

BADENHORST WINES

(SWARTLAND, SOUTH AFRICA)

<http://caperitif.com/>



Made for centuries in the Mediterranean countries that share a wine production history, the tinctures that we today know as vermouth, were largely a collection of local vegetation – herbs, flowers and other botanicals all infused into a wine and grape spirit concoction. Recipes were prized local secrets, but some of these received notoriety beyond the confines of the village and became the commercial vermouths we know today.

By the early 21st century, Caperitif had become a ghost ingredient in classic cocktail recipes. What was this mysterious ‘Cape Aperitif’ that was referenced in that classic cocktail bible from the late 1800’s, the Savoy Cocktail Book?

This question asked by an adventurous Danish mixologist lead to a meeting with a maverick South African winemaker and the rebirth of South Africa’s once-famous vermouth.

The ‘ghost ingredient’ is a handcrafted, natural product made with love and care and all-natural ingredients on the Kalmoesfontein farm in the Swartland wine growing region of the Western Cape, South Africa. This is home not only to Caperitif, but also to Swaan Cape Tonic and the AA Badenhorst wines.

Caperitif

CSPC# 810695

6x750ml

18.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

100% *Chenin Blanc*

Winemakers

Adi Badenhorst & Lars Erik Lyngaard Schmidt

Botanicals?

Botanists have classified areas that contain particular types of plants across the globe into Floral Kingdoms. The Swartland falls within the Cape Floral Kingdom – the most diverse of the 6 kingdoms and the only one that is contained within one country. The Cape Floral Kingdom has almost 3 times as many species as the South American rainforests, the second most diverse region. Whilst only occupying 1% of the African continent, the Cape Floral Kingdom contains 20% of the plant species in Africa. It is from this kingdom that we source the many aromatic and flavoursome botanicals

General Info Not indigenous to the Swartland area but found on the farm (indeed it lends its name to the home of Caperitif – Kalmoesfontein) is the Kalmoes (*Acorus calamus*), a native of India, southern Russia, central Asia and Siberia. The leaves of this plant have been used for centuries as a medicinal cure, the rhizome dried and ground to a powder as a substitute for ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg and an extract has been used to flavour pipe tobacco. The bible makes reference to its use and poets, including Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau often alluded to the plant’s connection to love, lust and affection.

With that information and when we found it growing wild on the farm, we call home – “Kalmoesfontein” (the spring that harbours Kalmoes), it was clear that the *Acorus calamus* was to become a key component of the Caperitif.

Unfortunately, the Americans and their Food and Drug Administration decided in the 1960’s that extracts of the *Acorus calamus* could not be used in foodstuffs, so our American bottlings are infused separately without Kalmoes and instead we use a dash more cinnamon for these batches.

What’s in it?

A simple and natural production process using seasonally available botanicals creates a subtle variation from batch to batch. We celebrate this distinction by labeling each batch with an associated number, which can be traced back to the season and circumstance of harvest and production. It is a marker placed in time to celebrate the certainties of change and diversity and the natural ebb and flow of things. Caperitif is made from wine fortified by spirits, gently sweetened with the sugars of the grape, bittered by cinchona bark and flavoured with a selection of some 35 natural botanicals, including Fynbos, Kalmoes and Naartjie.



Tasting Notes A high-quality white wine base (made on Kalmoesfontein) is the starting point. Then, a neutral grape-derived alcohol spirit is added to increase the alcohol to at least 18% ABV. Once this level of alcohol is achieved, 46 different ingredients are added. These ingredients include a variety of fruits, garden herbs, spices, a bouquet of various flowers, some roots and barks for bitterness as well as the distinctive and unique Fynbos. Fynbos is the collective name for the 8,500 different species of plants that grow in the Cape Floral Region. Many of these plants have been harvested and utilized for medicinal purposes for thousands of years and are intensely aromatic, imparting a unique aroma to the CAPERITIF. A portion of each batch is matured in old oak casks and blended back into the 'fresh' CAPERITIF to add even more complexity to the final product. CAPERITIF can be enjoyed like most aperitifs or vermouths simply with ice, or in many different cocktails.

Serve with With Christmas coming up, I can't think of something more fun and interesting to play with, whether you're northern or southern hemisphere, doing canapés and cocktails or a fusion-food starter or finding something to go with Christmas pudding and mince pies. One of the best matches I tried was dark chocolate with orange zest. Outside of Christmas, it's a beautiful match for Cape Malay curry or spiced butternut soup. It'll warm you up when it's cold outside and refresh you when it's hot [just like my desert island wine madeira – JR].

Scores/Awards **Wine of The Week - Tamlyn Currin, Jancisrobinson.com - 23November 2018**

Reviews *"This wonderful 'tonic wine' is a kaleidoscope of flavours. It pokes you in the ribs and flicks a middle finger at convention, doing somersaults on a tightrope between gramophone retro and reckless fringe. It's good straight up on ice, splashed with tonic water, turned long with cold soda water, mixed with gin for an edgy martini cocktail, and makes a much more sophisticated, complex Aperol Spritz than Aperol does. It also makes a damn good negroni. And for anyone who's looking for something less sweet than port and less alcoholic than cognac to finish the evening, this hits a satisfying middle ground."*

- TC, Jancisrobinson.com
