DE WETSHOF ESTATE
SOUTH AFRICA

news | july 2015

A new South African wine industry organisation has stepped to the fore on the international stage. In May this year, Cape Vintner Classification (CVC) was introduced at the London Wine Trade Fair. And seeing as De Wetshof Estate was publically named as one of its founding members, it is deemed relevant for to talk about the CVC.

This organisation, the result of five years of hard work, research and interacting with the South African wine industry, was formed to develop a set of recognisable criteria promoting excellence within the industry. At the core of this, is recognising wines produced from site-specific vineyards reflecting the unique geographical characteristics of pockets of South African terroir. Along with this, the wines must be produced by wineries registered as estates with the cellars and farms conforming to various standards including environmental and personnel regulations.

Those interested can find the full set of criteria at www.cvc1679.com. But in essence, wines conforming to these will be able to market themselves under the CVC logo indicating their certified premier status.

As communicated during the London Wine Trade Fair, De Wetshof Estate is one of the wineries currently carrying CVC acceptance, with our new packaging - introduced later this year - bearing this seal.

A founding member of CVC, De Wetshof is obviously very proud of the fact that our wines and winery practices are deemed good enough by the discerning panel of judges and auditors responsible for the selection process. But it is important to highlight a few aspects of the CVC.

First and foremost, its formation was driven by market factors. In this extremely competitive international wine market, decision makers have expressed a need for a tier of wines recognised for premier quality, geographical provenance and excellence in all stages of production.

With scores of country's producing wine and thousands of brands, South Africa was lacking a tier of wines bearing certification of excellence. Hence the CVC.

As far as the organisation itself is concerned, CVC is inclusive. All registered South African estates can apply for membership, as many have already done. Finally, and here is the true mission, CVC aims to assist the South African wine industry in its goals of promoting our country as a recognised, established producer of quality wines from vineyards expressing site-specific individuality.

We know this, but through our marketing and promotional endeavours, the message will be conveyed with greater vigour.

And in this, it is the South African industry that wins.

LIKE the rest of the Western agricultural industry, we were getting nervous about the lack of rain. Especially when May seemed closer to summer than autumn and our records showed the last real rain had only fallen in August 2014 ...

Fortunately June kicked-off with solid rain and some decent wintry temperatures, although a lot more is needed to allow our vines to go into their winter hibernation.

Now looking back at the 2015 vintage, the wine quality is proving to be far better than we had initially anticipated.

This year's vintage was known for its early start to picking and the dry, windy conditions in the De Wetshof vineyards. The resultant wines, however, are proving to be of exceptional quality - according to winemaker Peter de Wet.

"It was an erratic harvest season," says Peter. "Picking began about 10 days earlier than average due to the warm spring. And then as we finished bringing in our white grapes, the ripening of the major red varieties slowed down and their picking dates were pushed back."

But a few months down the line, the harvest is proving to have delivered wines of balance, refinement and superb structure."

Winter vines on De Wetshof

Since 1972, De Wetshof has vinified its various vineyards separately to ensure the expression of individual terroir pockets. And it is always exciting to see how these unique vineyards express themselves in the young wines following that year's harvest,

"The Chardonnay batches from site-specific vineyards are showing a linearity, with their individual terroirs expressing purity and elegance of the respective wines," says Peter. "Yes, we emphasise the fact that our wines originate from separate parcels each with an own fingerprint. Complementing this is the golden thread of De Wetshof terroir running through all the wines."

With Peter being responsible for taking De Wetshof in a new direction in terms of red Bordeaux varieties, he is particularly pleased with the 2015 vintage Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon currently lying in barrel.

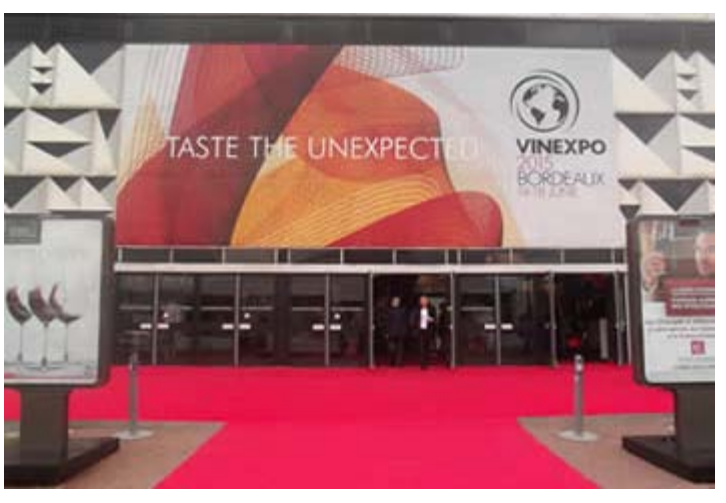
"These reds have only been in wood for three months, but I am loving what I am seeing," says Peter. The wines are sumptuous and showing powerful bright fruit, with a noticeable elegance to the mouthfeel - even now, tasted from a new French oak barrel."

The Cabernet Sauvignon, he says, is more restrained and classic, and like the Merlot expresses a freshness that bodes well for the next year's barrel maturation.

And on the subject of red wines, it was great to hear that from July the De Wetshof Naissance Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 will be served on SAA Business Class.

PETER and Johann represented De Wetshof at this year's Vinexpo, the bi-annual wine event in Bordeaux attracting everybody who is anybody in the wine world. They both agreed that the emphasis the French wine industry is now placing on the Vinexpo as a marketing vehicle for the wines of France is greater than ever - President Francois Hollande opened this year's event with a speech of over 20 minutes, going at great lengths to reiterate the importance of wine as a driver of his nation's cultural and economic character.

With the whole wine world at Vinexpo, Johann and Peter met current customers from the fields of wine importing, restaurants and sommeliers, as well as making several new introductions.



Vinexpo entrance

Johann and Peter de Wet enjoying the tastes of a vintage Cognac during their visit to Vinexpo

A lot of work, but time to play was also had. Staying with old friend Christian Radoux, the barrel supremo based in Cognac, the brothers had ample opportunity to sample some rare fare - including a 1956 vintage Cognac.

To the great envy of father Danie who was at home in Robertson and had always wanted to sample a Cognac produced while he was still in primary school!

A SPECIAL wine and food evening will be held on De Wetshof during the Robertson Slow Festival in August. This will be on Friday, 7 August and it is one not to be missed.

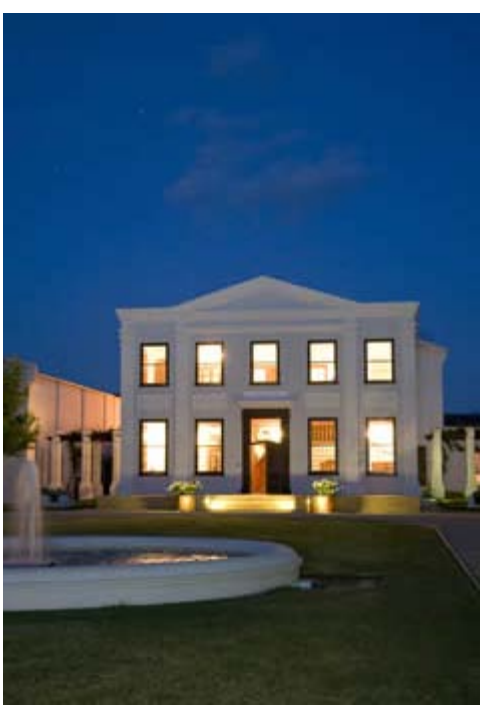
The gourmet five course dinner will be especially prepared by renowned and award-winning Swiss-trained chef Bernhard Hess from the Mimosa Lodge in Montagu.

Besides the sumptuous five-course meal, wine lovers are in for a treat. Older De Wetshof Chardonnays will be served with the dinner held in the Estate's main-building.

Bernhard Hess

Johann de Wet from De Wetshof will be present to introduce and discuss the wines in what promises to be a unique, engaging and personal event.

Only 25 places are available at R600 per person. The evening begins at 19:00 with canapés. For bookings contact the farm on 023 615 1853.



De Wetshof at night, venue of the fine dining event

Kind regards,

The De Wet Family

Tel: +27.236151853 **Fax:** +27.236151915 **Email:** frontdesk@dewetshof.com **Website:** www.dewetshof.com
P.O. Box 31 , Robertson, 6705, South Africa