

Colmant Cap Classique & Champagne

South Africa - Western Cape

After owning & running a stone manufacturing business in Belgium for twelve years, JP Colmant & his wife, Isabelle, were ready to change directions – they wanted a more adventurous, beautiful life for themselves and their five young children. They visited South Africa in 2001 and fell in love with the beautiful Franschhoek valley, and within a few months of returning home, they sold their business and began packing for the move.

They arrived at their new home in Franschhoek in December 2002 – a house with 5 hectares of lovely, bare land. The lot was part of the original La Motte farm, granted to one of the French Huguenots back in 1694. They began planting Chardonnay and Pinot Noir vineyards and building a cellar that would be dedicated to the classic method of Champagne production. JP felt that while lots of care had been given towards growing and evolving South African wines over the previous decades, the country's sparkling wine industry, "Methode Cap Classique" (MCC), had not been given all the attention that it deserved. JP studied with the locals to learn how to become a successful farmer and winemaker.

The cellar was completed in 2005, becoming the first in the country to be dedicated solely to MCC. The tanks room is equipped with 14 stainless steel tanks with capacities from 1000 L to 14000 L, allowing greater flexibility in the handling of the different grape parcels. Their cold room can accommodate cooling over 8 tons of grapes down to 0°C overnight before pressing. The barrels room, built in a rustic brick wall style, is maintained permanently at 13°C and a perfect level of humidity. The bottle maturation room has a storage capacity of over 100,000 bottles; Cap Classique matures in bottle for 2+ years at a steady 13 to 14°C.

While awaiting their first harvest's production to be ready for release, they also started importing Champagnes from meticulously selected estates in France (and they remain importers of these Champagnes today). They released their first bottle of Colmant Cap Classique in the spring of 2008, and JP says, "we have been thrilled at the amount of times we have had to pop a bottle to celebrate our achievements, and our beautiful life!"

JP's philosophy is that the most crucial part of making a refined bubbly is the blending, and for that reason, they select their grapes from different valleys, according to the specificity of each terroir, to ensure maximum complexity. Chardonnay is sourced mainly from the Franschhoek Valley. 70% is produced on their own farm (vineyards supervised by viticulturist Paul Wallace), and the rest of is sourced from the limy soils of Robertson. Their Pinot Noir is carefully selected from 5 different farms located in Robertson, Elgin, and Stellenbosch.

Today Colmant produces 50,000 bottles (4,167 cases) of fine Cap Classique wines, across five different blends. In 2016, JP & Isabelle's oldest daughter, Manon, joined them in the family business.