

*July 2013*

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# DURBANVILLE HILLS

*wines shaped by the landscape*

Dear friend,

Finally just about everyone is back from their winter holidays and at the cellar we are running at full steam again. After conducting an inspection in *loco*, I'm happy to report that our wines are now available not only in all the restaurants in the Kruger National Park but also in all the shops. You will also be delighted to hear that the Big Five are alive and well. So, after this relaxing break in the wild (recorded in some 1 600 photographs) and several bottles of wine enjoyed under the stars, I'm ready to tackle the second part of the year.

Looking at the hundreds of emails in my inbox I was marvelling at how much time it must have taken in the Old Days to write by hand all those memos and letters sent by "snail mail". But in the end they would pile up in the same way in your wire-basket serving as an in-tray, waiting for you to come back from holiday. I remember an old-timer colleague of mine who also saw such a pile on his desk on coming back from leave. This he emptied unceremoniously into his wastepaper basket saying if what was there had any importance, the senders would get back to him anyway. Not long afterwards, sitting in the office next to his, I could hear his phone starting to ring almost non-stop. Then there was a loud clang

## *Latest News and Upcoming Events*

### *Halloween Sunset Run*



Join us this Halloween for a trial run as the sunsets. It's a great way to appreciate the rolling hills of the area as you chase the setting sun. The 5km and 10km run starts and finishes at the cellar and the route meanders through the vineyards offering spectacular scenery along the way. Bring

outside my window. When I looked out, I saw his phone lying on the section of the roof below me. Well, that was at least one way of catching up with your work and doing so without interruptions!

## *Of pruning and secateurs*

Driving through the valley on rainy days you see bright yellow dots moving around in the vineyards as pruners in their oilskins brave the weather, clicking away with their secateurs at the old shoots on the dormant vines.

Wondering about the origin of this useful instrument which the dictionary describes as "a pair of pruning clippers with crossed blades", I went off to do a bit of research. It appears that secateurs – the name comes from the Latin *secare* meaning to cut - were, according to the 1819 edition of the French gardening guide *Le Bon Jardinier*, the invention of a French aristocrat with the impressive name of Antoine François Bertrand de Molleville (1744 - 1818). He was the head of the Royal Secret Police and had to flee to England after trying to help Louis XVI to escape the guillotine. Was his invention inspired by the blade of that ghastly instrument, I idly wondered.

A simple but ingenious tool, our secateurs have a spring that opens the scissors after cutting so that it can be operated with one hand, leaving the other hand free to remove shoots or other obstacles. However effective the spring action, a day of pruning takes its toll on the muscles of the hand. Some farmers therefore use a tractor-powered compressor supplying air for the shears of several pruners at a time. It calls for a bit more concentration though, as once the button is pressed the secateurs remove shoots, trellis wires and fingers alike.

your own head-light and dress up in Halloween costumes to stand a chance in winning a prize. Wine tasting, wine sales and gourmet burgers available. The restaurant will also be open for dinner.

**Date:** Thursday, 31 October

**Time:** Registration from 17.00 with the trail run starting at 18:00

**Distance:** 5km or 10 km trail

**Cost:** Entry fee is R60 per runner

## *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

## Destroy...

I read that "old and aged" commercial stock of Australian wine to the value of 35 million Australian dollars (read R315 million) is to be destroyed in the US following declining sales in that country. The company's CEO said the decision resulted from "over-ambitious forecasting of new commercial product launches, improved distributor logistics, and old and out-of-date stock". In the case of red wines, age is seldom a problem unlike in the case of whites where "fresh" is the key attraction of New World wines. Matching demand to supply is a fine balancing act that can lead to disastrous stock losses as well as sleepless nights for producers everywhere.

## Sink?

I found recent articles on ageing wine in the sea quite puzzling. Why, if sea levels are rising due to melting ice and thermal expansion, do you go and add to the problem by ageing your wines under the waves as well?

The New Zealanders seem to have added a new twist to this new trend of under-water ageing, confirming my belief that no wine is better suited to sea food than Sauvignon blanc. Last year the cargo ship, the *Rena* was wrecked off the coast of New Zealand with the result that 4 000 cases of the country's Sauvignon blanc is now ageing at the bottom of the ocean. And last month the good ship *Comfort* on its way to Sweden, went down off the coast of Yemen taking with it thousands of cases of - yes, you've guessed it - Kiwi Sauvignon blanc and some Pinot noir. Advice to the owners - patience is a virtue. Old wines from shipwrecks in classic times have been sold for millions at recent auctions.

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



## *The second half*

The diary for the next few months is a combination of winery activities, travelling and wine shows. The first week in August will see me in New Zealand introducing our wines to visitors to the Auckland Food Show. This popular show also attracts large numbers of expats living abroad and in the past I have often found myself switching to my native tongue when chatting to some of the "locals". The range of Durbanville Hills red wines is selling nicely over there, but we are not so cheeky as to send them some of our Sauvignon blanc!

It is amazing how many countries have big cities close to the same latitude with Santiago, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Cape Town, Sydney and Auckland all located on almost a straight line. Not that it does much to shorten the flying time to Auckland which is about the same as the time I spend at the show.

## *Mind the gap*

The current spate of wine shows is tough on the teeth and tender loving care is required to retain their enamel. I lost (and found) an old crowned eye tooth a day before judging commenced for the National Young Wine Show. I can't remember whether the crown was the result of rugby or wine tasting. What I can tell you is that with the years you develop a spitting technique that bears your own very special imprint. This show of artistry gets severely impaired by a gap in the dentures. It affects both aim and distance so you limp along like a car with a flat tyre.

As always, I need to ask to whom we shall raise a glass this month. And as always, I shall be first in there with the suggestion that we do so to those secateurs-wielders in their oilskins preparing the vines for the new

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)***

season. May all their fingers still be intact by the time the new buds appear!

Prost!

MARTIN MOORE

Cellar Master

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

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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.

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**Please drink responsibly**



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