentation the wine is transferred into a selection of 225L French barriques where malolactic fermentation will be inoculated. A barrel selection will be done after 12 months of barrel maturation, whereafter further maturation in barrels will take place for approx. another 6 months, depending on the

vintage. During maturation the wine will be racked 3 - 4 times.

The Cellarmasters at Delheim responsible for the Grand Reserve blends

Kevin Arnold (1980 – 1987) now at Waterford
Philip Costandius (1988 – 2000) now Solo Wines
Conrad Vlok (2001 -2002) now Strandveld Vineyards
Brenda Van Niekerk since 2003
Viticulture: Victor Sperling since 1994

Production:

A classic style wine with finesse and terroir as backbone. Only approximately 20 barrels are produced due to the low yields of the ageing vineyard of bush vine cabernet sauvignon.

The Future:

The 25 year old bushvine cabernet sauvignon vineyard which is the backbone of the Grand Reserve needs to be nurtured and possible replanting schemes need to be implemented. In South Africa this is a problem due to the fact that one cannot, as in Bordeaux, just add in new vines. Experimentation with new plantings of petit verdot, cabernet franc and malbec, for future possible inclusion in the blend are underway.

Grand Reserve will remain a classic style wine with ageing potential, reflecting the best cabernet sauvignon based blend Delheim can produce from a terroir specific vineyard in the Simonsberg Stellenbosch ward.