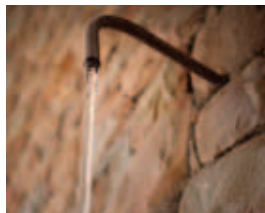




## NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2013



# DuToitskloof RAWSONVILLE wines



Since talking to you last, the pace in the cellar has picked up appreciably. It's not quite frenetic yet, but we are rapidly moving in that direction! We received the first grapes at the cellar early this month and at the time of writing had pressed close to 4 000 tons which means we're about 25% there. My guess is we shall press somewhere between 15 500 and 15 800 tons in total and so likely to be marginally down on last year's record crop of 16 400 tons.

However, more important than the sheer volume is the quality of the grapes, and in that respect this vintage does not in any way rank below 2012. I'm particularly excited about the grapes from the Chenin blanc bush vines that are of an exceptional quality. Walking through the cellar I am enveloped in an amalgam of olfactory pleasures (OK, I had to go and look up that word!) emanating from tanks filled with young wines of Chenin blanc, Sauvignon blanc, Nouvelle, Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay and Semillon – the white cultivars that have kept us busy at the cellar door over the past few weeks.

The first batches of early red varieties such as Pinotage and Merlot have also been crushed but the great stampede is yet to come. And we await that with some trepidation! The hot weather at the end of February will hasten the ripening process and what then tends to happen is that everything arrives at the cellar door at more or less the same time. Thank goodness for the investment made last year in extending our cooling systems. I can tell you, these facilities have proved to be worth their weight in gold.

Actually there is no reason for trepidation. I am unnecessarily dramatising the situation! We have a strong and experienced winemaking team in Mot, Willie and Derrick, backed by Jeffrey, Alfred, Setjhaba, Sanele and Stembiso who to a man know their way around a cellar. You can go to war with a team like this!

### Letting the cat out of the bag

Some of you might have seen in the February issue of *Wineland* magazine an article by Cape Town wine critic Angela Lloyd in which she writes about two new wines we've been working on for the last two years, the one a Bordeaux-style blend, the other in the Rhône style. Our viticulturist, Leon Dippenaar, identified exceptional pockets of grapes for us all over the Winelands – Cabernet Sauvignon from Darling, Merlot from Stellenbosch and Petit Verdot from Helderzicht for the Bordeaux blend, and Shiraz and Mourvèdre from Durbanville and a second Shiraz from Paarl for the Rhône blend.

We experimented with barrels of different sizes and characteristics obtained from different coopers, maturing the wines for on average 20 months and then blending the different components to meld their individual characteristics. Angela and two members of her wine-tasting group came to taste and provide us with feedback. The article in *Wineland* was the outflow of that visit.

We must still decide if and when we are going to introduce these two wines to the local market. At this stage there is a strong possibility that we shall. On the assumption that we do, we have started identifying individual blocks on member farms which we believe could, in time and with the right treatment, provide us in the future with grapes of the same quality and the same characteristics as we had to source from elsewhere. I shall keep you posted.

An exceptional wine at a bargain price



### THIS IS A 2012 FNB SAUVIGNON BLANC TOP 10 WINNER!

A firm favourite, it shares this distinction with highly sought-after wines selling for substantially more.



Not for Sale to Persons Under the Age of 18 Years.

If you are a regular reader of this newsletter you will recall our excitement last year in September when we had just heard that our 2012 Sauvignon Blanc was one of the winners in the 2012 FNB Sauvignon Blanc Top Ten competition where it had been chosen from among 195 entries. We made up a big single blend of more than 2 million litres we imagined would last us a long time. However, since the names of the Top 10 winners were announced, the demand for the wine rocketed (which was to be expected seeing that it costs less than a third of the price of some of the other winners). We do not expect stocks of the 2012 Sauvignon Blanc to last beyond the end of May so if you still want to buy some, don't postpone it for too long. We are even putting neck tags on the remaining bottles to make sure they are easy to spot on the shelf.

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



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