



NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2013



DuToitskloof
RAWSONVILLE wines

Surprise, surprise!

And there I was, thinking life might be ever so slightly easier this vintage compared to last year's, as our careful preliminary estimates indicated we would be pressing close to as much as 1 000 tons less. Not exactly!. As the grapes started coming in we constantly had to review our estimates upwards to where we now expect the harvest to be very close to last year's record intake of 16 400 tons. And the quality of the grapes is on a par with the very high standards set in 2012.

At the time of writing we have received about 60% of the crop and already we have to plan very carefully into which tanks the young wines will go so that there is enough space for what is still to come. The present inflow of grapes at up to 450 tons per day is straining our capacity to the utmost for it is at the upper limit of what the cellar can handle. The exhaustion is visible on all the faces around me.

At the same time there is also a sense of exhilaration as daily we see how well the young wines are developing in the tanks. There is no doubt in my mind that we shall see wines, especially among the whites, that compare very well with those of the previous vintage. The Chenin blanc and Sauvignon blanc in particular are looking very good. By the way, you will recall we don't rush to market any more with our Sauvignon blanc as we used to a few years ago when some prestige attached to getting your wine to consumers first. We now take our time and lavish all the care we can on our Sauvignon blanc which is such an important wine in our portfolio. We saw the benefit we derive from doing that last year when our 2012 vintage ended up amongst the Top Ten Sauvignon blancs produced in this country.

Although the pace at present is still so hectic, we do expect the daily deliveries to start slowing down soon with the last load coming in on or about 26 April which is late for our part of the world. The days are getting cooler – and decidedly shorter! – and that is slowing down the ripening process which is good for flavour concentration.



A stranger to our shores

I promised a while back to report again on our Nebbiolo and I'm doing so now as my eye caught a recipe on our website (www.dutoitskloof.co.za) which I believe ideal for the approaching winter months – Beef tagliatelle with a reduction of Nebbiolo, a rich, warming dish which will dispel any memories of the cold when snow is lying on the mountain peaks surrounding the cellar.

Nebbiolo is the only red Italian varietal in our line-up, which is dominated by some of the great French cultivars. Not that this famous inhabitant of Piedmont needs to take a back seat to any of them – it is reckoned as one of the purest thoroughbreds of the wine world. And it has taken surprisingly well to our part of the Breede River Valley. It is grown on only one of our member farms, on Dagbreek next to the Breede River where the mist often lingers until late in the day so it feels quite at home there (Nebbiolo comes from nebbia, the Italian word for mist, because it is an environment in which its prospers.) The number of wines made from this cultivar in South Africa is less than what you can count on the fingers of one hand. It is therefore a very exclusive wine made in small quantities – we receive about 20 tons of Nebbiolo grapes per vintage. That's just more than 1% of the grapes we process every year!

Our first vintage was the 2007; at presnt we are selling the 2010. We press the grapes when fully ripe – at about 26,5° Balling – and then cold-soak the juice for about 2 days in rotor tanks before fermentation. It is then aged for 12 to 18 months in French oak before bottling. Our wine has a dark, intense colour and matures extremely well. Try it and you will have a very different taste experience.



SA CHEESE
FESTIVAL

Meet our team at the annual cheese festival and taste our award-winning Top 10 Sauvignon blanc!

Date: 26 – 28 April

Venue: Sandringham Estate in Stellenbosch

Tickets available from Computicket



HARVEST
CELEBRATION

Join us in celebrating the end of the harvest with the opening of our new mountain bike route which meanders through our members' farms surrounded by vineyards and fynbos. Spitsbraai, Sauvignon blanc on tap, live music and kids entertainment will ensure a fun day for all!

Date: Saturday, 11 May

Time: 09.00 – sunset

Contact Elzaan Geldenhuys on 023 349 1601 to purchase a permit for the mountain bike route

Until next time,
Shawn Thomson,
Chief winemaker



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