

Le Bonheur



This 163-hectare estate with the optimistic name of Le Bonheur ("Happiness") is situated along the slopes of the Klapmuts Hill in the northern reaches of the Simonsberg Mountain, in the Stellenbosch Wine of Origin district.

Le Bonheur was an important venue for travellers in the Cape, offering fresh spring water and an outspan area at the major junction of Cape Town, Paarl, Stellenbosch and Malmesbury. Today Le Bonheur draws wine lovers who are content to sip fine quality wines, and enjoy the seemingly timeless atmosphere of the Estate.

Le Bonheur has an enviable terroir. Most of the 65 hectares of vineyards face north, while a few face east and south-east. The vineyards are situated at different altitudes from 200 to 350 metres above sea-level, and each has its own, unique soil characteristics. There are four basic soil types at Le Bonheur: decomposed granite, red loam, sand, and sand over pot clay. Winemaker Sakkie Kotze harvests wines of excellence from these soils of Klapmuts Hill.

Four years of painstaking labour went into perfecting the structure and composition of the soil before entrusting the vines to it. The improvement of Le Bonheur's soils has been modelled on those of the famed vineyards of France. Today, they contain all the minerals and other nutrients needed for growing the top-performing varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

Of these varieties, the best clones were selected to suit the Estate's climate and soils. The Chardonnay vines are rooted in areas with well-drained soil and maximum exposure to the sun. Most of the Sauvignon Blanc vines are planted on the lower slopes in cooler clay soils. The higher-lying vineyards with their red loam and decomposed granite soils have proved to be ideal for the cultivation of the shy-bearing Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot

vines.

History Of The Estate:

The history of Le Bonheur dates back to the late 18th century when it was granted by Lord Charles Somerset to its first owner, Jacob Isak de Villiers. The de Villiers family was among the first 200 French Huguenots to arrive in the Cape in 1689 after a five month journey on the ship, the Zion.

They built the homestead, a classic example of the H-shaped Cape Dutch style architecture of the 1820s, complete with its original doors and floors, and again today painted in subtle ice-cream hues typical of the day. **By 1972, when Michael Woodhead acquired the Estate**, no wine had been made on Le Bonheur for 50 years. The vineyards were neglected and the cellar had become antiquated. Since then, Le Bonheur has been completely redeveloped.

Today Le Bonheur is owned by Lusan Holdings (Pty) Ltd, a joint venture between Distell and Hans-J Schreiber. The joint venture is responsible for the farming activities and the production of the wine. The joint venture markets and sells its products exclusively through Distell.

How To Get There:

Travelling from Cape Town to Stellenbosch via the N2: Take the Stellenbosch R44 off-ramp from the N2. At the stop street on the bridge, turn left to Stellenbosch. Proceed over a set of traffic lights on route to Stellenbosch. Do not turn-off anywhere in Stellenbosch, remain on the R44 on route to Paarl. Approximately 10 kilometres after exiting Stellenbosch, turn left onto the estate.

From Cape Town to Stellenbosch via the N1: Take the R44 off-ramp from the N1 and proceed to Stellenbosch. Travel along this road (the R44) for approximately 5 kilometres and turn right onto the estate.

For further details visit <http://www.lebonheur.co.za/>.