



## Beautiful hues, stunning flavours mean wines to savour

IF choosing wine came down to colour alone, it wouldn't be hard to pick Chardonnay as a favourite for its glowing golden richness of mellow sunsets and liquid gold, while the much paler Sauvignon Blanc would be very much an also-ran in these stakes.

This would be as superficial, of course, as choosing a painting because it "goes" with the lounge curtains.

A tasting of the 2014 Grande Provence Chardonnay delivers an overall experience that can be summed up as "golden" – in colour,

flavour and sheer class. No doubt that inspired the press release suggestion to "savour the first touches of autumn" with a glass of its full-bodied elegance.

The wine is silky and rich with classic Chardonnay vanilla, honey and almonds, creaminess balanced with just enough citrus and pear fruitiness. Overall, careful fruit and wood integration, no single part dominating, just beautiful silky goldenness –

### A VINE TIME



SAM VENTER

rounded, elegant and lasting.

Winemaker Karl Lam-bour says the wine is "perfect" to drink now, and could age another two to three years. Try it with smoked fish, creamy seafood or roast chicken.

On the other hand, the clear, very slightly green-tinged hue of the Fleur du Cap Unfiltered Sauvignon Blanc 2015 gives only the tiniest hint of what lies beneath. From dryland vineyards in Darling, where the cool

climate means slow ripening and concentrated flavours, the wine is crisp and fresh to start – think cucumber, fresh asparagus, cut grass – with layers of depth and complexity to follow.

Fleur du Cap's winemakers aim for the least outside interference, allowing gravity to do the work of settling the wine rather than the pressure of mechanical or chemical filtration, in order to let the wine's natural flavours shine.

Filtration is argued to rob the wine of character and distinctive flavours. Unfiltered, this wine has character

aplenty – lean, lively, essential, with a depth and richness from some time spent on the lees.

The Grande Provence Chardonnay is R150 from the cellar door and the Fleur du Cap Unfiltered Sauv R108.

At the other end of the scale, a Chenin Blanc and a Chardonnay have been added to the Porcupine Ridge value range from the clever marketers at Boekenhouts-kloof (makers also of The Chocolate Block and The Wolf Trap). The Chenin is fruity and zesty with peach and pineapple flavours, a hint of nutti-

ness – a good balance of acidity and sugar that will work well with sweet 'n sour or spicy dishes. (It worked a treat with a rather un-Italian pizza combo of pastrami, blue cheese and Asian-style BBQ sauce!)

The light oaking on the Chardonnay shows in slight creaminess and a touch of butterscotch-vanilla, balanced with a basket of citrus and tropical fruit. There's some oak on the finish to wrap it up in a neat parcel. It won't impress serious Chardonnay fans (gift them a bottle of the Grande Provence rather) but it's a good introduction for the doubtful.



GRANDE PROVENCE, 2014 CHARDONNAY