

KNOCK OUT ROUND FOR ROBERTSON WINERY IN THE PLATTER WINE GUIDE

If you open the newly published John Platter Wine Guide at Robertson Winery, you'll be seeing stars! Not only are all the Vineyard Selection wines been printed in red, but they've all been awarded at least 4 stars, the No.1 Constitution Rd Shiraz and the Retreat Sauvignon Blanc winning 4 ½ stars.

The **Robertson Winery Retreat Sauvignon Blanc 2007** is described as having "clean-cut elegance, abundant grassy nettles and fig leaf, refreshing racy acidity; long herbaceous finish". The taster can't decide whether he wants another glass, or another bottle.

The Retreat farm, which has been in the De Wet family since 1896, has a terroir quite unusual for Robertson. The Sauvignon Blanc vineyard can be found high up on the south-facing slopes of the Riviersonderend Mountains. The sea breezes from the nearby coast cool down this vineyard every afternoon in summer, allowing the grapes to mature slowly.

"But we still harvest in two batches," explains winemaker Jacques Roux: "We harvest the outsides of the vineyard, and vinify them separately to the grapes in the middle of the vineyard, which lies in a dip and therefore gets a tad less sun. These 'middle' grapes therefore have lower sugars and are less ripe, so the resulting flavours in the tank are markedly different. The tank with the riper grapes shows great aromas on the nose, while the grapes picked from the middle of the block have a shy nose, but much more flavour on the palate with a lingering aftertaste. Jacques blended these two tanks together in a ratio that perfectly balances nose and palate, and displays a variety of Sauvignon Blanc aromas.

The **Robertson Winery No.1 Constitution Rd Shiraz 2004** is described as having "good potential" with "succulent, medium-bodied, sweet spice and savoury nuances continuing on sustained finish". This wine is Robertson Winery's flagship and represents a barrel selection from their Wolfkloof Shiraz Vineyard. Shiraz is a runaway success in the Robertson Valley, and performs particularly well in the well drained, lime-rich Karoo soils on Wolfkloof which has been in the Viljoen family since 1880.

While Shiraz is a vigorous grower, careful crop management reduces the yield substantially and therefore concentrates the flavour in the remaining bunches. The wine is naturally fermented in open fermentors, punching the cap manually every 4 hours. So bold and succulent its fruit, the wine is left to mature in a combination of French, American and Hungarian oak for 27 months.

Only a few barrels are selected from the Wolfkloof batch, which means the Robertson Winery No.1 Constitution Road Shiraz is only available in very limited quantities.

However, don't despair, the 2005 vintage has just been released and promises to maintain the high standards set by its predecessors. Winemaker Jacques Roux describes it as being "a deep rich purple colour with an intense aroma of dark ripe black berries, seductive spicy fruit and black pepper. It has a velvety palate with supple fine-grained tannins combining well with the French oak." Once again, limited quantities of this collectors' item are available only from the Winery itself or in selected wine shops countrywide.

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