Nautical Dawn 2019

ALHEIT VINEYARDS, WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

HARVEST & VINTAGE NOTES

On Rustenhof farm in Firgrove (southern Stellenbosch) there's a small granite hill called Sinai. The crown of the hill has a few small granite domes protruding from the soil. From up there you can see the waves breaking only 4kms away. The hillside is planted from top to bottom with dry-farmed bushvine Chenin Blanc. Nautical Dawn is made from a parcel planted in 1978 on the upper part of the slope. The vine rows run with the contour of the hill. The granite soil is shallow and warms quickly, causing this to be one of our earliest picks of the season despite the relentless South-East wind.

The grapes were hand sorted and whole bunch pressed. The juice is very lightly settled (we like very cloudy raw juice) with no additions to the raw juice, wild fermentation in took place in a 2000L Foudre and some old barrels of various sizes. Fermentation lasted for about two months. The wine was kept on lees for around 12 months, then rested in tank on fine lees without fining for a further six months prior to bottling. Very simple, careful winemaking.

As always, this wine is an athlete. Clear yellow fruit and sweet herbs, endless flavor, unreal tension and energy on the palate, with coated acidity. This is the kind of wine that does well in blind tastings.

The Name: Nautical Dawn is the phase of dawn that occurs between astrological dawn and civilian dawn. It's a mysterious time of day—dark enough to see the stars for navigation, light enough to hoist a sail. The point of the name is to take you close to the sea, facing East.

WINEMAKERS: Chris & Suzaan Alheit

GRAPES: 100% Chenin Blanc

ALCOHOL: 13.38%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.9 g/L

TOTAL ACIDITY: 6.1 g/L

pH: 3.28

BOTTLING DATE: June, 2020

91 POINTS vinous
Neal Martin, Vinous, April 2021