

Oeno-File

Rants Raves and Reviews

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2003 Vilafonté "Series C".

Paarl-Simonsberg, South Africa. 14.8% alcohol. \$70. 1,378 cases made.

Vilafonté is a new ultra premium winery from South Africa. In 1998 and 1999 they planted almost 30 acres to a mix of Bordeaux varietals - Cabernet, Franc, Malbec, and Merlot with most of the acreage devoted not surprisingly to Cabernet and Merlot. The vines are densely planted (2,110 vines per acre) on gently sloping gravelly clay soil. Vilafonté drops crop twice per vintage to increase the concentration of their wines. Zelma Long, a talented and very experienced winemaker who has done stints at Robert Mondavi and Simi in the past, makes the Vilafonté wines.

The series c is their flagship blend of 82% Cabernet, 9% Merlot, 7% Franc, and 2% Malbec that was raised in French oak barrels (54% new). An intense perfume of blackberries, cherries, the tell tale game, roasted herb, and earth that marks South African wines, dark toasty oak, a hint of vanilla, and coffee. Velvety but firm tannin dissipate slowly in the mouth - the silkiness of the tannin is really remarkable. Lots of power balanced with plenty of acidity.

If one is looking for the latest heavy weight New World Cabernet laden with sugar then this is not the wine for you. For the rest of us this wine presents a quandary: Where do I find enough cash in the budget to lay down some of this shockingly fine rather aristocratic wine from South Africa?

Drink 2010 to 2017. 94 points.

2003 Vilafonté "Series M".

Paarl-Simonsberg, South Africa. 14% alcohol. \$50. 1,875 cases made.

A deep red hue with some brownish tinges and thin but substantially colored legs. Very full and immediately pleasing aromas of roasted herbs, chocolate, earth, iodine, game, and baked cherry. Perfectly balanced with a considerable depth of richness and fine acidity. Excellent length. Substantial tannins but they are smooth and layered. A blend of 41 % Merlot, 39% Cabernet, 16% Malbec, and 4% Franc that was raised in French oak barrels (19% new). A very impressive first effort from this new producer.

Drink now (2010) to 2014. 92+ points.