

# *Vin de Constance*

2017



# Vin de Constance 2017

Vin de Constance is one of the world's most iconic wines, made from Muscat de Frontignan. It is tailored from historic records that detail some of the techniques that was used to create the legendary Constantia wine. This wine was undisputedly one of the great wines of its time, lusciously sweet yet also "racy" - in other words, perfectly balanced by natural acidity. In a journal dating from the early 1800s, Lambertus Johannes Colijn described how he made his wine, like his father and grandfather before him: "In order to make good Constantia wine, one should allow the grapes to ripen thoroughly before cutting. They should be half-way towards becoming raisins, and during the cutting all rotten and unripe berries have to be spotted, picked out and disposed of..." Colijn made it clear that the wine should stop fermenting naturally, without the addition of brandy or grape spirit: "Great care must be taken to listen daily, and if fermenting continues the wine has to be placed in a cask, which was treated the day before with a piece of sulphur six inches long and four fingers broad, but no longer than this, as otherwise the wine is bleached too much. And after it has been lying still for eight days, it is poured over into clean casks which are treated the day before, the first of May."

The build up to the 2017 harvest of Muscat de Frontignan was text book. The autumn months were hot and dry – resulting in early leaf fall and moderate reserves in the vines. Winter came late with mild conditions. The rainfall, although better than 2015, was below average. Spring's

warm weather initiated budburst, however a cold September resulted in the budburst being slightly uneven. The summer months were near perfect for flowering and berry set. The exemplary growing season was characterised by cold nights, moderately warm days, cooling winds and just the right amount of rainfall perfecting the process of berry development and the ever so important maturation process.

Despite the drought, we were able to isolate our individual pickings into 20 different batches of Muscat de Frontignan. These pickings spanned over two months, allowing us numerous possibilities when making up the final blend of Vin de Constance 2017. The most time consuming of these batches is the essencia, the heart and soul of the Vin de Constance, which is made from raisins harvested individually by our specialised team.

The secret to Vin de Constance is perfect balance between sugar, acid and alcohol while retaining freshness and expressing our cool climate location and unique terroir. Therefore, everything we do from vineyard to bottle is done with this in mind. It is our goal to continually strive to improve what we do and to this end we are researching and reviewing, and when justified making prudent adjustments in practices annually, aiming to do a little better year on year. For this vintage we believe that we have successfully found small ways of better preserving freshness and aromatics during the aging process.



Here are some other indications of what we have been undertaking:

- It is the first year that we have supplemented the use of inorganic nitrogen as a fermentation aid. Now we solely use organic nitrogen sources that come in the form of amino acids, vitamins and trace elements. This gives an enhanced balance that allows us to express the beautiful purity of flavours.

- 2017 marks our third vintage using the new cellar, of which we now have a better understanding of its dynamic. As a result, we can better control every little detail in our handling of the grapes and our approach to winemaking.

- A great deal of effort has gone into restoring the natural balance of the soils and vines. Since 2012 we have slowly implemented sustainable farming practices, reducing the old and increasing organic and bio dynamic methods. By doing so, we can restore homeostasis in the soil and create an environment that is in balance. With a holistic approach leaning towards bio-dynamics, our aim is to improve the quality of our soils and fruit produced. As a WWF Conservation Champion our vision is aligned with that of the World Wildlife Fund, as we aim to unite conservation and agricultural development in a complementary, mutually beneficial manner.

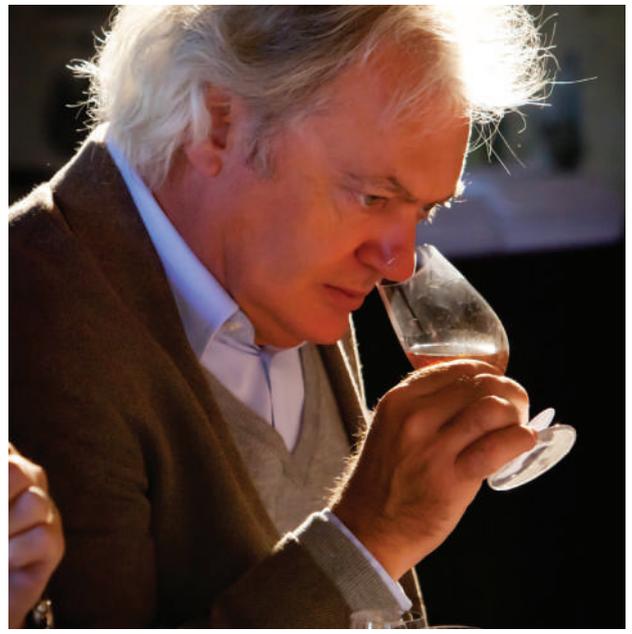
- As part of our social sustainability project Klein Constantia is now WIETA (Wine & Agricultural Industry Ethical Trade Association) accredited. The organisation's ethical code of conduct serves as a rigorous framework through which its members and their supply chain are monitored. Social audits serve as a primary monitoring tool to measure not only legal compliance with South Africa's labour and occupational health & safety legislation, but also goes beyond compliance requirements to ensure that the company's management systems reflect sustainable ethical principles, policies and practices. (For more information, visit their website [here](#)). As part of our project, we are working on community upliftment through special training and development. Alvino, one of our cellar hands has recently completed his national certificate in winemaking and has taken part in two vintages overseas, one in Burgundy and last year in Portugal.

- In order to enhance the complexity of the wine, in 2016 we began to experiment with a 'Non Saccharomyces' yeast strain, stimulating an additional non-alcoholic but microbial fermentation. The added benefit of this process is that it inhibits any unwanted micro-organisms in the wine, reducing any off flavours from being formed. A great deal was learnt from this experiment and we have implemented it into the 2017 vintage.

- NDtech is the latest cutting-edge offering from Amorim Corks. It is a unique quality control technology for natural cork closures that effectively eliminates the risk of cork taint, by ensuring that if any TCA remains present in the cork it is below the detection threshold of 0.5 nanograms/litre. This helps preserve the integrity of both the cork and the wine. The 2017 vintage of Vin de Constance is the fourth vintage to receive these closures.

- Blending is an important factor when trying to achieve a perfect balance in the wine. Outside of our internal tasting panel, select tasters from both South Africa and France attend multiple tasting sessions over a 6-month period, constantly fine tuning the perfect blend before the final decision is made and then bottled.

- Matthew Day, *winemaker*.



# Tasting Note

The approach used to create Vin de Constance is unique to Klein Constantia, tailored from historic information used to make the iconic sweet wines of Constantia in the 1700's. From these records we have recreated a style of Muscat de Frontignan involving numerous winemaking techniques in order to create the perfect sweet wine. One of the most important aspects is to achieve balance, to do this we harvested the grapes in numerous batches over a 2 month period. Each batch has a precise purpose and is meticulously blended together on numerous occasions to achieve a perfect balance between sugar, alcohol and acidity. After an extended fermentation period, the wine was aged for 3 years in a combination of 50% new oak and acacia barrels, as well as large format foudres before further blending and bottling.



## DESCRIPTION

Pure gold in colour. The nose presents an enticing encounter, followed by precise yet delicate aromas of white flowers, ripe citrus and touch of rosewater and almonds. The palate is in perfect harmony with a luscious mouthfeel. Flavours of creamy stone fruit, litchi, citrus zest and a lively spice abound creating an ideal balance. It concludes with a vibrant yet complex long finish.

Vintage	2017
Varietal	Muscat de Frontignan
Alcohol	14.0%
Residual sugar	165g/l
PH	3.7
Total Acid	6.6g/l
Region	Constantia, Western Cape





VIN

DE

CONSTANCE

SCORE CARD

# Vin de Constance

## KLEIN CONSTANTIA — 1685 —

### Vin de Constance 2016

**98 points & Best Sweet Wine of the year** - Tim Atkin SA Report  
**97 points** - Vinous  
**96 points** - James Suckling  
**94 points** - Robert Parker's Wine Advocate  
**18.5/20** - Jancis Robinson

### Vin de Constance 2015

**98 points & Best Sweet Wine of the year** - Tim Atkin SA Report  
**98 points** - Adam Lechmere  
**96 points, Gold** - Decanter World Wine Awards  
**96 points** - James Suckling  
**94 points** - Robert Parker's Wine Advocate  
**93+ points** - Vinous  
**93 points** - Wine Spectator  
**5 stars & joint Best Natural Sweet Wine of the year** - Platter's Wine Guide SA  
**Highest scoring SA wine in Decanter's Top Wines of the Year 2019**

### Vin de Constance 2014

**97 points, Platinum & Best in Show** - Decanter World Wine Awards  
**96 points** - Tim Atkin SA Report  
**95 points** - James Suckling  
**94 points** - Wine Spectator  
**94 points** - Vinous  
**5 stars & Best Natural Sweet Wine of the year** - Platter's Wine Guide SA

### Vin de Constance 2013

**98 points** - Karen MacNeil, WineSpeed  
**97 points** - Jamie Goode, Wineanorak  
**96 points & Platinum Best in Show** - Decanter World Wine Awards  
**96 points** - Robert Parker Wine Advocate  
**95 points** - Tim Atkin SA Report  
**95 points** - James Suckling  
**94 points** - Wine Spectator  
**94 points** - Stephen Tanzer  
**19/20** - Weinwisser  
**5 stars** - Platter's Wine Guide SA

### Vin de Constance 2012

**99 points** - Adam Lechmere  
**97 points** - Decanter Rating  
**97 points** - Tim Atkin SA Report  
**95 points** - Wine Spectator  
**94 points** - Robert Parker Wine Advocate  
**Overall Sweet Wine of the year** - Tim Atkin SA Report  
**Best Sweet & Fortified wines** - Tim Atkin SA Report  
**5 stars** - Platter's Wine Guide SA

### Vin de Constance 2011

**96 points & Best Sweet Wine of the year** - Tim Atkin SA Report  
**96 points** - Winemag SA  
**94 points** - Wine Spectator  
**93 points** - Stephen Tanzer  
**93 points** - Robert Parker Wine Advocate  
**5 stars** - Platter's Wine Guide SA