



GRAHAM BECK

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2017 Harvest

WARNING:
“may contain bubbles”

Harvest...harvest...harvest.....harvest!!

THE PACE IS FIERCE AND BRUTAL

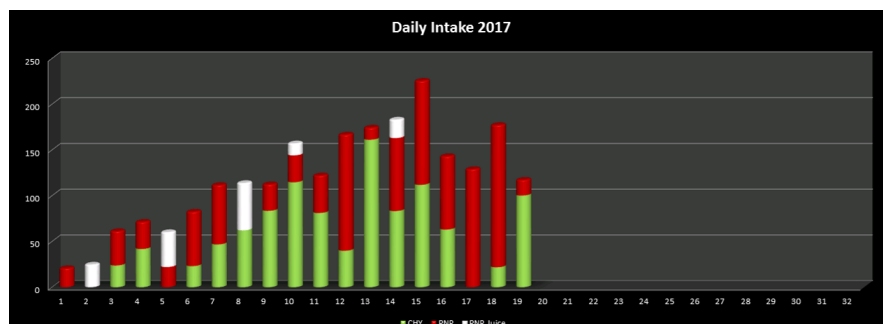
I cannot believe 14 days have passed since our last newsletter. Gosh time flies when you snowed under grapes. It is a little like an avalanche that hits one and then you don't really managed to see the light of day! As the saying goes “paper is patient” (papier is geduldig) it has no relevance to the actual challenge of increased production by whopping 65% with the same equipment, same infrastructure with just a few hands more, on deck than last year. We have been very well prepared and for the first time in the history of our winery we have introduced a night shift team. This means harvest 2017 runs on a 24/7 scenario and has proven not only a lifesaver but the best thing since slice bread.

Quality of the harvest up to know have been amazing! The Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes are healthy and surprisingly show text-book analysis despite the earlier December heatwaves. Great natural acidity, bright flavours and a good pH is the foundation that could be a ‘rock star’ vintage. Off-course it is early days and we are actually are concentrating all of our efforts to meet the demands of volume before the ‘window-period’ ends. So far so good.....this is the most important factor for now, besides the attention to detail that never is lost in the hectic and frantic pace.

There has been an unusual calm in the team even in times of crisis and breakdowns. We all seem to be focused on the major job to be done. Our cellar team remains my “dream team” I am truly blessed. We can comment that we cannot wait for the tsunami of grapes start to subside, which most properly be by next Thursday. Then only will Pierre and I (and off course our interns) get to look into the individual base wines from our Robertson Estate and that from the all important parcels from other geographical areas. This mix will be eventually be 80% Estate fruit from Robertson and the 20% from other areas to have the opportunity to build on the ever important aspect of consistency and continuity!

HARVEST “ROLLER COASTER”

The pace as you can see has been hectic and unbelievable on some days—I guess this translates to say that we are not ‘humans’ but ‘machines’. Below is the number of days of harvested so far and showing Chardonnay, Pinot Noir grape intake and juice intakes.



Awesome and dramatic views from a drone—picking Chardonnay



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

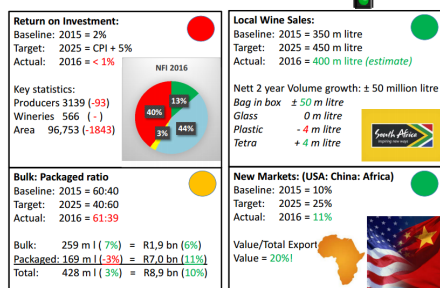
VinPro Information day.....	2
Pictures tells a better story...	3
The Story of Noilly Prat.....	4
Love of Science & Bubble.....	5
Best cocktail in Town	6

SPECIAL NUMBERS OF INTEREST (NOT CAST IN STONE!)

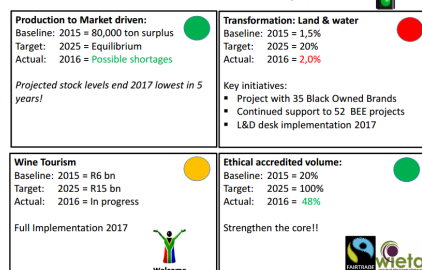
- Total grapes harvested on 27 January = 2 350 tons
- Chardonnay = 1 057 tons
- Pinot Noir = 1 293 tons
- Potential Liters = 1 527 500
- Total SKU cases 152 730
- Record Day = 225.39 tons
-to be continued.....

VINPRO—KEY INDUSTRY GOALS—UNLOCKING VALUE

WISE State of the Industry



WISE State of the Industry (cont.)



At the recent annual VinPro information day the following key wine industry goals were shared. This is known as the WISE program of VinPro that has been implemented to meet challenges by 2025.

2015 Reality (Current status Quo)

- Producer ROI – 2% • Production driven – 80,000 ton surplus • Black-owned land & water – 1.5% • Local wine sales: 350 million l • Bulk vs Packaged export – 60:40 • Ethical Accredited Volume – 20% • Only 2 Free Trade Agreements • Market Ratios: USA : China : Africa (3%:2%:5%) • Wine Tourism R 6 bn • Industry levies R80 m: Government

R11 m • Job Creation – 275 000 Ideal future state . This is to improve by 2025 to:

2025 WISE Program:

- Producer ROI – CPI + 5% • Market and value-chain driven • Black-owned land & water – 20% • Local wine sales: 450 million l • Bulk vs Packaged export – 40:60 • Ethical Accredited Volume – 100% • Key markets, lead Africa • Market Ratios: USA : China : Africa (7%:7%:10%) • Wine Tourism R 15 bn • Matched funding • Job Creation – 375 000

Quite a challenge but the industry needs it.

The South African wine industry is going through some tough times, but sustainable growth is on the cards. What's needed is a clear game plan, a stronger domestic market focus, ingenious marketing and a collective drive towards higher price points. - VinPro Information Day 2017

WISE State of the SA Wine Industry

Return on investment

In 2016 the average return on investment at producer level reduced to below 1%, largely driven by the prolonged drought in certain regions, stagnant wine price and cost inflation. VinPro's research reflects that only 13% of the 3 300 producers farm at sustainable income levels, 44% are operating at breakeven and 40% are making a loss. The nett result is that the total number of grape producers and area under vineyard have declined to 3 139 and 96 753 ha respectively, with subsequent job losses. It is interesting to note that minimal consolidation at winery level has yet occurred.

RATTLE THE MARKETING CAGE!

Very interesting snippets continues:

"Don't think because you've got less wine the price will automatically go up. Wine prices are not driven by availability, but by demand from the consumer for wine as a commodity," said Michael Fridjhon, wine critic and columnist who led a panel discussion on ways to unlock value in the industry chain.

According to Richard Rushton, group MD of Distell, disruptive marketing efforts and the emergence of five to ten scale brands will strengthen the industry's brand as a whole. The higher wine prices that will be achieved through this will inevitably be passed down the value chain to the producer. "Building premiums will require time and patience though," said Rushton.

Gavin Dittmar, MD of national distributor Meridian Wine Merchants, warned against using discounts as a marketing tool. "It's the quickest race to the bottom. How will we build brands if discount is our only bargaining tool?" he said. He emphasised the value that distribution companies can add as collective marketing vehicle for South African wines. "If we're the ham in the sandwich between producers and the trade – let's be parma ham, not polony."

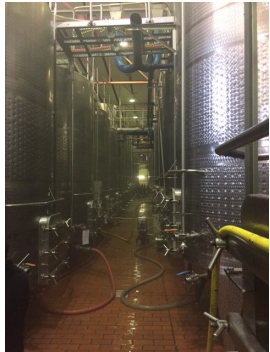
Wine companies should make sure that their marketers travel extensively to build a relationship and trust with buyers. "You won't get anywhere with your brand if you only visit an overseas market once a year for five days," said Neville Carew, CEO of Origin Wine.

The same applies to the domestic market. Lebo Motshegoa, MD of marketing research company Foshizi, said the black market has its own social calendar. "Know it and interact with them at these events." Many marketers make the mistake of using the "one size fits all" approach when targeting this market, while the range within this segment is wide and needs to be targeted properly. "They want a product they can relate to, a brand that cares about what they're all about. And if you're the first brand to introduce a new category, they will adopt your brand name as the category name and all other brands will have to work around that," said Motshegoa.

PICTURES THAT TELLS A BETTER STORY



New perspective on vineyard photography—Courtesy of Gavin Withers done with a drone



Calm



Chaos



Before



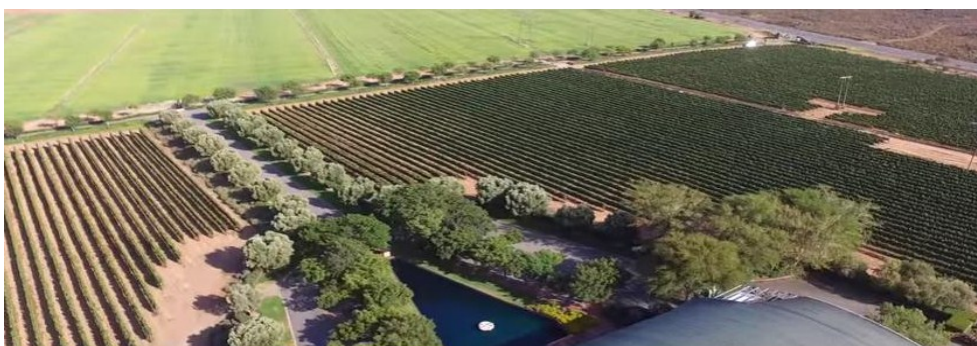
Press vs Quality



Collette racking



Historic group shot



HARVEST 2017 AT A GLANCE

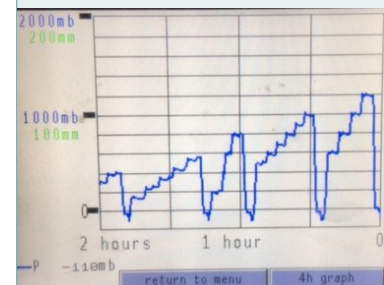
With two consecutive dry winters dam levels in the Western Cape have reach critical levels and could become disastrous going forward. Water is crucial for delivering quality grapes. Thus dry winter and a very cool spring but good flower/fruit set. Early summer was warm and unusual heatwaves came early December. Global warming is eminent.

On the upside, the dry, windy conditions resulted in healthy vines, relatively small bunches (means smaller berries) with greater flavour intensity.

We have been receiving really great looking fruit and this will transpire into good quality base wines from this harvest,

So far we can report that Stellenbosch crop levels are —20% on estimates. Luckily the other geographical areas includes our own Estate in Robertson are coming in on estimates and up to +10%

We have adjusted and adapted our pressing program for pressing and seems to be working very well and recovering the same juice but at lower pressure levels.



Sauté of Veal with Noilly Prat

(Courtesy of Nadia Travers)

Ingredients:

800 g / 2 lbs veal cut into cubes
30 g / 2 tablespoons butter
4 shallots, finely diced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
80 ml / 1/3 cup Noilly Prat
180 ml / 3/4 cup chicken stock
Pinch of sugar
1 bay leaf
4 sage leaves, fresh
200 ml / 3/4 cup heavy cream
Parsley, fresh, roughly chopped for garnish

Preparation:

Melt the butter in a large sauté pan over medium high heat
Add the veal and brown on all sides
Add the shallots, salt and pepper and cook a few more minutes
Pour in half the Noilly Prat
Add the chicken stock and the bay leaf and lower heat to a slow simmer
Allow to simmer, covered, for 1 hour
Add the rest of the Noilly Prat
Dice the sage leaves and add to the pan and leave to cook, uncovered, another 15 minutes for the sauce to thicken
Remove from the stove
Remove the bay leaf and check the seasoning
Add the cream and stir well
Sprinkle with parsley
Serve with homemade pappardelle pasta
Bon Appétit!



THE STORY OF NOILLY PRAT

Noilly Prat is a brand of vermouth from France. “Noilly Prat Dry is 18% alcohol by volume. The Noilly Prat company is based in Marseillan, in the Herault department

of southern France. Joseph Noilly was a herbalist who developed the first formula in 1813.

The manufacturing process used today is virtually unchanged since the 1850s. Noilly Prat is made exclusively from white grape varieties grown in the Marseillan area, principally Picpoul de Pinet and Clairette. These produce light, fruity wines which are matured in massive Canadian oak casks inside the original store-rooms. The wine stays in these casks for 8 months, maturing and absorbing the flavour of the wood, before being transferred to smaller oak barrels which are taken outside and left for a year. Here they are exposed to the sun, wind, and low winter temperatures, while the wine is slowly changing. The result is a wine that is dry, full-bodied and amber coloured, similar to Madeira or Sherry. During the year outside, 6 to 8% of the volume is lost to evaporation, the “angels’ share”.



Barrels exposed to sun, wind and extreme temperatures

Brought back inside and left to rest for a few months, the wines are then blended together into oak casks. A small quantity of Mistelle (grape juice and alcohol) is added to the wines in order to soften them, along with a dash of fruit essence to accentuate their flavour.

In the oak casks, a process of maceration, supposedly unique to Noilly Prat, takes place over a period of three weeks. A blend of some twenty herbs and spices is added by hand every day. The exact mix of herbs and spices that goes into Noilly Prat is a closely guarded secret, but includes camomile, bitter orange peel, nutmeg, centaury (Yellow Gentian), coriander, and cloves.

After a further six weeks, the finished product is ready for bottling and is shipped in tankers to Beaucaire, Gard, where it is bottled by Martini & Rossi.

Why not try this delicious recipe!

THE LOVE OF SCIENCE AND THE BUBBLE ...

More insight for the reasoning of changing our stemware for our Cap Classique 's. For several years now the Team Effervescence, Champagne and Applications has attempted to better understand the role of glass in the tasting of champagne and sparkling wines. Because it is in contact with the glass that the bubble is born. It is detached to go up to the surface, while charging dissolved carbon dioxide and aromas of the wine, which it releases when bursting.

All the parameters of the wine and the glass that you hold in hand contribute to the final sensation perceived by the taster: the volume of wine served, its temperature, the age of the wine, the shape of the glass, its curvature, the size of the bubbles, the angle you impose between your nose and the foot of the glass when you smell the vapours that escape (to name but a few ...). It is this game of great subtlety that fascinates us and that we try to better grasp when we imagine a scientific experiment. At the moment, and with the aim of optimizing the pleasure of tasting, we focus on the shape of the glass, the identification and the dispersion of the aromas of the champagne, with the tools of science and the competition.

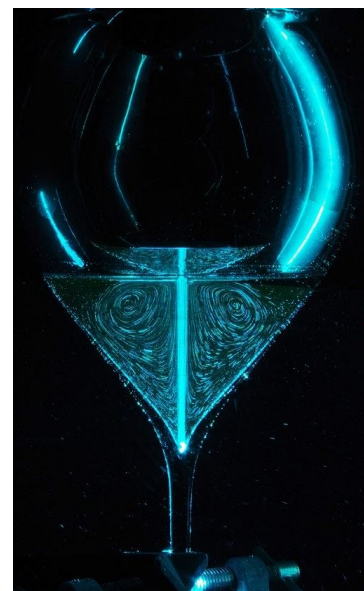
Precious of two men of the Art: Messieurs Herve Fort and Philippe Jamesse, respectively director general and chief sommelier of DOMAINE LES CRAYERES, in Reims. Hervé is teeming with new ideas and does not hesitate to create connections between various forms of Art. Philippe is an expert known and recognized for his great knowledge of champagne and Champagne. It offers an impressive wine list of more than 600 references. Our universes are different, of course, but our Grail is the same. We want to understand the phenomena that are played in a glass in order to sublimate the sensory experience of the tasting. It is in this spirit that we meet regularly to exchange and try to better decipher the processes at work during a tasting champagne.

A few years ago, Philippe had the luminous intuition to draw three very different glasses for the service of champagne which provide a different sensory experience during the tasting. It can be seen from the photographs below that three geometrical parameters make it possible to distinguish these three glasses when they are served with an identical volume of champagne. (1) First, the service height is very different. It decreases from the narrowest glass to the most flared glass. The bubbles will therefore tend to be refined from the narrowest glass to the most flared glass. (2) Moreover, the surface of the champagne disc offered to the degassing and the evaporation of the aromas increases very clearly from the narrowest glass to the most flared glass. (3) Finally, the volume of the head space, as inhaled by the taster, increases considerably from the narrowest glass to the most flared glass. The fundamental role of the head space variable volume in which carbon dioxide and volatile aromatic molecules are mixed is currently being analyzed in our laboratory.

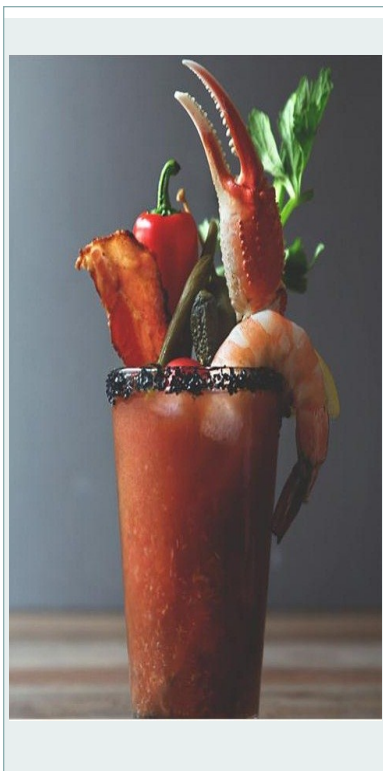
Very recently, Philippe Jamesse developed the Synergie glass (distributed by the Lehmann Glass brand), whose generous volume allows the aromas to harmoniously invade the headspace without letting the carbonic gas take over. This very refined and almost spherical shape is the fruit of a long journey and Philippe regards this glass as a culmination. We will return later on the glass Synergie and its properties.

Today, the illumination of science (notably through the use of techniques such as laser spectrometry, laser tomography, or particle image velocimetry) provides another perspective and a very complementary explanation of the Empirical reflection on tasting and the role of glass. Our laboratory work is thus an innovative approach and totally complementary to that of the restorer, the sommelier, or the glassmaker, whose work also consists in proposing to the taster a glass which valorises at best the characteristics of the champagne he wishes Tasting.

(Courtesy of Gérard Liger-Belair)



“It is this game of great subtlety that fascinates us and that we try to better grasp the aim of optimizing the pleasure of tasting, we focus on the shape of the glass, the identification and the dispersion of the aromas of the champagne, with the tools of science and the competition”



THE ULTIMATE BLOODY MARY

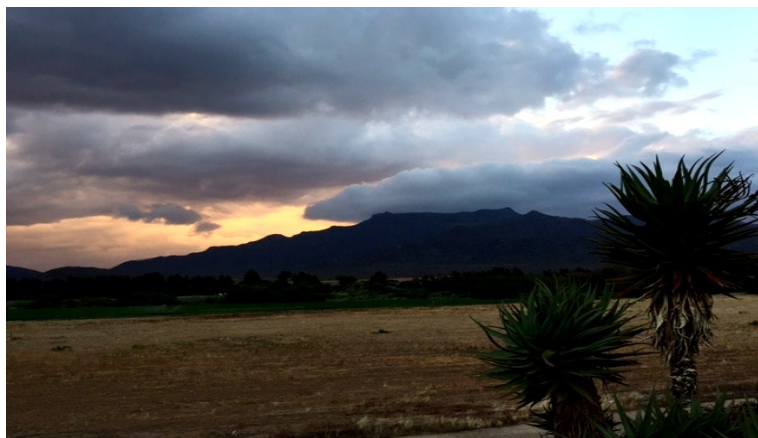
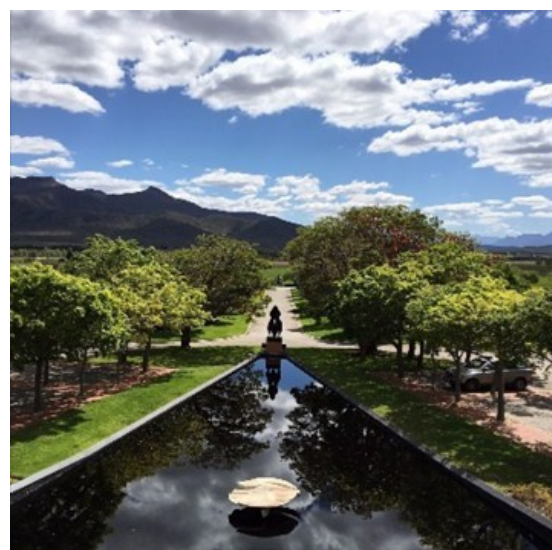
Bloody Mary is about as complex as it gets. Here's the classic recipe:

- 60 ml Vodka
- 150 ml Tomato juice
- 30 ml Fresh lemon juice
- 15 ml Worcestershire sauce
- Pinch Pepper
- Pinch Celery salt
- Garnishes: lemon, celery & olives
- And wait there is more. Be wild and try it by adding some red pepper, green beans, gherkin, smoked bacon, steamed prawn, lobster claw and radish

The Bloody Mary is intimately associated with two events: flying and brunch. It's that latter occasion where things can quickly go from complex to absolutely over-the-top. As you'll see on the left, the general thought process goes something like this: if hungover people crave greasy food and Bloody Marys, why not just combine the two? Indeed... why not.



Special terroir aspects in our arsenal in Robertson



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