



NEWSLETTER | JULY 2016

The saying among vine farmers goes: a vineyard cannot go to bed hungry. Meaning that the climate has to cool down sufficiently before vines enter their winter dormancy in order to ensure that they accumulate enough reserves in the post-harvest period to hibernate unhindered. This also ensures that the vines are radiantly healthy and full of life when they enter the growing period in spring.

To be able to rest with these reserves in store, cold temperatures – very cold actually – are required in autumn, and with this year's scorching heat that persisted from summer to early autumn, many of us were worried that the necessary peaceful winter sleep would not materialise for the vineyards. Fortunately nature defies predictions. In May and especially June we not only had good rains falling across the valley, but also freezing cold temperatures which gave the plants the much-needed boost required to enter dormancy.

Currently a state of blissful tranquility reigns over the Du Toitskloof winelands. The workers have begun pruning. The air is crisp and icy, especially in the mornings, and with the winter sun breaking through the clouds we are reminded every day that this is one of the most beautiful places on earth. The rivers are running. The vineyards are bare and clean. And the mountains tower majestically and dramatically against the blue sky, although a layer of snow would certainly round off the picture nicely.



New labels

As the accompanying photos here show, Du Toitskloof Wines' marketing team has collaborated closely with some of our board members on the packaging of certain wines. The packaging is for a new range called the Selected Vineyard Series comprising the Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, Pinotage, Nebbiolo, Dimension and Pinotage Rosé.

These wines originate from selected blocks of vineyard located in areas where the terroir's influence on the wines is clearly discernible. The grapes are also handled separately in the cellar to do justice to the fruit's special characteristics. It was therefore decided to complement this sharper focus by giving the Selected Vineyard Series a cleaner, more focussed appearance.

As the photos indicate, the traditional Du Toitskloof elements of culture and heritage have been maintained, yet the more modern fonts and elegant neck design make the range really stand out. And this is particularly important, as packaging plays an enormous role in influencing the consumer's buying decision in an environment where hundreds of wines are vying for shelf space and attention. And with the range's new look, the wines have an outstanding appearance to match the quality of the bottle contents.



Raw Craft

In May there were some serious celebrations at the cellar, with close to 800 people visiting us to listen to great music, enjoy the delicious dishes of Melissa's, as well as the fare hauled in by various Cape Town food trucks, and...drink beer. Yes, the Old N1 Craft Beer Festival took place at Du Toitskloof, and with good reason too: the cellar launched its very own beer, namely Raw Craft.

The expansion to the growing craft beer market is a logical progression for a renowned player in the liquor industry, but it doesn't mean that we intend to grow fields of hops and barley all over the valley or that winemaker Shawn Thomson will be swapping his winemaking gloves for beer brewing overalls.

No, Raw Craft is brewed independently from the cellar, in fact just down the street at Breedekloof Brewing. The beer is marketed as supplementary to Du Toitskloof's range of wines, and considering we already have our own restaurant in Melissa's, there is already a good outlet for Raw Craft. It gives us the advantage to offer two products to our customers, as everyone doesn't want to drink wine all the time, and good beer has its place in life after all.

We are also busy marketing Raw Craft in the region, and expanding to other fields, so as the saying goes: watch this space!



Valiant Swart and his band rock out at Du Toitskloof's beer festival.

Visiting artists performing at Melissa's

Du Toitskloof has a stunning venue in Melissa's, and therefore it was decided to use it for guest performances by a wide range of artists and entertainers. The first "guest" evening was a roaring success, with the writer Johan Bakkes enthraling an audience of 70 people from Worcester, Rawsonville, Paarl and Cape Town with his compelling storytelling.

Johan was actually there to introduce his latest travel memoir, Openbaring, about his journeys to the coldest, hottest, wettest and driest places in the world. But when Johan starts talking, the discussion inevitably takes more twists and turns than the most treacherous mountain pass in Siberia. He drew the audience in with his beautiful use of the Afrikaans word and had them laughing, joining in the conversation and close to tears at times.

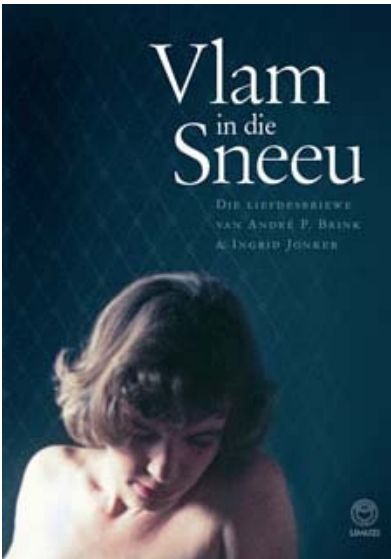
Next in the line-up is a discussion about the book Vlam in die Sneeu, the notorious publication containing the love letters between André P Brink and the poet Ingrid Jonker. This discussion about the intimate writings of two of the greatest literary giants South Africa ever produced, will be led by Karina Sczurek, who was married to André Brink until his death. Not only was she involved in the compilation of the collection, but as a writer in her own right and someone who knew Brink very well on a personal level, there are few people as qualified to talk about the publication.

The conversation with Karina takes place in Melissa's at Du Toitskloof on Thursday, 18 August, and will once again be an evening function which includes a meal and wine in a convivial atmosphere.

And for September, the two cooking gurus from Sarie, Herman Lensing and Barbara Joubert, will be here for a demonstration on how to prepare dishes from their respective cookbooks published last year. More information about this event will be announced shortly.



Johan Bakkes



Vlam in die Sneeu



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