

THE SADIE FAMILY WINES PTY LTD

P.O. BOX 1019, APRILSKLOOF ROAD, 7299, PAARDEBERG, MALMESBURY, SOUTH AFRICA
TEL: +27 (0)22 125 0085 EMAIL: office@thesadiefamily.com

BEST POSSIBLE DRINKING DATES FOR OUR WINES

Often we get asked what may be the best drinking times for our wines.

The answer is much more complex than a one-liner or a brief reply.

First and foremost, we have to realize that everyone has a different drinking preference; some love the fruit purity and fresh fruit flavours and are happy with these primal fruit aromatics being the main drive in the young wine, albeit the tannins and texture being held by significant tension and possible astringency. For the sake of classification, let's call this wine VERSION 1.

Then other again, I would much rather forgo those initial aromatics for a wine that, with time gone by, has now have shed its primal fruit aromatics, baby fat, and brightness and has instead evolved into secondary flavours that did not exist in VERSION 1 and also at the potential loss of the primary aspects have now gained much more earthy, soil, aged fruit and secondary aromas, and all of this with the tannins that now present themselves much more round and smooth the initial tension in the wine now presents itself more relaxed and 'open". We may call this VERSION 2 of wine.

Then there are various connoisseurs in between these two wine versions of preference, but we will focus on the two stereotypes for this exercise.

Palladius

Palladius vintages 2002 – 2008 were all made in one frame. In that decade, the wines leaned more into ripeness, some old oak aging, and the blend's base was Chenin Blanc, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Rousanne, and Viognier with little Clairette Blanche. So most of those varieties were more on the riper side of maturity, and the wines were more opulent in style. We would suggest that you drink those wines whatever you have left as they were suitable for a decade of aging. If you are a drinker that loves wines in a potential VERSION 3 scenario, you may well hold back some bottles; we did. Still, we are realistic that the palate might be good, but the aromatics might overshoot in the tertiary sphere.

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Palladius vintages 2009 – 2014 were made with the inclusion of earlier ripening varieties that joined as vineyards to the project and the addition of Semillon Blanc & Gris, Verdello, increased volumes of Clairette Blanche and Grenache Gris and Palomino meant that the wine had more acidity and lifted fruit and also higher acidity. These wines are between a VERSION 1 and VERSION 2 definition and in good time. But can age still.

Palladius vintages 2015 to current had a new dimension added in that the new cellar was completed. All the wines moved in aging to only concrete and clay amphora, resulting in a much more restrained and reductive aging for the first 12 months and the second cycle of 12 months. The wines are racked off and aged in big old wooden casks, which are also respectful and slow aging. Thus these wines are, for now, sitting in the VERSION 1 identity.

Columella

Columella 2000 to 2009, being the first decade, we were picking riper, doing more extraction and the wines spent 24 months in small oak barrels, of which 40% was new and mainly Syrah and Mourvèdre. These wines were built like a solid brick, and they have aged incredibly well. Today, their tannins are something that we have reviewed and will bring in part back into our wines as we, later on, went for lighter extractions. But these wines are simply wonderful to drink, but they are only somewhere between a VERSION 1(2001,2003, 2007,2009) and VERSION 2 identity(2000, 2002, 2004,2006,2008).

Columella 2010 till date, we decided to move more towards earlier picking.

We stopped the massive extraction during fermentation and reduced the time in small oak to only one year at 10% new oak and an additional year in big, old wooden casks. We also introduced, Cinsault for fruit aspects, Carignan for acidity, Tinta Barocca for tannin, and increased the Mourvèdre percentage to have more tension and fiber in the wine. These vintages are still very much the VERSION 1 category, with possibly only 2012 and 2014 being slightly ahead of the curve edging the journey into VERSION 2, but it is early days.

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Old Vine Series

Soldaat

VERSION 1: 1-5 years

VERSION 2: 8 – 12 years

Then and beyond, it might develop incredibly gracefully, as Grenache has some of the most complex and incredible tannins. The variety has low acidity being its Achilles heel, but the tannin and tension often make up for it, whether anywhere in the world.

Pofadder

VERSION 1: 1-5 years

VERSION 2: 8 – 12 years

The Pofadder has the exact departure as Soldaat very much but being Cinsaut; it has another dimension in that Cinsaut almost seems like it ages up to the point of, say, 20 years. Then it just gets locked in and stays on that plateau, neither degenerating much nor improving, immortalized, and then shuts down. The curve is not steady, and it is like a tightrope reaching the other side.

Treinspoor

VERSION 1: 1-4 years

VERSION 2: 10 – 18 years

The reality is that Tinta Barocca is a big temperament grape with the demeanour and makeup to age. The entire being of this grape and liquid construction is made for the future.

It drinks well young with a big steak and a plate of triple-fired potato chips, but as a wine on its own or down a white table cloth and some fine dining, it requires the wait.

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Skerpioen

VERSION 1: 1-4 years

VERSION 2: 12 – 18 years

The Skerpioen blend of Chenin Blanc & Palomino grown in limestone has a prolific acidity and a salty mineral backbone. The wine is one of our wines that may be enjoyed at an early age as much of its identity is central to the freshness of fruit and salty mineral aspects, but these style of wines across the world is also known to age incredibly well.

Skurfberg

VERSION 1: 1-6 years

VERSION 2: 14– 18 years

The Skurfberg being high altitude Chenin Blanc on sandstone also brings mineral earthy aspects to the wine. Still, it does have a riper character and ages slightly faster to a point, but then kind of plateaus off and locks into prolonged aging from that point and beyond.

Kokerboom

VERSION 1: 1-8 years

VERSION 2: 16 – 20 years

The Kokerboom wine, a blend of Semillon Blanc and Semillon Gris, is prone to develop very slowly. Semillon as a variety has these waxy, sheep's wool and lanolin characteristics that simply as aromatic components age very slow. Semillon hangs onto time like a few other varieties, whether it is from Bordeaux or the hunter valley in Australia. The acidity in the Citrusdal mountains is lower than Bordeaux and the Hunter in Australia, so it might be that these wines plateau off at 25 years of age, but only time will tell, for we have only produced 19 vintages to this point, but 2009 is still in perfect condition.

'T Voetpad

VERSION 1: 1-4 years

VERSION 2: 15 – 22 years

The 'T Voetpad is a blend of Semillon Blanc & Gris, Palomino, and Chenin Blanc, all co-planted so picked together. On paper, it should be the wine that requires more time to reach an equilibrium in the bottle, but it is the first wine to get a most stable point. Guess after 140 years of living together that is what happens.

This wine can age incredibly well, and 2009 is still fresh.

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Mev. Kirsten

VERSION 1: 1-8 years
VERSION 2: 16 – 25 years

The Mev. Kirsten is, to our mind, potentially one of the best positioned old vine white parcels located to make an authentic wine for aging. The vineyard has heavy soil, and the wine as is the soil is very complex and needs much time. The earth takes longer to heat up in Spring, and the departure of the vines budding and growing is slow and the ripening as well, and that same reality follows through in the bottle.

It took us a long time to find the best way to work with the soil and the vineyard and equally so in the cellar with the vinification.

Mev. Kirsten from 2006 – 2009 was the formulation years, and the old vine series at the time did not exist. The wine at this stage was fermented on the white grape skins, and the initial wines became very structured, tannic, and took on the form of [orange wine](#).

Mev. Kirsten, from 2010 – to 2014, we started to get the balance right in the vineyard, and the wine certainly got much more refined. These wines are typically now in the VERSION 1 phase, starting the migration to the entry of VERSION 2, and they give much pleasure.

Mev. Kirsten 2015 to current is in the VERSION 1 sphere of development, but we indeed have found the rhythm of the vineyard in this timeframe. It was a matter of viticulture and vinification lining up to the actual reality of the site.

We trust the above will aid all in the decisions that may arise. In a perfect world, with the ownership of a case of six bottles opening the first bottle in year one, then the second four to seven years down the line, and the remaining four bottles then at incremental stages of three years will make for an entire journey and the very last bottle may even be delayed to see the potential full stretch of the wine.

With two bottles, a five and 15-year opening is a conservative policy.
With one bottle, any day is a good day.

