

# Klein Constantia Harvest 2016

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Harvest 2016 has been exemplary in many ways. Not often are winemakers afforded the luxury of taking time off in April, this year has been the exception to the rule. A great deal of thanks is due to El Niño which caused a very warm and dry build up to vintage resulting in an early harvest. Fortunately, in the Constantia Valley we receive enough rainfall in even the driest of seasons and are safeguarded with sufficient water in the root zone, unlike some warmer regions in the country. We are also protected from the extreme heat by our proximity to the ocean, experiencing predominantly cool night time temperatures that cause for favourable berry growing conditions that are in line with previous vintages.

In hindsight, the 2016 harvest was one of the most textbook years we have ever experienced at Klein Constantia and the most fleeting. There was a frantic rush to try and receive all the Sauvignon blanc into the cellar, with a window period for picking spanning only 3 to 4 weeks. We systematically started harvesting at the bottom of the mountain and worked our way up, theoretically this is how it should be done but is seldom the case. Thankfully, due to our newly renovated cellar, we were well equipped to handle this.

As part of the refurbishment, we have revolutionised our grape reception. In striving to deliver the best fruit to the cellar we have created a tracking system where every crate is numbered and each picker is responsible



for their crates. All the grapes are picked, loaded and delivered to the cellar by hand. A series of conveyor belts have been designed to allow us to delicately sort through each bunch and berry in order to respect the careful attention they receive in the vineyards. A stem cutter has also been introduced to mulch the grapes stems; this enables us to fast track the composting process and gets the grape by-products back into the soil as fast as possible.

The 2016 vintage has the potential to produce some amazing wines. One in particular, is the Vin de Constance. It was a quick and dry ripening season which allowed for perfect raisining of the berries. We passed through each block numerous times in order to harvest the best components to build a wine that has a balanced concentration between sugar, alcohol and acidity.

2016 sees some new exciting developments at Klein Constantia. Vin de Constance finally has a home – a double floor maturation cellar. The top floor displays new foudres with a private tasting room and the bottom floor is designated for barrels and bottles of older vintages. Currently as part of an experiment, we are busy planting some new cultivars to potentially blend into the Vin de Constance. Some traditional and some



completely out of the box, in a few years we hope to unveil some exciting news. We are still in the process of isolating our own clone of Muscat de Frontignan in conjunction with the University of Stellenbosch.

We're also proud to announce a new member to our family, Duran Cornhill, who after working for Klein Constantia and Châteaux Angelus for three years will be joining the team as my assistant winemaker.

Our Single Vineyard programme for Sauvignon blanc continues. This year we have made 6 single vineyard wines from the highest quality Sauvignon blanc sites on the farm, all part of our quest to express our unique terroir. After a few years of trials, our Chardonnay is here to stay with a new block recently being planted in a perfect spot on the farm.

In the past few years, we have put great effort into focusing on what we are good at and we think now we are well on track. 2016 is the first of many increasable vintages from the NEW Klein Constantia. This year has proved that with a lot of effort and some changes we are capable of achieving the best.

