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Let the harvest begin...

NORMAN MCFARLANE

Stomping the pomegranate – they call it – in honour of the commencement of the harvest, and it is a ritual that takes place every year at Morgenster Wine and Olive Estate, nestled under the northern slopes of the Schapenberg in Somerset West.

“We know that it is time to commence the harvest when the pomegranate is ripe, and the juice runs clear and red when it is stomped,” explains cellar master Henri Kotze.

We’re standing in front of the cellar door surrounded by estate staff who take part in the wonderful ritual every year, and estate owner Guilio Bertrand’s foot is poised over the pomegranate.

“Of course we have more scientific methods to determine the ripeness of the grapes, but this ritual is symbolic of the commencement of that very busy, yet rewarding time on the farm.”

And with that, Mr Bertrand puts his weight onto the pomegranate – which splits, and the lovely red juice runs, to cheers and raised glasses from the assembled company.

Raising his glass, he says: “Salut! And I wish you all a wonderful harvest.”

The assembled company troops into the cellar, where a stack of crates of grapes stand alongside the press, ready to be processed. Mr Bertrand breaks the ice, by tossing the first chute of grapes – Cabernet Franc – into the hopper, and the bunches are pulled up by they stepped conveyor to the destemmer, after which they drop into the press.



Continued on page 3 ■ Surrounded by estate staff, Morgenster owner Guilio Bertrand stomps the pomegranate to signify the start of the 2015 harvest.

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