

Noon Gun 2002 Flagstone, Western Cape

17 Mar 2003 by JR

This inexpensive white from one of South Africa's bright new producers reminded me just how good a blend of different white grape varieties can be.

Flagstone's animating spirit Bruce Jack is rather dismissive of Noon Gun (named after a Cape Town institution), describing it as 'our bread and butter wine that creates the cash flow for us to do the other exciting stuff, like our single vineyard obsession'. I am one thousand per cent behind any wine producer devoted to expressing the characteristics of individual vineyards and it's great that, like every man and his dog, he's trying to make superior Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Pinotage (all of them, incredibly, in the Flagstone portfolio). However, where else in the world can you find a wine made up as follows?

30 per cent Riesling
30 per cent Chenin Blanc
19 per cent Sauvignon Blanc
9 per cent Pinot Blanc
9 per cent barrel-fermented Chardonnay
3 per cent Semillon

Much less one that tastes really interesting and retails for less than £4.50/ \$6.75. It's effectively dry yet intensely fruity without any obvious oak character, just an attractive depth of flavour. A particularly accessible, New World take on Riesling dominates the nose while the last three varieties add depth. This is just the sort of wine to keep in stock as a house white - or to drink in the sunny outdoors as I have just done, miraculously for London in mid-March, with a lunch of *gravd laks* and chicken mayonnaise.

As it happened I initially tasted it at more or less the same time as a range of new offerings from Jean-Louis Denois who in 2001 sold part of his controversial Domaine de l'Aigle near Limoux (which made exceptional fizz and Languedoc Pinot Noir but earned the ire of the authorities for its unauthorised Riesling) to Antonin Rodet of Burgundy. His two most interesting wines are Languedoc-wide blends, both red and white called **Grande Cuvée 2001 Vin de Pays d'Oc, Jean-Louis Denois** (from *cavistes* in France and £8.75 from www.shop.wine.co.za and www.flagstonewines.com).

The following also import wines from Flagstone:

[American International Distribution Group \(AIDC\)](#)
[Nedervecht Wijnkopers](#), Netherlands
[18/03/03](#)