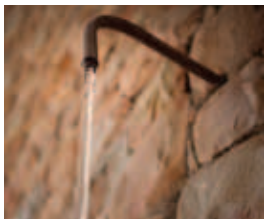




## NEWSLETTER | OCTOBER 2012



# DuToitskloof wines

RAWSONVILLE

I was babbling on so much last month about the awards we had received as the cherry on top of the cellar's fiftieth anniversary that I never told you about the party itself which was really a wonderful affair. I work in the cellar every day of my life but when I walked into it that Saturday evening of 15 September I could hardly believe my eyes for that drab interior of tanks and winemaking paraphernalia had been transformed into a massive, gleaming white tent with subdued lighting, beautifully laid tables and masses of flowers everywhere.

It was a supreme effort stage-managed by our own staff, but it was worth every bit of it for it turned into a most memorable evening, with the old hands reminiscing about the early days and inspiring us with their stories of how they overcame the many adversities that confronted them in the 1960s. The master of ceremonies that evening was Duimpie Bayly, one of the true legends of our wine industry, who started working at the old Stellenbosch Farmers' Winery (SFW) in 1962 – the same year in which Du Toitskloof – and as a member of that company's winemaking team has had a very long and mutually rewarding association with us.



From the left: *Rob Wagner, CEO of WP Rugby, and his wife, Claire; Johan de Wet, chairman of Du Toitskloof Wines, and his wife, Lori Ann; and Sue and Duimpie Bayly. Duimpie, one of the legends of the South African wine industry, was the evening's master of ceremonies.*

### A House for R6 351!

In his speech Johan de Wet, chairman of our board of directors, shared many an amusing anecdote with the guests. The first manager/winemaker started work on 1 September 1962. His name was Ursus Schirmer, a winemaker from Germany. Before he arrived a house had to be built for him next to the cellar. It's the same house in which I live today with my family. It was completed on time – at a cost of R6 351! But then, building the cellar itself cost less than R80 000. Ursus - it means bear in Latin – was by all accounts not a particularly patient man, but he knew what he was doing and laid a solid foundation and established a culture of winemaking which still guides us today.

Those were the years of absolute control of the industry by the KWV as the government agent. Vines could only be planted in certain areas of the Western Cape. A quota system determined how many tons of grapes a wine farmer could deliver to his co-op. Every year in January, before the harvest, the KWV would determine the minimum price to be paid for "good" wine and for distilling wine. For their first harvest in 1963, members of the Co-op received an initial payment of R8 per ton which was about 25% of the total payout. How the industry has changed since, and how much for the better!

### A much underrated cultivar from the hills of Piedmont

I was still in an euphoric state when I received an email from Angelo Lloyd, one of the Cape's foremost wine writers and judges for many years. At Cape Wine 2012, that most important biannual trade show of the South African wine industry held last month, she tasted our Nebbiolo and wrote me the following note:

"I'd been so impressed with your Nebbiolo I thought I'd give it to friends at our monthly tasting to see what they thought of it. I found the 09 at a local liquor store, decanted it a few hours beforehand and served it blind with cheese.

"Most guesses centred on the Rhône, with Grenache mentioned, but more important than getting it wrong, were the many positive comments, noting its elegance even with its ripe fruit, honesty, well-judged oak, pleasant drinking. Needless to say, when I did reveal its identity, there was some surprise, although the cellar's reputation has obviously travelled this side of the ubiquitous mountain, as people also commented on what good things you're doing."

I should add here in all modesty that Angela's tasting panel include some of the foremost palates in the Winelands. More importantly, her very positive response has made me realise we don't do enough to raise awareness of this for me very special wine we make. It is perhaps because it is made in such small quantities that we never get around to talking about it very much.

That's something we'll have to rectify and soon.



## TETRA PAK CARTONS

We have just launched two Fairtrade wines in the UK. Both are blends: the one a Sauvignon blanc/Chenin blanc, the other a Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot. Both elicited a very positive response on British television recently. According to the leading British wine publication Decanter these two wines are the first to be packaged in completely aseptic Tetra Pak cartons in the UK. They are available from the well-known Waitrose chain.



## 2009 NEBBIOLO

The 2009 Dimension recently received some very positive comments from several well-known Cape Town wine tasters. It was also one of the wines we offered to overseas visitors to taste at Cape Wine 2012, South Africa's major international wine show.

Until next time,  
**Shawn Thomson,**  
Chief winemaker



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