



DE WETSHOF ESTATE
SOUTH AFRICA



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Pruned vines on De Wetshof Estate

Around 40 AD Ancient Rome's viticulturalist, Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella, wrote that "the vineyard likes rocks and hills". But he could have included "cold weather" into the phrase, too. For a cold winter allows the vines to settle into a deep, dormant slumber which is just what is required after their energy-sapping and vigorous growth-period of Spring and Summer.

Although inhabitants of the Western Cape might find the current icy grip of the Southern Hemisphere winter a bit uncomfortable, the vines are in their true element. This is the second very cold winter De Wetshof has experienced in a row, and conditions are currently ideal for allowing the vines their hard-earned rest. It is the period of rejuvenation and of slumber, and the results of last year's chilly winter could be seen in the healthy state the vines were in over the past growing period. With another cold winter underway, we expect the vines to be in excellent shape when bud-break begins in Spring.

Sleeping dogs should be left to lie, but just because the vines are hibernating does not mean they can remain unattended. Now is the time for pruning: trimming back the canes to remove the dead, spent wood and clearing the way for the new buds which will break when things warm up and bear fine, healthy fruit.

It is a beautiful time on the farm. Without any leaves on the vines, De Wetshof's variety of different soil structures can be seen from afar. The vines, especially those of the older vineyards, take-on an old, gnarled character allowing one to see the magical structure of this plant that gives its wines personality and character.

Single Vineyard Chardonnays Show That Old Produces Gold



And old vineyards can still perform when it comes to producing quality wines! The two oldest Chardonnay vineyards on De Wetshof, The Site and the Bateleur, are building up a formidable reputation on the Chardonnay landscape. As reported last year, The Site 2009 was one of only two Chardonnays to achieve a 5 Star rating in the 2012 Platter Wine Guide.

This year the De Wetshof Bateleur 2009 garnered a gold medal at the Chardonnay du Monde Competition held in France. This is the world's leading competition for Chardonnay wines, attracting 908 entries from 43 countries for the 2012 event. Here the De Wetshof flagship Bateleur was one of only three South African wines to manage a place on the gold medal podium. What is interesting is that the Bateleur is made from a 25-year old vineyard, while the 5 Star The Site comes from a site planted 26 years ago.

"I am obviously very proud that these two 'old timer' vineyards are still managing to produce wines whose character and elegance is recognised by judging panels," says Danie de Wet. "But what is more important is that these wines have shown what Chardonnay is capable of expressing when planted in the correct site specific terrains. This allows South African Chardonnay to build-up a track-record through legacy with its own unique story and narrative."

De Wet says that the results at this year's competition once again proved that South Africa had arrived on the world stage as a Chardonnay producer.

"We are honoured to receive this accolade from the world's leading Chardonnay competition and hope this shows the world that South Africa is capable of producing white wines, and especially Chardonnay, that can compete with the best in the world."

"The fact that from the 43 countries whose wine were judged, South Africa was listed among the top 10 Chardonnay producers is an accolade to all those who over the past two decades made it their passion to bring South Africa to the fore as a leading producer of quality Chardonnay wines."

Bateleur Meets Its Burgundian Brother



Brothers in wine - De Wetshof Bateleur & Joseph Drouhin Clos de Mouches

During this year's Wacky Wine Week-end, Johann de Wet conducted a unique tasting that caught many wine-lovers – including the De Wets themselves! – off-guard.

The tasting was of the Bateleur 2009, our flagship Chardonnay, and the Clos de Mouches 2009, a Burgundian wine of the same variety.

There is an important connection between these two wines: The vineyard from the Clos de Mouches just outside Beaune is also the origin of the plant material from which the Bateleur vineyard was planted in 1987. What the tasting of these two wines from two different countries – and two different hemispheres – set out to do, was to see whether any traces of similarities would be evident due to the shared plant material.

Those who attended the tasting were mesmerised by the tasting.

Both wines are magnificent examples of the Chardonnay varietal with perfumed flavours of citrus, grilled nuts and minerals. Although the textures and mouth-feel differed, with the French wine being characteristically lighter on the palate, there was an uncanny linearity running through both wines.

"To say we were gobsmacked is an understatement," says Johann de Wet. "We had not tasted the Clos de Mouches for some time and brought the wine to the public tasting as its shared origins with our Bateleur makes a good story. But the similarities were striking: citrus, minerals and elegance."

"This just goes to show the strong role played by plant material and clone selection. The vinification and wood treatments of the Bateleur and the Clos de Mouches are worlds apart – literally, too – but the fact that both wines shared the same DNA leads to a remarkable similarity."

Slow Down in the Robertson Valley



As mentioned above, winter is a wonderful time to visit our Estate and enjoy the stillness of nature resting. This year's Robertson Slow takes place from 10 to 12 August, and De Wetshof will be open on Friday 10 and Saturday 11 August. We invite you to visit our winery for a bowl of hearty soup and a traditional "vetkoek" in front of the fireplace. The complete range of De Wetshof wines will be available for tasting.

And remember, members of our Chardonnay Club receive a discount. Bookings: Marliese (023) 615-1853 or e-mail frontdesk@dewetshof.com.

For more information on De Wetshof and the Chardonnay Club, visit www.dewetshof.com or follow us on twitter - [@dewetshofwines](https://twitter.com/dewetshofwines).

As always, we look forward to welcoming you on our Estate.

The De Wet Family