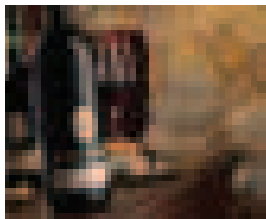
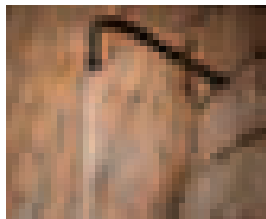
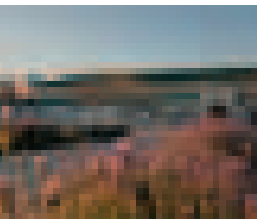




## NEWSLETTER | APRIL 2013



# DuToitskloof RAWSONVILLE wines



### Paternoster

There is a little fishing village on the West Coast about 100 km from the cellar called Paternoster where my wife, Elrine, and I have a holiday house. As you read this, we'll be pressing the last grapes of 2013 and then, at the first free weekend, I'm off to Paternoster with Elrine and our two small daughters, Elle (6) and Lisa (3). We've not been there since the harvest started at the end of January, and not only I but Elrine as well, desperately need a break. We live very close to the cellar – on the grounds, in fact – and throughout the three months of the harvest Elrine prepares nourishing meals for the whole cellar team every day to keep us going.

Paternoster lies on one of the most beautiful beaches on the whole of the West Coast – completely unspoilt, rich in marine life, and with dazzling white sand. They say the name, which is the Latin for the Lord's Prayer, was given it centuries ago by Portuguese sailors praying as the waves pounded their fragile ships – "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name...".

It is a place inviting you to sit back in the silence of the evening staring up into an overcrowded starlit sky, sipping a glass of good Du Toitskloof wine and thinking back on the vintage that has been. No, it's misleading to say it like that, for the vintage is far from over. The backbreaking work might be behind us, but now we start working on those young wines in the tanks – stabilising, clarifying, blending and shaping them into a final product we can offer with confidence to wine lovers.



### A risky business

At this stage of the winemaking process the senses take over and you become dependent on your nose and your palate – a risky business, because on the basis of what we smell and taste we are going to blend millions of litres of wine in the hope that others will like what we make, too. I admire those winemakers who have such confidence in their own judgment that they will single-handedly make up their final blends. At Du Toitskloof we share that responsibility among the members of the winemaking team. Together we taste wines from all the tanks of a particular cultivar, select the best ones and then start balancing the various components to arrive at a blend that has the approval of the whole team.

There is another advantage to such a joint effort. Our team is a microcosm of the world out there and represents a wide range of taste preferences. For we make wine not for ourselves so much as for others, so we need to consider what they are likely to enjoy as an expression of our area in a way that meets our strict quality criteria.

It's important to discover directly, what it is that people like about our wines. That's why I'm always keen to talk to wine groups as I did again recently when I was invited by one in the Hermanus area. I took with me a number of unfiltered white wine samples of the 2013 vintage "just as they came from mother", as we say in the industry. These were building blocks for the new wines, and it was fascinating to get the input from people as to what they expect from a Sauvignon blanc, a Chenin or a Chardonnay.

On one point there was general agreement, and that is that the 2013 vintage is shaping up into something very special.



Until next time,  
Shawn Thomson,  
Chief winemaker

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### SILENT SUPPORT

You can't look back on the vintage without realising how dependent you are on your fellow winemakers and your cellar team; in my case, on Willie, Mot, Jaco, Tiaan and Anet, on Derek, Balie, Setjhaba, Jeffrey, Sanele, Alfred, David and Eleveno. However, I really want to single out Tiaan Loubser who heads up our on-site laboratory – not because he is more deserving of praise, but because the role of the laboratory in the quality of any wine is so seldom recognised. The same goes for Mot, but I'll get round to him in a moment.

On a hectic day the laboratory analyses up to a hundred samples, determining the sugar, the acid, the pH of the grapes in every single load that is delivered to the cellar. Tiaan, who is still a youngster, joined us from a wine estate close by where he also headed up the research laboratory. He adapted very quickly despite the fact that he found the pace at Du Toitskloof somewhat more hectic than what he was used to. In any cellar quick, accurate and reliable analysis is crucial when you have to decide quickly how to treat a particular load while the trucks are queuing up to drop their cargo and that is what Tiaan has provided us with throughout the season.

Mot is one of our winemakers. Call him by his real name, Chris Geldenhuys, and he will probably walk right passed you without realising you were talking to him. This year I threw him in at the deep end by leaving the fermentation of all the red cultivars to him. I sat on the sidelines and didn't interfere, although at times it took all the restraint I could muster! But Mot came out on top and triumphantly so, and we shall be producing beautiful red wines this year from the start he made.

Just goes to show.



### 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

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US ON

