

Autumn 2013

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Grape harvesting at Uitkyk



Harvesting at Uitkyk

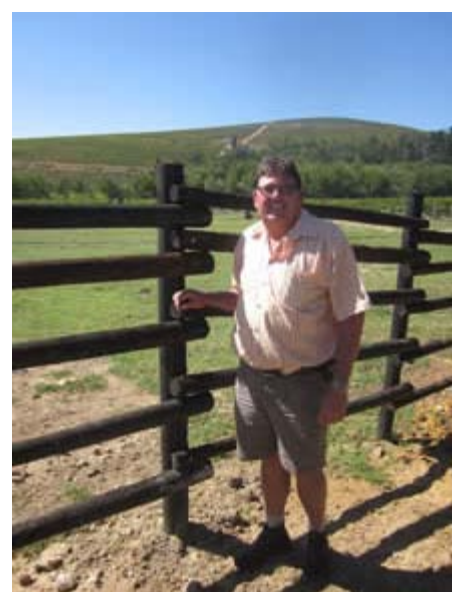
Outstanding year for reds

After a cool growing season followed by an unusually warm over the year-end, the harvest at Uitkyk was in full swing at the end January. The younger blocks of Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay and Pinot noir were picked first, and then came the Sauvignon blanc and older Pinot Grigio and Chardonnay.

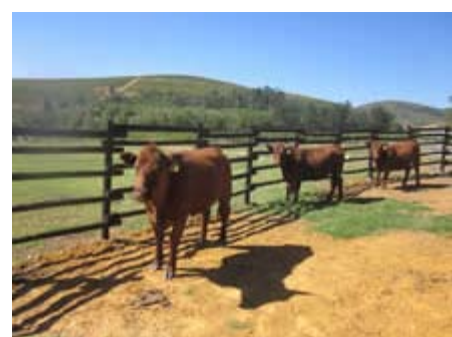
Due to strong winds at the time of flowering in October the yields in the various vineyard blocks on the farm varied substantially - some provided us with record yields while in the case of others, volumes picked were way below expectations. These discrepancies were mainly due to the location of the individual vineyard blocks at various altitudes among the hills and valleys of the farm and consequently their level of exposure to the wind.

February and March brought cooler weather, accompanied by heavy downpours of up to 60 millimeters in three days in early February. Especially in the case of the Sauvignon blanc, the pressure was on to deliver the grapes to the cellar as swiftly as possible to avoid any chance of rot associated with such weather conditions. Luckily Uitkyk's vines grow on the slopes of the Simonsberg where the wind minimises the chances of rot. The quality of the Sauvignon blanc is outstanding, even though we had to pick at a slightly lower sugar level than planned.

The first red grapes came from a young block of Merlot and from our only Pinotage vineyard. By the beginning of March all white varietals had been picked with the reds starting to trickle in. The ripening of the red varietals was slightly prolonged by the cold nights and cool days of preceding months. This slow ripening means only one thing: Outstanding reds with intensely concentrated flavours!



Cattle judge Rudi Buys



Aberdeen Angus cattle at Uitkyk

Viticulturist Rudi now also a cattle judge!

Rudi Buys, both general manager and viticulturist of Uitkyk, had to grow his knowledge of animal husbandry very quickly when the estate moved into new farming areas.

"We don't have a lot of water on the property so intensive farming was not an option. And in any case, we already had a commercial herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle on Uitkyk, a breed known for the high quality of its beef. In fact, it is the only cattle breed of which the meat is sold under its own name. And the animals tend to put on weight very quickly – young bull calves weigh up to 300kg at the tender age of seven months.

"We also have enough land to sustain a much larger herd. So we said to ourselves: Why not simply try to be better at what we were doing already?

"We decided to increase the number of cattle on the farm and, most importantly, to turn the existing commercial herd into a stud herd which would provide us with a substantially higher return."

That got Rudi reading extensively about breeding Angus Aberdeen cattle.

"In the course of last year I attended an Aberdeen Angus judge's course. Twenty-six of us attended, only seven passed the very tough exam at the end of it. I count myself lucky to have been among the seven. Believe it or not, I'm now a qualified inspector and can judge Aberdeen Angus cattle at shows!

"More importantly, I now know what to look for in selecting animals to improve the quality of our herd, which we want to increase to 240. In addition to buying animals, we also use 'in vitro' fertilisation where pure-bred embryos are implanted in surrogate mothers to improve the gene pool of the herd."

In the meantime, the herd has grown from 47 to 104 of which 31 are stud animals. Those of poorer quality are sold off and replaced with registered breeding stock. The first heifer calf of the new herd was born on Uitkyk recently and was named Kissa meaning first-born daughter.

Rudi foresees no challenges providing enough quality food for his enlarged herd. There are several paddocks on Uitkyk planted to kikuju which are irrigated from time to time while there are also 70 ha planted to oats which in future will be baled and kept for dry fodder for the winter months.



Runners participating in WAT borg-'n-woord at Uitkyk



Participants in WAT borg-'n-woord project at Uitkyk

US Woordfees a runaway success

For the second consecutive year Uitkyk hosted two fun runs, one over 6 km, the other over 12 km, as part of the annual US *Woordfees*. This year saw about 500 runners descending on Uitkyk armed with words unique to the Afrikaans language. The event helped funding the publication of the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (WAT) as runners could sponsor a word at R100 each as part of the WAT borg-'n-woord project.

The routes took runners through vineyards where raptors such as jackal buzzards and kestrels could be seen resting on the posts used by owls as hunting perches during the hours of darkness. Participants also ran through the farm's more than 310 ha of indigenous vegetation, mainly *renosterveld*, set aside for conservation. The number of smaller antelopes such as grysbok and duiker in this area has shown encouraging growth over the past few years as have many other species of indigenous fauna.

The resurgence in plant and animal life on Uitkyk is largely the result of an extensive conservation and rehabilitation programme on the estate, which enjoys champion status with the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative (BWI), introduced a number of years ago.

Runners crossing the finish line received a *spekboom*, instead of a medal, to take home and plant. The *spekboom's* capacity to soak up excess carbon dioxide makes it one of the most efficient carbon-storing plants.



Elsabe Daneel hosted a delicious food and wine pairing meal in the stately Uitkyk manor house

Dinner with Elsabé Daneel

As part of the US *Woordfees*, well-known South African actress, Elsabé Daneel hosted an exclusive dinner for selected guests in our stately manor house. Our refreshing Flat Roof Manor Pinot Grigio and Pinot Rosé Light were served on arrival with juicy melon wrapped in Parma ham. This was followed by Caprese salad skewers with basil pesto served with Flat Roof Manor Sauvignon Blanc Light. Next up were smoked salmon roses with baked asparagus and hollandaise sauce. This decadent course was partnered with Uitkyk Chardonnay.

The star of the show was the ostrich burger with caramelised onions and mushrooms, homemade tomato relish, wholegrain mustard and Camembert, served with beetroot Carpaccio, butternut salad and potato wedges - a perfect match with Uitkyk Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon. Dessert came in the form of dark nutty chocolate brownies served with chocolate mousse and hazelnut ganache. A "to-die-for match" with our award-winning Uitkyk 10-Year-Old Reserve Brandy calling the end to a truly tasteful evening!



Uitkyk 10-Year-Old Reserve potstill brandy and chocolates

Find us at Fine Brandy Fusion, now also in Cape Town

Make your way to the über-trendy Fine Brandy Fusion festival this year, making its debut in Cape Town in May. Here you will not only get to taste our delicious and award-winning 10-year-old potstill brandy, you'll also get to try it with a variety of top-quality Belgian chocolates from Huguenot Fine Chocolates of Franschhoek. The melt-in-your-mouth selection includes a vanilla truffle, citrus marzipan, brandy truffle and a praline milk truffle.

Fine Brandy Fusion takes place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre on May 9 and 10, from 17:30 to 21:30. The Johannesburg arm of the festival is scheduled for June 26 to 28, from 17:30 to 21:30, at the Sandton International Convention Centre. Tickets for the Cape Town show cost R175 per person, and R195 per person for Johannesburg. Tickets are available through Computicket or at the door.



Uitkyk Manor House

Make contact

That's it from me for now. For more, follow us on Facebook or send an e-mail to info@uitkyk.co.za. We would also love to welcome you to our home.

Remember, our trading hours are Mondays to Fridays from 09:00 to 17:00 and Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 to 16:00.

Estelle Lourens
Winemaker