



DURBANVILLE HILLS CAPE TOWN. OUR LOCATION MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Dear friend,

Arriving back at the cellar after visits to England, Scotland and Germany, I thought I had the day wrong as the parking area was strangely deserted for a busy Monday morning. It was only when I got to my office that I understood why, for on my desk was a pack of leave applications from staff members who took off the Monday before the public holiday on the Tuesday to turn what would be an ordinary weekend into an extra long weekend. Can't turn your back, I mumbled to myself.

I arrived back on an overcast Saturday and could therefore not see the aftermath of the inclement weather of the week before. As I drove to the shops the next morning to restock my larder, the weather had cleared and I could see the thick layer snow blanketing the mountain tops – no wonder it felt as if every fridge in the neighbourhood had been left open during the night. I guess the Weather Office would in its usual manner describe it as "normal for this time of the year". Normal my foot!

The possible effects of the cold weather on budding bothered me so much that I abandoned my shopping and set off to the nearest Chardonnay vineyard to see what was happening. Thank goodness they had already started budding. At the same time I realised they would have to be sprayed soon as the fragile young shoots are very susceptible to mildew. However, the soil was soggy under foot and I knew any tractor sent into a vineyard now with spraying equipment would simply get stuck.

It reminded me of a similar situation a few years ago when driving to town, I spotted a tractor stuck in a vineyard close to the road. On my return it was still there but now, close to it, a rescue tractor sent in to help was also stuck in the mud. Driving home that evening I could not help but notice that there was now a second rescue tractor which got stuck trying to pull the other two out. I couldn't resist the temptation to phone the farmer and ask him why there were three tractors stuck in his vineyard. "Sorry," he said, "there would have been more but I ran out of tractors."

He was obviously not going to be caught like that again for on the Monday morning there were the workers in the vineyards with portable spraying equipment protecting the young growth that will spawn the new vintage.

Wine show season

Results from various wine shows are trickling in and, if any proof was needed, confirmed again how well suited our cool hills are to Sauvignon blanc. At the Michelangelo International Wine Awards two of our wines of this varietal were given Gran d'Or medals (called Double Gold by most winemakers and "Grënd Gold" by some of the oldies!). The wines in question are the 2013 Rhinofields Sauvignon Blanc and the Rhinofields Sauvignon Blanc Noble Late Harvest. It was the latter's debut wine show. It followed up on this success a week later by receiving a "Gold Outstanding" award at the International Wine and Spirits Competition in London.

The 2012 Rhinofields Sauvignon Blanc, the 2013 Durbanville Hills Sauvignon Blanc and the 2011 Rhinofields Merlot all received gold medals. The Rhinofields Merlot is no stranger to medals and a quick calculation shows that Merlot is still ahead as our most awarded varietal, but that Sauvignon blanc is now quickly closing the gap.

The 2012 Rhinofields Sauvignon Blanc also made its way into the FNB Sauvignon Blanc Top 20 line-up. After the announcement of the results of the Veritas Awards on the first Saturday in October we get a break from local wine shows until the same time next year... feels pretty much like the exam time!

White or red wine area?

Today, the Durbanville area is pretty well known for the quality of its Sauvignon blanc and I have often amused myself by asking a waiter for a bottle of Durbanville Hills without mentioning the specific wine and without fail he would return with the Sauvignon blanc. At the same time our red wines have often outperformed our whites at wine shows so you could ask: Is Durbanville a better red or white wine region? There is no quick, simple answer to this one because of the contrasting topography of this area.

The easiest way to explain to people why we are so well suited to both white and red wine is by getting them to drive through the valley, first on the Tygerberg valley road (M13) and then on the parallel-running Viessershok road. The Tygerberg valley road running from the city centre past the winery on the western side of Table Bay, meanders between warmer, slightly less elevated northern slopes and, on the right, the steeper, cool southern slopes. It may seem like mirror images, but they are quite different due to sun and wind exposure.

Towards both ends the valley opens up, again adding to the diversity of the area and the possibilities in what we can achieve with different varieties and clones. Behind the southern slopes on the right, the Viessershok road meanders in a similar way parallel to the M13, where the backsides of the southern slopes form the northern slopes of this little valley. The road follows an upward curve against a steep hill before opening up to vistas of the Atlantic Ocean.

Such a drive clearly shows the potential of the area for the cultivation of a range of varietals. The soil types belong to the Malmesbury group of alluvial rocks which were deposited more than 550 million years ago. The proximity of the Atlantic and Indian oceans has a stabilising effect on the climate. You could summarise by saying that our quality is assured by the similarity of overall conditions but also the complexity of the differences. The trick is to know how to apply them!

International travels done for the year

The overseas travel for the year is now behind us. It's often been tiring but also very rewarding in making great new friends and allies. The progress made in a variety of markets bodes well for the year ahead. It does not matter whether the successes achieved are in big or smaller markets, they all make us feel as if we've won another "Grënd Gold" medal such as when we got the news of the listing of our wines in top-end Peruvian restaurants and since then also a supermarket listing.

It is these breakthroughs, big or small, that keep us going on the often exhausting overseas travels. On the last trip I went to Scotland and had to get back from Crieff to Stirling on a Saturday morning. I had a fairly good idea of the first part of the road and only switched on the rented GPS halfway there. Surprise, Surprise... the lady spoke Spanish! I was on the outskirts of Stirling before I finally got her to speak to me in English. Getting out of the car I seriously considered switching it to Arabic for the next customer!

Today I suggest we raise a glass to that unknown person or persons who first introduced Sauvignon blanc to our area thereby opening up a world of potential for us.

Prost!

MARTIN MOORE
Cellar Master

Please visit our website on www.durbanvillehills.co.za

Latest News and Upcoming Events

Season of Sauvignon



Summer equals Sauvignon blanc so head to our cellar for the annual Durbanville Wine Valley's Season of Sauvignon.

The festival includes tastings of Durbanville Hills' flagship range as well as Sauvignon blancs from all the wine producers in the Durbanville area. On both days you can take part in an interactive sensory tasting where you can discover for yourself how sweet, sour, bitter and savoury flavours change the taste profile of a Sauvignon blanc. Kids entertainment, live music and various food stalls will be on offer with picnics, oysters, sushi, nachos and charcuterie platters available. The restaurant will also be open for breakfast and lunch.

Date: Saturday, 5 and Sunday, 6 October

Time: 10.00 - 17.00. Sensory tastings on both days start at 11.00

Cost: Entry is free. Wine tasting which includes a crystal glass at R50 per person. Sensory tasting experience at R60 per person

Booking essential for picnics, breakfast and lunch at the restaurant as well the sensory tasting.

Halloween Sunset Run



Join us this Halloween for a trail 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 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.

Summer Picnics



The scenic views of Table Mountain, Table Bay, the rolling hills and adjoining vineyards from our cellar is the perfect setting to soak away the winter blues under the olive grove with the beautiful bespoke throws and comfy pillows that come standard with each picnic booked.

The hand-woven wicker basket includes a bottle of Durbanville Hills Merlot Rosé and a wonderful selection of picnic treats. The kids can tuck into the "5 Ants" before shedding some energy on the free-form jungle gym.

Picnic season: October 2013 – April 2014

Cost: R310 per two people sharing and R75 per child

Bookings are required at least 48 hours in advance during the week and for weekend picnics, please book on the Friday by 12:00.

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