

Alheit Vineyards

Alheit Vineyards Cartology 2023 is a remarkable expression of South African heritage , crafted from old-vine Chenin Blanc and Semillon, capturing the soul of Cape winemaking.

Cartology Bush Vines 2023

, South Africa



Alcohol :13,00 %

Composition: 94% Chenin Blanc, 6% Sémillon

Region and Vineyards

Cartology is crafted from a collection of **old dryland bush vines** spread across the **Western Cape**, with an average age of 40-50 years. These low-yielding vineyards, producing approximately **3 tons per hectare**, are planted in regions like **Skurfberg, Piekenierskloof, Malmesbury, Paardeberg, Bottelary, False Bay, and Tygerberg**.

The **Chenin Blanc (94%)** dominates the blend and comes from these historic sites, while the **Semillon (6%)** is sourced from the renowned **La Colline block in Franschhoek**, adding depth and texture. The diversity of these sites provides a multi-dimensional profile, reflecting the Cape's complex terroirs.

Winemaking and Maturation

The grapes for Cartology 2023 were **hand-sorted and whole-bunch pressed**, ensuring only the highest quality juice. The raw juice was left intentionally cloudy and underwent **wild fermentation** in a mix of **cement eggs, old foudres, and used barrels** of various sizes. This fermentation process lasted anywhere from **three weeks to 11 months**, showcasing the individuality of each parcel.

Post-fermentation, the wine remained on its lees for approximately **12 months**, enhancing texture and complexity. It then rested in tanks on fine lees for an additional **five months** before bottling. The result is a wine with depth, energy, and purity, achieved through careful, minimalist winemaking.

Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Bright straw yellow with golden reflections.
- **Aroma**: Ripe pear, citrus rind, and subtle herbal undertones dominate the bouquet, creating an inviting and layered aromatic profile.
- **Palate**: A harmonious balance between richness and crystalline freshness, with energetic acidity. The wine finishes long and savory, leaving a moreish impression.

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Did you know?

The name **Cartology**, meaning "the study of maps or charts," symbolizes the journey of discovering these rare old vineyards. It reflects the wine's role as a **vinous map of the Cape**, uniting history, terroir, and craftsmanship in a single bottle.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Cape Malay chicken curry**: The wine's acidity and citrus notes cut through the richness of the curry while complementing its complex spices.
- **Grilled lobster with garlic butter**: The ripe fruit and savory finish enhance the sweetness of the lobster and the richness of the butter.
- **Roasted root vegetables with thyme**: The herbal undertones and vibrant freshness harmonize beautifully with earthy, caramelized flavors.
- **Aged Gruyère cheese**: The wine's energy and subtle complexity balance the nutty creaminess of the cheese.

95

Robert Parker (RP) : 95 Points (2023)

Here's an ambitious wine that beautifully captures the quality and the aspirations of contemporary South African wine. A wine with a clear identity, the Alheit Vineyards 2023 Western Cape Cartology Bush Vines is a blend of 94% Chenin Blanc and 6% Semillon. It draws its fruit from various carefully selected parcels of bush vines in the Western Cape. It starts off slow but maintains a beautiful pace as it picks up intensity and aromas with stone fruit, sweet citrus and crushed stone. It is naturally fermented, and you taste the delicate texture of the fruit. That lasting intensity pounces up from behind and leaves you with a long-lasting sense of purity and freshness.

95 vinous

Vinous (Antonio Galloni) (VN) : 95 Points (2023)

The 2023 Cartology has slightly more Sémillon in the blend this year (see the Producer Commentary for Chris Alheit's reasoning why). As usual, this is a blend of what he considers to be his best parcels. It has one of the classiest bouquets you will find in a South African white this vintage: yellow fruit, a soupçon of peach skin, lanolin and whisked egg whites. Stunning delineation and purity. The palate is very well balanced with a bright and tensile opening. This has a killer line of acidity and is full of tension and complexity, concluding with a mineral-driven finish that has a slightly waxy/resinous texture. Very long. Very classy.

94 James Suckling

James Suckling (JS) : 94 Points (2023)

This has an elegant and pretty nose of fresh pears, lemons, chamomile, wild thyme, beeswax and minerals. It's deliciously salty and savory on the palate, medium-bodied but compact and fleshy, nicely weighted. Long and cool. 94% chenin blanc and 6% semillon from bush vines across the Western Cape. Drink from 2025.