

XX CLUB
SESSION 115.2
1st NOVEMBER 2023

TASTING NOTES

WHITE WINE:

EXCELSIOR HERITAGE RESERVE WILD FERMENT CHARDONNAY 2022, 75cl, £12.99, ABV 13.5%

The Press Association wrote, "South African winemakers are producing an abundance of world-class wines". Excelsior Estate has been doing that for 150 years, since its foundation in Robertson in 1870. Today it's still owned by the De Wet family, with father and son duo – Freddie and Peter – running the show. Their philosophy is that great wine is made in the vineyard, so much care is given to the vines. Their Heritage Reserve range uses their finest grapes from the lowest-yielding vines on the region's premium limestone soils, all to ensure rich flavour. Only yeast from the grape skins is used, which produces a wine with broader flavours. Enjoy this creamy, unoaked Chardonnay, with its citrus peach notes, with white meats or salmon.

Tasting notes

Expressive notes of fleshy white peach, ripe citrus with a long finish

Aroma

Bright, lemon and mineral, with ripe peach, creamy edge, nutty

RED WINE:

ALPHA DOMUS MERLOT CABERNET COLLECTION 2017, 75CL, £17.99 ABV 12.50%

Alpha Domus was started in the early days of New Zealand winemaking – 1989 to be precise. Anthonius and Leonarda Ham saw that the Western Heretaunga region of Hawke's Bay, with its ancient riverbeds and moderate climate, held the secret to fine wines. They planted vineyards in this area, now known as the Bridge Pa Triangle district, and were one of the subregion's first wineries. They remain family-owned today and have received Trophies for their impressive wines. 30 years later, they have converted fully to organic viticulture, with certification from the 2023 vintage. New Zealander Barry Riwai is the winemaker. With considerable experience all over the world, he is well suited to produce this elegant Kiwi take on a Bordeaux blend.

Tasting notes

Bright, ripe red fruits, fine-grained tannins, depth, savoury length

Aroma

Dark plum, liquorice, ripe berries and vanilla spice

**SWEET WINE:
SEIFRIED ESTATE SWEET
AGNES RIESLING (HALF
BOTTLE) 2019, £16.99,
ABV 10.5%**

Luscious sweet Riesling from the pioneering Seifried estate in Nelson, just next door to Marlborough. The region boasts 2,400 hours of sunshine a year, bringing amazing intensity and complexity to this fabulous, rich, honeyed wine. The sweetness is achieved by allowing the grapes extended ripening time on the vine, increasing their sugar content. Expect rich notes of ripe peach, exotic fruit and blossom. It has the perfect balance of honeyed sweetness and fresh acidity, making a great pairing for sweet fruit tarts, baklava, or ripe blue cheese. This utterly irresistible dessert wine, with all its Trophies, Golds and Double Golds every vintage, is the pride of Hermann Seifried. He was a grape growing pioneer, who arrived in New Zealand's South Island from Austria, via Germany and South Africa, in 1969. He met and married Kiwi Agnes Wilkins, and they soon realised their shared dream of growing grapes. 1976 was their maiden vintage and, over 40 years on, the Seifrieds are racking up countless awards with the help of the second generation. Sweet Agnes is pure, late-harvested Riesling crafted from naturally 'raisined' grapes from the stony soils of their Eden Road vineyard. Boasting a total of 13 trophies and 28 Golds since launch, it's a delight on its own or with apricot tart.



**PORT WINE:
ANDRESEN 10-YEAR-OLD WHITE PORT (50CL) NV, £18.99
ABV 20%
Grape: Malvasia Fina, Códega do Larinho, Rabigato, Arinto**

Andresen are one of the last remaining family owned port houses. A dedication to quality remains at their heart, and their openness to new ideas has led to this entirely new port category. Recently voted 'Wine of the Show' at the London wine show. The wine is smooth and inviting with an abundance of dried fruit flavours and delicious long finish. Served chilled it makes a truly outstanding apéritif, or serve with crème brûlée, cake or savour a glassful after dinner.

White Port is made from white grapes and comes in two styles - dry and sweet. The sweet version is the traditional style of White Port and tends to be rich and grapey. Examples of these may last as long as some of the red vintage ports and make an excellent aperitif. They are best served slightly chilled with a plate of nuts. The sweetest examples are known as 'lagrima' (tear) after the viscosity of the wine in the glass. Since 2006 age classifications of 10, 20, 30 or 40 years old can be used although these are rare.

The drier style is a more recent innovation that is increasing in popularity; it is off-dry, often with a nutty hint, and is best drunk in its youth. Great when served chilled as an aperitif or with tonic water, ice and a slice of lemon or lemon peel. White Port is largely vinified in the same way as red (albeit with less or no maceration time). It is aged for around 18 months in stainless steel or concrete vats (and occasionally wood) before bottling and does not improve with ageing. Since 2006 age classifications of 10, 20, 30 or 40 years old can be used although these are rare.