

Vilafonte

Seriously Old Dirt

THE FACTS

COUNTRY: South Africa

REGION: Western Cape

APPELLATION: Paarl

CEPAGE: 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Malbec, 2% Cabernet Franc, 2% Merlot

WINEMAKING: The vineyard, with a combination of 8 to 23-year-old vines, is situated at various elevations and orientations, featuring flat, south-east, north, and north-west aspects. The soil types vary, including Klapmuts, Estcourt, Glenrosa, Cartref, Swartland, and Malmesbury shale. The climate is Mediterranean with a cool maritime influence. The harvest took place on February 7, 2023, and was characterized by a delayed start due to cold and wet spring conditions. The growing season had cool to moderate temperatures, with no heatwaves in February and March. The grapes underwent a six-day cold soak, followed by a 1012 day fermentation at 25 degrees Celsius, with malolactic fermentation in stainless steel tanks.

ALCOHOL BY VOLUME: 13.5%

AGING: 22 months in French oak barriques and seasoned tanks.

ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 15000 cases

THE STORY

Vilafonté, in South Africa's Paarl-Simonsberg region, was founded in 1996 by Michael Ratcliffe, Zelma Long, and Phil Freese. Named after its ancient "vilafontes" soils (750,000–1.5 million years old), the winery produces Bordeaux blends that are globally acclaimed. Winemakers Chris des Vries and Arlene Mains lead the creation of wines celebrated for elegance, complexity, and longevity.

BIOGRAPHY: Arlene Mains, Head Winemaker of Seriously Old Dirt, shifted from Microbiology to Viticulture at Stellenbosch University. With an MSc in Wine Biotechnology and experience at Opus One and Mouton Rothschild, she oversees Vilafonté's vineyard and cellar. Her 2019 discovery of old Cabernet vines enhanced the wine's depth. Arlene blends kindness, innovation, and joy in her winemaking.



THE ADJECTIVES

OVERALL: Sexy & Sleek

AROMAS / FLAVORS: Fresh plum, black raspberry, mulberry, and ripe strawberry, accentuated by hints of nutmeg.

MOUTHFEEL: Silky-smooth

THE SELLING POINTS

Crafted from ancient soils. Unique!

AWARDS: 94pts Greg Sherwood, 92pts Wine & Spirits, 91pts Tim Atkin, 90pts Decanter

SUSTAINABILITY: Vegan, Sustainable In Practice

PAIRINGS: Pairs well with grilled meats, mushroom risotto, aged cheeses, or a charcuterie board. Versatile!

