



**DURBANVILLE  
HILLS**

*wines shaped by the landscape*

Dear friend,

## Christmas in June

June in the southern hemisphere is the equivalent of December in the northern half and down here, kicked off with a hailstorm second to none. The widespread storm left Cape Town looking like Christmas in Switzerland as hailstones of various sizes covered the city and surrounds like snow. Not surprisingly – if you're used to the pronouncements of the Weather Bureau – a spokesman claimed it was “not unusual for this time of the year” despite some 90-year-olds insisting they'd never seen anything like it. Maybe I've got it wrong and seeing something once in a lifetime isn't that unusual?

The local storm prompted enthusiastic amateur weather forecasters to predict a fierce winter to follow, but I'm sitting here in short sleeves enjoying weather as gentle and unexciting as the performances of most of our national sports teams this past month. Some argue the worst of winter still lies ahead, but the winter solstice has come and gone and we are halfway into the year, give a day or two. What is certain this winter is that the first day after a rainy day is always a Monday!

## Hail the timing

We were lucky that the hailstorm at the beginning of the month came when it did for the vines are all in dormancy so there was no new green growth that have been knocked off by the hail. Just a week before, some 6 000 ha of vineyards in south- eastern France were severely damaged by hail. And a week ago about 1 000 ha of vines in Vouvrey and other parts of the Loire valley also got struck by hail stones the size of eggs to create what was described as “scenes of devastation”. There was virtually no growth left on the vines – which means no bunches this year and virtually no buds to produce shoots for next year.

## 2013 Savvy soon

June is the month when we bottle the first Sauvignon blanc of the 2013 crop. It should be on the shelves sometime in July. I first came across “Savvy”, the affectionate nickname for Sauvignon blanc, among Kiwi winemakers. Since then the name has caught on elsewhere as well. It does sound friendlier than the longer version and probably also suggests that some brains are needed to make (and enjoy) a good Sauvignon! Will they soon also be referring to Cabernet as Cabbie, to Chardonnay as Chardie or to Merlot as Merly? I sincerely hope not! There are already quite a few 2013 Savvies (surely that must be the plural!) on the market. However, in our cool climate we tend not to “pressure cook” our wines in an effort to be among the first to get to market. We prefer to show some savvy and release mid-year.

## Rediscovering Pinotage

With a winter fire going I tend to first comb through my collection of reds from previous vintages to find something to keep me company. I usually choose something out of the ordinary, like a special bottling from our Rhinofields range. That's why there has been a slight build-up on my shelves of reds in the Durbanville Hills range. I have been delving into some of the older Pinotages – and what a pleasant surprise. I've often found that with time cool-climate Pinotage develops a very similar flavour profile to its famed parent Pinot noir - and dare I say often even better?

I selected the first one to accompany a spaghetti Bolognese, but needed some wine for the broth - it's my own recipe so I can add what I want! - and reluctantly had to sacrifice some from the first bottle, forcing me in time to fetch one from the next vintage. And so I worked my way through the various vintages. I was being altruistic, of course. My labour was all to ensure I could provide you with up-to-the-minute advice on how these older Pinotages are maturing.

## Hunting? No I'm just looking

Trying to get hold of someone this time of the year is often a frustrating experience because the hunting season is open and it's time for male bonding and team-building in the quiet of the veld.

To make up for the frustration is the sudden ample availability of venison that tempts you to slip off the Pinotage wagon and go for the red fruit aromas and spicy, peppery flavours of Shiraz. I have tasted some cold-area Shiraz from other countries that shows only pepper with no fruit, and others from warm countries with over-the-top fruit and no spice...maybe they should do an exchange deal.

Cool-climate Shiraz shows signs of both spice and red fruit, and is absolutely made for our local venison. I guess it is the spice mix used on the venison with its expression of dried coriander and cloves that opens the gap for Shiraz to take hands and match the meat perfectly.

Personally, I shall be giving hunting a pass this year and instead join the annual exodus from the Cape for the Kruger National Park during the school holidays. Our wines are sold in the park's restaurants but not in its shops (yet) forcing me to stock up before entering the gates. Soon I will be able to advise you which wine goes best with which whine...growl, roar or whoop.

## Something is spooking our pigeons

Lately, we have observed large flocks of pigeons near our cellar, frantically trying to get out of the way of something. These are the same pigeons which seem unperturbed by the presence of our resident pair of Jackal Buzzards. There are also no Peregrine falcons around as they migrate in winter and don't usually hunt close to the cellar.

The dead pigeons we have been finding made me think we might have a silent sniper in our midst. Then talk started surfacing of a “little red falcon”. The culprit is very fast and is often seen diving into the olive grove at the back of the cellar. I have narrowed the hunter down to a Black Sparrowhawk or a Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk or, most probably, a Lanner Falcon that is causing the pigeons to fly away, keeping an eye out for the enemy instead of obstacles in their way. It happens regularly that we hear a thud in the cellar to find that a couple of pigeons have flown into a window or wall at breakneck speed, literally.

Keep an eye out in the near future for free-range pigeon pie on our restaurant menu... it goes well with Merlot.

So, to whom shall we raise a glass this month? I raise mine to those selfless friends who brave the icy wilds to bring back a bounty of venison for those who stay at home. Is anyone listening out there?

Prost!

MARTIN MOORE

Cellar Master

Please visit our website on [www.durbanvillehills.co.za](http://www.durbanvillehills.co.za)

## Latest News and Upcoming Events

### Take Friday Nights Off



At the end of a long, hard week, it's great to gather your friends, share a bottle of wine and enjoy delicious food. And now our bistro-style restaurant is offering you all this by opening the restaurant on Friday evenings for dinner and live music. The creative, winter-inspired menu includes some tempting choices such as quail breast with bacon, sage and dried fruit chutney, caramelised beetroot and fig tarte tatin, and pork belly, slow cooked with apple and raisin.

To make a booking contact the Durbanville Hills restaurant on (021) 5581337 or send an email to [info@durbanvillehills.co.za](mailto:info@durbanvillehills.co.za).

## Wines From Around the World



Satisfy your inquisitive palate as you taste your way around the world and discover how Sauvignon blancs and Merlots from some of the finest wine-producing regions differ in style. Led by cellar master Martin Moore, the wines of Durbanville Hills will be included among a selection from Chile, France, New Zealand and Australia. The difference in production methods, style and taste profile between these wines will be discussed, offering insight into the factors that determine the character of wines made from the same cultivar in different parts of the world. The tasting will be followed by a Thai green curry dinner and coffee or tea served with biscotti.

**Date:** Thursday, 22 August

**Time:** 18:30 for 19:00

**Cost:** R220 per person (includes welcome drink, comparative tasting, dinner, coffee or tea served with biscotti)

**Booking is essential** as space is limited.

For reservations contact Simone Brown on (021) 558 1300 or by sending an email to [sibrown@durbanvillehills.co.za](mailto:sibrown@durbanvillehills.co.za).

**For more information on any of these events or to book contact Simone Brown on (021) 558 1300 or by sending an email to [sibrown@durbanvillehills.co.za](mailto:sibrown@durbanvillehills.co.za)**