March 2013





Dear friend,

Are we there yet?

One of the first things I do on buying a diary for the new year is to check on which days the next Easter weekend falls, always in the hope that we shall be able to finish the harvest on time so we can all get away for a relaxing break. No such luck. I can't remember when last we were able to crush the last grapes before the start of the long weekend. This year will be no exception for among these cool hills of ours we start picking two weeks later than in most other areas. We have become used to the disappointment and accept while others can get away, we'll be doing regular checks on fermenting tanks, racking the odd wine and making sure everything is running smoothly.

Over the years your ears become attuned to the sounds of the cellar. You recognise the noises made by the fans of the heat exchangers, by the cooling compressors and the air compressor; you hear the cold water circulating in the cooling jackets and gurgling in the pipes. They all combine in a gentle cacophony of sound signifying that everything is running as it should. On stopping at the cellar for a routine check at night or over the weekend, you immediately know if one of the instruments in the "orchestra" had gone quiet or, more alarmingly, if a new one had joined in. A silent instrument might take up the "music" again on flipping a tripped switch, but a new one that has joined in, from a burst pipe to bearings that have lost their way, mostly require the maintenance cavalry to be called in.

Latest News and Upcoming Events

Thank You Mom!



A single day is really not enough to thank mom but lunch at The Eatery will be a good place to start. Spoil her this Mother's Day with a gorgeous lunch in our restaurant overlooking Table Mountain and Table Bay.

Date: Sunday, 12 May 2013 *Time*: 12.00 - 15.00 Cost: R169 per person and R80 for the kiddies menu

So how are the colour on the reds and the flavours of the Sauvignon?

The good winter ensured a solid base for the vintage with more than enough water in the ground to produce a bumper crop. I remember the 2013 vintage for the intermittent rain, exceptional colour on the reds, massive flavour on the Chardonnay and Sauvignon blancs that started off rather shyly in the fermentation tanks but then opened up and showed their true flavours when racked and cleaned. With only a few red blocks still ripening and the Sauvignon blanc noble late harvest still nobly rotting into sweetness, I can safely declare this vintage as one for the thinking winemaker. The best wines will come from those who instinctively knew when to pick and when to chance their luck with the weather to get the desired flavour spectrum and complexity - definitely not a vintage for nervous vintners!

Let's recap from the Vinoteque

We are planning a special event for April to celebrate one and a half decades of winemaking here in the hills. It will revolve around the exceptional wines made during these past 15 years and will call for tasting a great many wines on this journey down memory lane.

Our supply of the 1999 Biesjes Craal Sauvignon Blanc which wowed the crowd at our tenth anniversary is down to the last bottle, now used for display only. The first Chardonnay we made in the new cellar was called Elsjes Corael Chardonnay after the Dutch name for the Elsies River which rises on one of our member farms. What were the marketers thinking giving it a name I can only pronounce properly after the fourth glass? However, the wine itself stunned us into silence during the tasting and will be the one to be poured to commemorate our first vintage. It crossed my mind that it had matured much more gracefully than its maker.

The Luipaardsberg Merlot and the Caapmans Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot blend, both from 1999, will complete the trio from the first vintage although I have a sneaking feeling we'll have to create room for the 1999 Durbanville Hills Cabernet Sauvignon as well, as it's refusing to remain in the shadow of its two brothers from the reserve range. These wines made me feel like a proud parent for as we were trying to crush the grapes and make our first wines back then, contractors were still swarming over the site trying to finish the cellar "before the first grapes arrive".

Anyone who still has a bottle of the 2005 Caapmans should enjoy it soon as it is now at its absolute peak. Two years in the barrel followed by six years in the bottle have put this wine right in the middle of the scale between drinking too early and keeping too long. I find a lot of wine connoisseurs and others with big wine collections wanting to see how long a wine will last instead of practising the more precise art of drinking it at the perfect time. The Caapmans is right there now. Enjoy it.

As always, we were pleased with the older Sauvignon blancs from the Hills range with 2005, 2007 and 2009 particularly outstanding. In our tasting we focused in particular on older vintages that would make interesting food partners. Among the notable wines were the 1999 Shiraz , the 2006 Merlot and the 2007 Chardonnay.

At the end of quite a marathon tasting I felt, not without a certain humility, that we have done a pretty decent job over the years, from the progress we have made in the vineyards to adapting the styles of our wines to keep pace with changing market preferences.

Please Note: Booking is essential.

Contact The Eatery on (021) 558 1337 or by sending an email to info@durbanvillehills.co.za.

Create a Masterpiece



Learn the essence of crafting an exceptional red blend along with red winemaker Wilhelm Coetzee. He will assist teams of four in creating your own unique wine which will then be bottled, sealed under cork and labelled.

Date: Thursday, 30 May 2013 Time: 18:30 for 19:00 Cost: R230 per person (includes

welcome drink, wine blending, dinner, coffee or tea, goodie bag and your own labelled bottle of wine)

Please Note: Space is very limited and booking is essential. Please contact Simone Brown on (021) 558 1300 or email sibrown@durbanvillehills.co.za.

Why are they shooting at us?

Visitors to the cellar have recently been exposed to an explosive experience. Our neighbours, who are normally a fairly peaceful bunch, set off dynamite next to our fence on four occasions. We are used to blasting from the quarries in the area as their owners continue with their determined efforts to turn hills into holes and gravel into roads. The new blastings are to create an underground water reservoir to supply the fastgrowing needs of the area. I wondered if they could spare us some storage space as the cellar is fast filling up as we turn grapes into wine.

So, any suggestions as to whom we can raise a glass this month? My suggestion is the poor sods who will be staying home this Easter to ensure no grapes are left hanging on the vines longer than they should, and those who will be manning the cellars to receive that bounty!

Prost!

MARTIN MOORE Cellar Master Please visit our website on www.durbanvillehills.co.za

> Not for sale to persons under the age of 18. By clicking on any link on this email I confirm that: I am the intended recipient of this email; am 18 years or older, and am a member of Durbanville Hills community.



Please drink responsibly



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