



LA VIERGE NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2012



At La Vierge we celebrate women's month with the feminine Pinot Noir grape. To maintain her youthful elegant medium body, she loves moderate warm days and cool nights. But make no mistake, although she has a delicate skin, she is no push-over and does not conform easily, she is in high demand in her social circle.

With her style she is most suited in the company of Champagne and much talked about in high society; Jancis Robinson (a world renowned wine writer) calls her the "minx of a vine", Andre Tchelischeff (internationally acclaimed winemaker) declared that "God made Cabernet Sauvignon whereas the devil made Pinot noir" and Joel Fleischman (Vanity Fair) boasts her to be "the most romantic of wines, with so voluptuous a perfume, so sweet an edge, and so powerful a punch that, like falling in love, they make the blood run hot and the soul wax embarrassingly poetic."

Whether a mystical pagan goddess of feminine power such as Isis, or the Catholic Virgin Mary with a darker complexion (as reflected in statues and paintings around the world), the Black Madonna is an apt name for our feminine and delicate La Vierge Noir.

THE JOURNEY OF PINOT NOIR

On our farm, Babylon, we currently have 13ha of our 40ha planted to Pinot Noir and adding another 5.5ha of this great Burgundian grape variety, which will only be ready for production in 2015 - a long wait, but really worth it.



In **January** we started off with soil preparation (photograph shows ripping of the soil where we worked in extra agricultural lime into the virgin soil for the purpose of correcting and stabilising soil pH to optimise growth conditions).

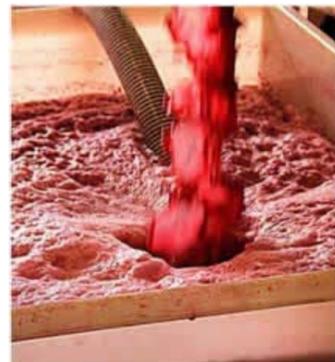
In **February** established Pinot Noir blocks are on the verge of harvest are almost ready to be harvested.



In late **February** early **March** we harvested the Pinot Noir grapes (photographs taken of the 2012 vintage).

The grapes were hand-picked, sorted and partially destalked before the fresh mash was taken straight to the tanks.

In **March** the Pinot Noir juice was pumped over to mix the fermenting juice and skins, aerate the fermentation and aid in colour and flavour development. Thereafter the wines settled on skins and stalks before being lightly pressed and put into barrels for gentle malo conversion and slow ageing.



By **April** the vines were bare of berries and leaves were turning colour.

In **July** barrel topping occurred to keep the wines fresh and stirred.



August is the time for new planting. This year we are adding another 5.5ha of this sought-after grape variety. Vines are ordered through Vititec (the wine grower's nursery) one year in advance where the Pinot Noir is grafted onto rootstock. In the photograph below you can clearly see the grafting point rootstock RQ28C (bottom) and Pinot Noir (top) PN115B.

A close-up of the vine as seen below.



The roots are cut off to about 30cm just before planting, to stimulate new growth. Holes are dug 78cm apart, 45cm deep and 25cm wide. Vines are dropped into the holes that are then closed up.

We will be planting 34 687 vines and at 1 500 vines being planted per day, it should take us roughly 24 days to complete the three new blocks of Pinot Noir (weather permitting).

In the mean time, the established Pinot Noir vines are pruned in **August** (see block 6 planted in 2007 in the photograph below).



October month the vines will be budding and be followed by flowering, berries and shoot development. Grapes ripen in **December**. The current vintage is being specially selected, blended and bottled for gentle ageing before release next year.

The proof of the pudding is in the drinking thereof. Our winemaker Marc van Halderen enjoying a glass of La Vierge Noir overlooking the valley.



PERFECT VENUE

Need a venue for that special birthday, office party or wedding day? Visit our www.lavierge.co.za



PROMOTIONAL PINOT NOIR OFFER

We have an exclusive offer to our newsletter subscribers (valid 18 August to 30 September 2012): 3 x 750ml 2010 Jezebelles (Chardonnay) and 3 x 750ml 2010 La Vierge Noir (Pinot Noir) for only R800 delivered to your front door anywhere in South Africa. Please place your orders via e-mail to sales@lavierge.co.za



Not for Sale to Person Under the Age of 18.

