

uniWines Vineyards News December 2013



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Tourists from the Northern Hemisphere seeking some early summer warmth in the Cape winelands must have wondered whether their aeroplane had landed on the wrong side of the equator. Spring may officially have sprung in the Cape during October, but in November we experienced some inclement weather of the kind that makes climate change sceptics running towards the nearest parcel of sand in which to stick their heads in – although a dry one could not be found.

In the Bredekloof, where uniWines Vineyards and our farmers are based, rain, wind and cold temperatures of the unseasonable kind were experienced at a time when we usually begin to run our air-conditioners at full blast. That this weather struck during the delicate flowering period for our vines caused some nerves to be scraped raw.

Damp conditions, followed by heat, are a fertile breeding ground for pests such as downy mildew. Fortunately our grape-growers are always prepared for what nature throws at them – they have to be, they are farmers. The uniWines Vineyards head-office at the Daschbosch Cellar did, however, not come off the storm that lightly. The downpours caused our building to be flooded, with a brisk stream of water running through the staff-offices, causing all the sales, admin and marketing personnel to shift their work to the functions venue while the damage is still being repaired.

Fortunately, those who know our team will attest to the fact that there is not lack of humour around here so jokes about canoeing to work and colleagues "wet behind the ears" were in no short supply.

That's the wine industry for you – unpredictable, challenging, never a dull moment. Only the attitude of yourself and your team will determine whether adversity can be turned into success. We at uniWines Vineyards believe we have what it takes.



Pieter Cronje, Marketing to the World

Pieter Cronje, uniWines Vineyards' marketing manager, has two wire-haired terriers who – surprisingly – have not started barking at him for becoming a stranger. Marketing the uniWines Vineyards' brand and its set of values, servicing clients' needs, seeking new business and generally increasing the brand footprint means that Pieter spends two months out of each year on the road, visiting up to 12 different countries in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Although his dogs might not share in the enthusiasm, Pieter says that it is a very exciting time to be involved in the South African wine industry. "We only produce three percent of the world's wine, but the international market has in the past few years certainly sat-up and noticed us," says Pieter.

"Our quality-to-value offering is superb, especially in the kind of wine uniWines Vineyards focusses on, namely well-made bulk wine produced from grapes grown by skilled grape farmers where they are able to obtain relatively high yields of good quality due to the Bredekloof's climate and soils."

However, Brand South Africa still has to find a firmer foothold in the world marketplace. "We have to continually work hard in emphasising the fact of how the South African wine landscape has changed over the past 20 or so years and that the wine industry is one of the New World leaders in quality and viticulture. As well as the fact that South African wine has that something a little bit extra!"

One of the areas where the country has made tremendous improvements is in the relations between farmers and farmworkers, with uniWines Vineyards one of the local wineries producing wines under the Fairtrade label. How important is the Fairtrade brand to uniWines Vineyards? "This is very important in today's marketplace as one is dealing with an informed consumer who demands to know how his or her product was sourced and the impact this has on the environment and the local communities," he says. "However, Fairtrade must be part of your broader, holistic strategy and not the only one. Markets that are especially particular to Fairtrade include the United Kingdom, the Scandinavian and Benelux countries, as well as Japan."

Recent reports from financial institutions imply a possible shortage of wine due to last year's poor harvests in Europe. But Pieter says one must not jump the gun. "Wine remains a commodity and will always be vulnerable to factors such as climate change, strength of currency and the international economic climate. The market is always precariously poised, but a lot of work still needs to be done before there is a wine shortage in the developing markets. And an oversupply is always imminent with good harvests in the traditionally large wine producing countries of Spain, France and Italy."



Pieter Cronje

Trail running finds firm foothold in the Bredekloof

Trail runners and outdoor adventure-seekers flocked to the Bredekloof this past Spring to participate in the first annual uniWines Meander Trail Run. The event was hosted at the wine producer's Daschbosch cellar, situated in the picturesque Louwshoek area near Rawsonville.

Feedback from the 124 participants was overwhelmingly positive, with runners enjoying the challenging climbs, invigorating scenery, and also the varied course terrain which ensured an unpredictable and exciting running experience.

uniWines Vineyards plans to expand the event and make it a favourite annual pit-stop for adventure sport enthusiasts. Our region has more to offer than simply wine. Our unspoilt natural environment makes the Bredekloof ideally suited to adventure sport, and the rugged, mountainous terrain at Daschbosch is any trail runner's dream. The Meander Trail Run is also an extension of the healthy, balanced lifestyle that we aim to promote through our wine brands.

The Bredekloof has become a premier destination for outdoor enthusiasts in recent times, with these activities complementing the local wine offerings. At uniWines Vineyards we understand the importance of a holistic approach to wine tourism. We want more people to discover our beautiful environment that has all the natural elements for truly authentic adventure sport, and where a wine culture and an active lifestyle go hand in hand.



A Fiery First from uniWines Vineyards

The range of items available in the list of Fairtrade-accredited agricultural products has received a boost with the world's first husk spirit bottled under the Fairtrade label. The husk spirit is based to the same recipe as Italian Grappa, a term which can no longer be used on South African products due to EU legislation.

The Italians have made husk spirit – their grappa - an almost indispensable part of enjoying a good cup of coffee. And with coffee being one of the leading product categories with Fairtrade accreditation, this Fairtrade husk spirit complements the range and the experience offered to consumers.

uniWines Vineyards's Palesa Fairtrade Husk Spirit is produced from Cabernet Sauvignon grapes grown on one of its producer-farms in the Bredekloof. After the pressing of the grapes, the skins were distilled in a copper pot-still. The distillate was bottled at 43% alcohol. No barrel-aging was done so as to ensure the pure fruit flavour of the distilled product.

Husk spirit is gaining in popularity in South Africa, a nation that has always had a love for distilled elixirs. It can be enjoyed with coffee and even added to the coffee, as is the Italian custom and served chilled, it is also an excellent digestif after a good meal.

The Palesa Husk Spirit is available from the uniWines Vineyards Daschbosch winery at R150.

