



Seven Generations OF TIMELESS TRADITION

HURGER FAMILY

150 Years

SINCE 1864

DECEMBER 2014

News

Those people frequenting wine farms know the Christmas Holiday Season as the preferred period to do some tasting and buying. Especially on the white wine side, where - as is the case of Rietvallei - the 2014 vintages are bottled, matured and ready for the taste test.

South Africa is in the fortunate position of being able to put complex and developed white wines on the market in the year of vintage, offering consumers wines which are fresh and fruit-driven, yet are developed with many different dimensions.

Visitors to Rietvallei over this holiday period will be able to taste the white wines from the 2014 vintage, including the award-winning Estéanna white blend. And if you have a keen eye, you will also notice that the packaging has been revamped, cleaning-up the labels which honour the Rietvallei tradition while exuding a look of modern style.

The tasting room will be open for most of the festive season - see www.rietvallei.co.za - and the team looks forward to welcoming you on the farm where you will be among the first wine lovers to try the new vintages. Enjoy!



Our new packaging

Our JMB Top Tier Wines

And then, my pride and joy and highlight of the year, was two new wines with totally new packaging. Coinciding with its 150th anniversary this year we released two single vineyard wines under a new label. The wines, a Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay, are Rietvallei's first wild-fermented wines and to my mind represent a highlight in the Estate's history of making fine wine in the Robertson Valley.



These two wines, a Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay, are bottled under a new label named JMB - my father's initials - aimed at the premier wine market and honouring the Rietvallei heritage.

We launched the [JMB Cabernet Franc 2011](#) and [JMB Chardonnay 2014](#) at the Mount Nelson Hotel in November, with Chef Rudi Liebenberg preparing a special menu and having myself and Elizabeth seated in his kitchen with selected guests from the media. And I am glad to report that the reception to these wines has been really positive.

The Cabernet Franc vineyard yields 5t a hectare, while the Chardonnay provides 8t of fruit. In the cellar the wines were given a minimum-intervention approach, including the withholding of inoculation allowing natural yeasts to prompt and sustain fermentation.

The [JMB Cabernet Franc](#) was fermented in open tanks with manual punch-downs ensuring the integration of skin, juice and lees. Once dry, the wine was placed in 300 litre vats of French oak for 26 months, with only the best barrels selected for the final product.

Cabernet Franc is not a common variety in the Robertson region, but on Rietvallei the chalky soils and the relatively undulating terrain exposed to southerly breezes allow the grapes to set, grow and ripen evenly under ideal conditions. The result is superb quality fruit ensuring a wine of succulence and freshness, and I deem the JMB 2011 to be a highlight in Rietvallei's red wine history.



Kobus Burger with Mt Nelson Chef Rudi Liebenberg



Media at Chef's table

The [JMB Chardonnay 2014](#) represents a new Chardonnay direction for us as the character of the single vineyard, wild yeast fermentation and the aging in new 300 litre oak vats brings a complexity and fruit-expression we have not seen here before. The 300 litre vats allow for a greater wine-to-wood ratio, balancing exposure to new wood ensuring the fruit and verve is maintained while the barrel brings structure and dimension to the Chardonnay.

The estimated retail prices for the [JMB Cabernet Franc 2011](#) and [JMB Chardonnay 2014](#) are R250 and R150 respectively.

New Television Show

The year ended with the recording on Rietvallei of an insert for a new series on South African wine for the Afrikaans DStv channel kykNet.



Called *Sediment*, the show takes an irreverent and fast-paced look at South Africa's leading wine estates, and we had great fun as the crew - young, hip and happening - chased us around asking questions and commanding me to show them various aspects of the winery. It is great news that a major television channel has commissioned a series on wine. With more cooking and food programmes than you can throw a hat at, it is time the broader media takes a look at the unique aspects of the South African wine industry.

And the good news is that *Sediment* is not a once-off, so the country should be exposed to the wine culture for quite a few months next year.

The series is broadcast from January and we will communicate via the usual social media channels.

I would like to end off by wishing everyone a joyous festive season and all the very best for the new year.

For those of you not able to enjoy an extended holiday through January, well, you'll find me and the team on the farm, as harvesting is set to commence in the second week of January.

Kind regards,

Kobus

- Kobus and the Rietvallei team

