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Cellar Club October 2024

2022 Boekenhoutskloof The Chocolate Block Red Blend – S. Africa

Originally named Franschhoek meaning the “French Corner” because it was home of French Huguenots, today the valley contains many historic cellars and is an important tourist location because of its proximity to Cape Town. This valley is enclosed on three sides by towering mountains. Streams from the slopes flow down to the valley floor, converging to form the Berg River. The area excels in the production of full-bodied reds. A svelte lady is the figurehead of Boekenhoutskloof, an early silver hallmark of the Cape of Good Hope. She carries the dove of peace and hope, guarding over Boekenhoutskloof, representing intrinsic quality, which is prized above all else. The 2022 The Chocolate Block is 77% Syrah, 9% Grenache, 8% Cinsault, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% Viognier. Boysenberry and dark cherry dominate an inviting nose, with gentle scents of violets and rose petals and intriguing whiffs of exotic spice. The brambly black and red fruits of the nose follow through with flavors of ripe plums, black currant, dried cranberries and blueberries. Slight hints of cured meat and espresso add complexity to the round, silky mid-palate. The mouth-coating texture of dark milk chocolate is balanced with fine, powdery tannins and fresh yet integrated acidity. The wine is medium-bodied, lithe, and elegant with licorice and subtle hints of crushed coriander and black cardamom lingering on a smooth, soft finish. Vinous 90 PTS

Pairings: Food pairings: Grilled meats like steak, lamb chops, or barbecued ribs, Roast chicken, western BBQ chicken, or vegetable chili, A heavenly hamburger wine.

2019 Thelema Cabernet Sauvignon- Stellenbosch, S. Africa

Stellenbosch is the most famous wine-producing region in South Africa, just 25 miles east of Cape Town. The town is steeped in wine producing history and is home to the country’s best-known wine estates. Cabernet Sauvignon is the most widely planted grape variety. The region’s climate is relatively hot and dry, although a maritime influence comes from False Bay in the south. Cooling southeasterly breezes wash through the vineyards in the afternoons, refreshing the grapes after the morning’s hot sun. In 1983, Gyles Webb bought Thelema. He abandoned his accounting career in Durban to become a winemaker. The first wines under the Thelema label were released in 1988. By the mid 90’s Thelema’s wines sold out within a month after release, making it one of the most sought-after wine estates in South Africa. Complex and stylish, with aromas of blackcurrant leaf and coffee bean which progresses into a palate that’s structured and racy with hints of leather, dark chocolate and sweet blackberry. The firm tannins yield a gripping mouthfeel from the first sip through to the long lingering finish. Decanter 91 PTS, Tim Atkins 90 PTS

Pairings: A butterflied leg of lamb or a lamb steak with rosemary and potato dauphinoise on the side. Try marbled ribeye steak, prime rib, braised duck, or grilled sausages as well.