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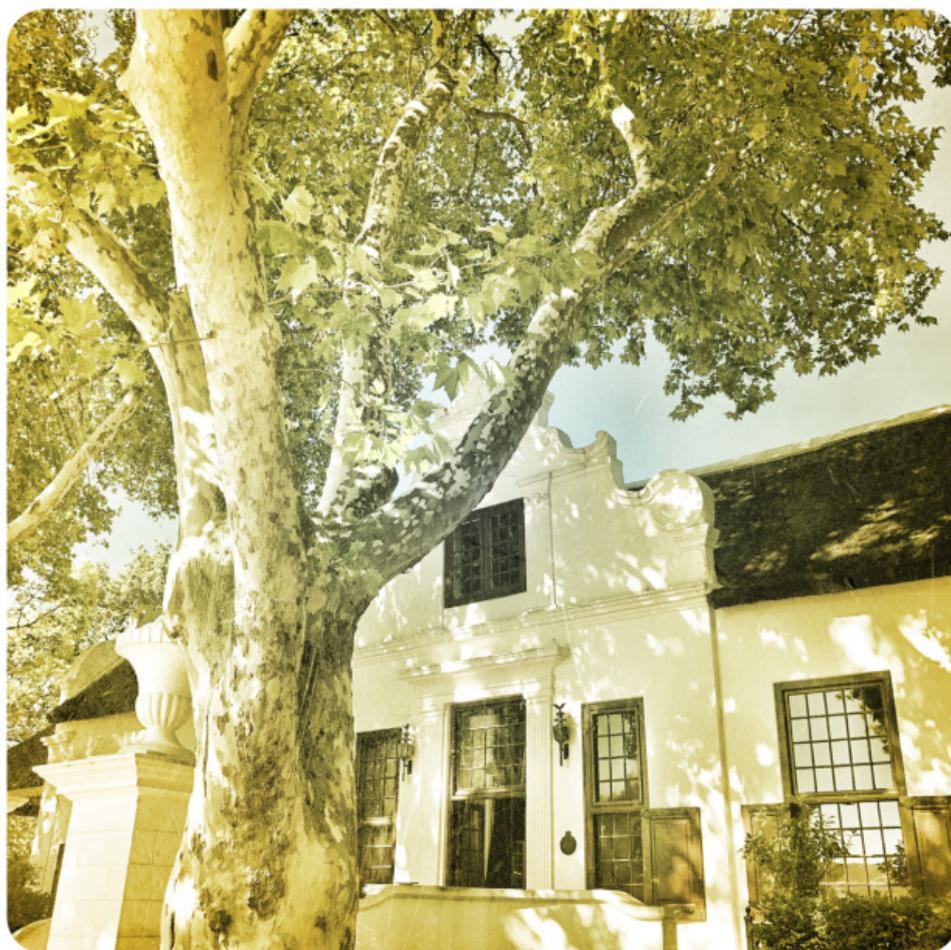
Tasting An Ageworthy South African Cabernet Sauvignon From A Historic Off-Vintage...

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After tasting a lot of 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon recently made me think about the ageability of South African wines. We all expect great vintages like 1974, 1995 and 2015 to age well, but what about off vintages? Tasting this 1977 Nederburg Cabernet Sauvignon recently in South Africa from the Distell Tabernacle cellar reinforced the true longevity potential of this grape in South Africa even when sourced from an off-vintage.



The early 70s was a very successful era, with 1970, 1972 and 1974 all being excellent vintages, while 1976 and 1978 were also good. But 1977 was plagued by wet weather and was regarded as a very, very difficult vintage overall receiving a 2/5 star rating. This wine bears testament to the winemaking techniques of Nederburg and their ability to create iconic wines.



Nederburg 1977 Superieur Cabernet Sauvignon, WO Paarl, South Africa

Fine deep notes of black berry, boxwood, plum skins and earthy black currant. Far less tertiary than one would expect, While tasting this wine, I received a brazen nod from Michael Fridjhon that this is certainly a classic Cabernet Sauvignon and a classic Nederburg but not from a lauded vintage. The palate is full, fairly sweet fruited, rich and textural, but also quite compact, pure and relatively unevolved. Showing great black earthy, tobacco Cabernet Sauvignon typicity, this is about as good as Cabernet gets in a cool rainy vintage like 1977. This wine shows power, distinguished chalky tannins, subtle hints of molasses and sweet tobacco spice and is absolutely delicious to drink. An impressive and powerful wine that still has plenty of legs!

(Wine Safari Score: 93/100 Greg Sherwood MW)