

Bernard Foucher

CABERNET FRANC · 2020

WINE OF ORIGIN PAARL

Wines are made not only for the moment of drinking, but for patience, memory, and time.

THE VINEYARD

Bernard Foucher occupies a distinctive place within La Luandière. As the estate's flagship Cabernet Franc, it is intended to express not only the character of the cultivar, but the particular vineyard from which it comes and the conditions of the year in which it was grown. Cabernet Franc is remarkably transparent in this regard. It carries its surroundings with unusual clarity, revealing differences in season, soil and ripening conditions with very little disguise.

The vines are planted on the higher terraces of the farm, where their position opens them to abundant sunlight and the cooler movement of air descending from the Klein Drakenstein Mountains. Paarl provides the warmth required for full flavour development, while the elevation and exposure help preserve freshness and aromatic definition. This natural tension between ripeness and restraint lies at the heart of Bernard Foucher.

Beneath the vines, sandy clay loam soils contribute depth and structure while encouraging the fine tannin profile so important to Cabernet Franc. The fruit develops slowly into an expression that is generous without becoming heavy, with the vineyard lending both savoury character and a distinctive freshness to the wine.

IN THE CELLAR

The cellar approach is deliberately unobtrusive. Our philosophy of minimal intervention, careful extraction, and long maturation is particularly important with Cabernet Franc, a cultivar whose finer qualities can easily be obscured by excessive handling. Fermentation is therefore approached gently, allowing colour, tannin and flavour to develop naturally without pushing the wine beyond the character of the fruit.

Maturation in French oak for approximately twelve months provides structure and quiet refinement rather than an obvious layer of wood. Thereafter, the wine is afforded further time in bottle before release. This period is an essential part of its development, allowing fruit, tannin, acidity and oak to become increasingly integrated while retaining the freshness and aromatic detail that give the wine its identity.

TASTING NOTES

The 2020 vintage is particularly compelling for its sense of restraint. Rather than relying on sheer ripeness or concentration, it draws its character from freshness, purity of fruit and finely judged structure. There is an attractive seriousness to the wine, but also a youthful vitality that keeps it poised and inviting.

Mid depth and gently perfumed nose with rustic winter red berry notes. This is more sappy than the 2019, with fresh acidity and some structure, the palate is still broad and fulfilling, wood notes are indistinguishable and the whole effect is of pristine and classy fruit. This is a restrained wine, balanced and cerebral rather than showy and super-ripe. Fine grained and polished, there are cranberries, tomato leaves and forest red fruits here, just mid weight and with bones to age. A clean wine, youthful, vigorous and charming.

The character of the 2020 is found as much in its savoury detail as in its fruit. Cranberry and woodland berries sit alongside the leafy, gently herbal nuances so characteristic of Cabernet Franc, creating a wine that feels composed and distinctly varietal. Its fruit is succulent without becoming sweet or excessive, and the freshness running through the palate gives definition to its broader texture.

There is a fine-boned quality to the structure. The tannins are polished and precise rather than imposing, providing a framework for the wine while allowing its aromatic character to remain clearly visible. French oak has become almost inseparable from the fruit, contributing subtle depth and shape without announcing itself as a separate flavour.

Moderate alcohol, bright acidity and a supple middle palate bring a sense of harmony to the wine. It has sufficient generosity to be enjoyed in its youth, yet there is an underlying seriousness that becomes more apparent as it opens in the glass. The finish is persistent and quietly savoury, with red fruit gradually giving way to finer earthy, leafy and mineral nuances.

CELLARING

A small amount of natural sediment may develop in bottle, reflecting the restrained handling and minimal intervention employed in the cellar. Rather than pursuing cosmetic perfection, the intention is to preserve the substance and integrity of the wine and to allow its evolution to continue naturally.

Bernard Foucher 2020 has the structure to develop gracefully over many years. As its youthful cranberry and red berry character recedes, further layers of dried herbs, forest floor, cedar, earth and savoury spice should begin to emerge, while the tannins soften and become increasingly seamless.

It is a Cabernet Franc defined not by excess, but by precision: finely structured, quietly complex and deeply connected to its place. In 2020, Bernard Foucher shows a particularly elegant side of the vineyard, combining youthful energy with the composure and depth expected of La Luandière's flagship wine.

