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## A Technical Unravelling of the Young Wine Show Champion!



2019



Jongwyn Skou  
SA Young Wine Show

*Winner*

GENERAL SMUTS TROPHY

SA Champion Wine

FLAGSTONE WINES  
Sauvignon Blanc

Dr. Carien Coetzee

[Basic Wine](#)

18 September 2019

The coveted General Smuts Trophy for the best wine at the SA Young Wine show was won by Flagstone Winery in Somerset West for their 2019 Sauvignon Blanc (unwooded). This was the fifth time in the competition's 187-year existence (the oldest of its kind in the world) that a Sauvignon Blanc wine won the General Smuts Trophy.

Table 1. Sauvignon Blanc General Smuts Trophy Winners

2019	Flagstone Sauvignon Blanc
2013	Diemersdal Sauvignon Blanc
2002	Roodezandt Sauvignon Blanc
2000	Cape Point Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc
1999	Vergelegen Sauvignon Blanc

Industry and consumers are waiting anxiously for the release of this prestigious wine which, I have been told, will be released as a special edition in October this year. However, in the meantime, a peek into the technical aspects of the wine made from South Africa’s most popular variety, will give some insight into the process behind the success.

The grapes are sourced from a single vineyard (seven-year-old, clone SB 317) in the Darling district, Coastal Region of the Western Cape. The single vineyard is located at 310 m above sea level, exposing the grapevines to heavy winds that pick up daily from 11am like clockwork. This unique terroir results in a mesoclimate that is about 5°C cooler than what is experienced in the town of Darling. The average rainfall of 450 mm per annum combined with Hutton and Oakleaf soil, that has good physical and water-retention properties, means that no irrigation is necessary. This unique site ensures a large buffer capacity of enough water for healthy growth and ripening of the grapevines, resulting in exceptional quality grapes.

The fruit were hand harvested at optimal ripeness on 11 February 2019 during the early hours of the morning. An average yield of six tons/ha was obtained. Mindful handling of the must and the judicious use of inert gas ensured an overall reductive environment during the entire winemaking process. Sulphur dioxide (40 mg/L) and ascorbic acid (15 mg/L) were added to the juice at crushing for protection against oxygen and enzymatic oxidation.

Eighteen hours of skin contact contributed to the mouthfeel and body of the wine and ensured optimal extraction of potential aroma precursors. After pressing, the juice settled for three days allowing additional contact with the rough skin particles. The clear juice was racked and inoculated with rehydrated Alchemy II (Anchor Yeast), a yeast product known for optimal volatile thiol production. Fermentation took place between 13°C and 14°C until dry, after which the wine remained on the gross lees for three weeks, stirring the lees once a week, adding complexity and body to the wine.

The wine was then racked and remained in contact with the fine lees in a stainless-steel tank. The wine will be tartrate stabilized in preparation for bottling using the 'static' cold stabilization method.

Table 2. General wine analyses

Alcohol %v/v	14.84
Residual Sugar (g/L)	2.12
Titrateable acidity (g/L)	7.15
pH	3.46
Volatile Acidity (g/L)	0.45
Free SO <sub>2</sub> (mg/L)	32
Total SO <sub>2</sub> (mg/L)	137

When asked what makes this wine stand out from the rest, the Flagstone Team replied, "The unique terroir gives the wine its remarkable distinctive personality, expression and vibrancy. Sound winemaking ensures elegance and finesse". Tasting notes from the cellar staff includes descriptors: herbaceous, asparagus, citrus, lime, passion fruit and green fig with a hint of guava. The wine is full-bodied with upfront fruit, vibrant acidity and great length.

"Each year we're provided with an opportunity to reflect the wonderful complexity that goes into a vintage, from terroir and soil to climate and weather. Every year the journey is different, every year it's a challenge and every year there's an immense reward in combining our skill and creativity to produce Flagstone Sauvignon Blanc. The only way to bring that creativity out is by working hard and by really having a passion for what we do", says Gerhard Swart, Head Winemaker at Flagstone Winery. The ultimate recipe resulting in an award-winning wine: classy, complex and complete.