

BLANKbottle, Little William (2019)

Producer	BLANKbottle
Distributor	Blue Crane Imports
Category	Wine - Still - Red
Grape variety	Syrah
Region	Western Cape, South Africa
Appellation	Ceres
Feature	Sustainable
Vintage	2019
Alcohol by volume	12.5%



Sizes

750 mL × 12 — BB-LW-75-19

Distributor's notes

It was the vision of Marguerite Mavros Macdonald to plant vines in the Witzenberg mountains on her husband's family farm (Dugald). I got involved in 2015 and this wine has become my favourite expression of South African Syrah. In South Africa we have the luxury of mountains. These mountains separate desert from coastal areas and create valleys and different exposures, enabling grape growers the opportunity to grow a wide range of varieties in a very small area. One aspect of South African terroir that still needs to be explored fully is height above sea level. And this wine is a great example of what Syrah at 750m above sea level can do. The wine is named after my chance meeting with a little boy called William on the Witzenberg mountains. It's been a fascinating story from the start, but became even more bizarre at the end of last year, with another chance meeting. Little William reloaded! In January 2016, I was driving back from a tiny little vineyard in the Koue Bokkeveld (Ceres Plateau). Cruising along at the 100km/h speed limit, I came to a very winding stretch of road leading towards the Witzenberg pass. Suddenly, for a split second, I thought I saw something in the middle of the road. I had just come through a super sharp bend and had to jump on the brakes with both feet. When I finally got my 470 000-km-on-the-clock Toyota to stop, there, on the white line in the middle of the road, stood a little blonde boy. I guessed him around a year and a half old. He was in his nappies and had a white T-shirt on, perfectly camouflaged on the white line. Unsure of what to do once I'd taken him out of the road, I thought it a good plan to prompt him and see which direction he takes off in (with myself of course right behind). About 200 meters further along the road he (we) crossed a little bridge heading towards the other side of the canal. He turned up a dirt road which led to a farmhouse about 300 meters up a hill. Keeping up to his snail-like pace, we arrived at the house more or less ten minutes later. When the gardener saw us approaching, he called out to a woman at the house and judging by her reaction, she must've been his mom and he must've been missing for a while. It was a bit of an emotional and chaotic environment so, knowing he was safe, I just turned around and left without introducing myself. So each time I present a tasting with Little William wine as part of the line-up, I get the same question: "Why is it called, Little William?", followed almost without fail by: "What does the family have to say about you calling a wine, Little William?" My answer is always the same: "I never went back, they don't even know the wine exists. But I am convinced there will be this one day where I'd be sitting at some local bar in Knysna, drinking a beer all by myself when the young guy next to me turns to me and introduces himself as William from Ceres." And I'll be able to tell him: "Eendag, lank, lank gelede het hierdie oom jou lewe gered!" High elevation, whole bunch pressed, low alcohol mountain Syrah. Aged one year in older French barrels.

About the producer

Regarded as one of the most innovative producers in South Africa, in 2004 Pieter Walser pursued an ambition to make wine of quality, excitement and mystery - for those intrigued by what's in the bottle, not by what's on the label. Armed with an education in Agriculture, Viticulture and Oenology, and a nomadic, adventurous spirit, BLANKbottle was born. Pieter sought creative flexibility, and to be unconstrained when it came to style, region, vintage and cultivars. This led him to form alliances with vineyards, winemakers and wineries throughout the country, and the opportunity to craft unique blends of premium character. This versatility turned out to be the BLANKbottle edge.

Pieter's eclectic range is from vineyards positioned across the Western Cape, representing diverse regions, micro-climates, soil types, and varietals, ultimately leading to different wine styles and the ability to also introduce once-off limited runs of compelling wines. As Pieter tells it himself, "When I started BLANKbottle, my goal was to create an honest wine brand that had no limitations in order to break down any preconceived expectations....I've come to realize that the road I'm on does not necessarily lead to the perfect winery. Rather, it's an adventure, it gives me stories to tell, and that I count as my true riches and success." As it turns out, the BLANKbottle labels are in fact as exceptional as the wine, having recently won multiple awards, including the Grand Prix, at the 2015 Wine Label Design Awards.
