

25 SEPTEMBER 2008

Inaugural launch event
Observatory, Cape Town
Chef: Bruce Robertson

VINTAGE REPORT 2007

Exceptional wines were made from the 2007 vintage and winemakers keenly anticipated top quality red wines right from the beginning.

The cold winter and favourable conditions of 2006 set the scene for the '06/07 season.

It was a very healthy season. The crop ripened practically disease free. The harvest was long and drawn out with early cultivars (like Sauvignon Blanc & Pinotage) ripening up to 10 days earlier.

2006 GROWING SEASON:

Growth was generally vigorous, mainly due to good soil moisture and the mild climate. Canopy management was of the utmost importance to ensure good, effective foliage.

In Stellenbosch, strong winds during the flowering period caused looser bunches, resulting in uneven flower and bunch development. To improve quality, top producers removed green bunches and even berries at various stages. Temperatures were cool during the early part of the growing season, with good rainfall in October, November and December.

The January climate influenced the size and quality of the crop. There was hardly any rain, with cool conditions at the beginning of the month. Unusually hot conditions prevailed at the end of January, while February (when most Pinotages were harvested) was cool to normal.

THE HARVEST:

Despite the heat wave at the start of the harvest, the nights remained relatively cool and most vineyards were properly buffered by sufficient available water and optimal canopies. As a result of the heat most cultivars ripened earlier than 2006, with excellent colour and concentrated fruit.

The cool spring and summer temperatures were very conducive to the production of top quality grapes.

THE WINES:

Good grape analyses were obtained from the early cultivars and the heat wave had a lesser effect on acidity and pH values, than was the case with the later cultivars.

Once again, the top producers that managed their vineyards well, overcame the obstacles and produced fantastic wines.

TASTING NOTES REGARDING THE DIFFERENT 'COMPONENT' WINES

(all from Stellenbosch Wine of Origin area – Vintage 2007) alphabetical order

1. Delheim Pinotage (winemaker – Brenda van Niekerk)

From 12 year old 'bush-vines' grown on the lower slopes against the Klappmutskop, of the family's Vera Cruz Estate, overlooking Table Mountain in the distance. Made in the Delheim cellar and matured in new small French oak barriques.

"Deep purple-red colour. Intense nose of plummy fruit & spice. Deep, intense and lots of concentrated flavours with classical tannins and superb acid balance. Super long-lasting finish. A great wine on it's own already and the core of the blend."

2. Hartenberg Pinotage (winemaker – Carl Schultz)

From meticulously farmed vineyards on the 'coffee-stone' soils of this renowned Estate, North-West of the town Stellenbosch.

"Very deep crimson colour. Intense aroma of ripe black cherries & Christmas pudding. Complex ripe flavours fill the mouth and ends with soft, almost sweetish tannins. A 'big' component for a 'big' wine."

3. Lanzerac Pinotage (winemaker – Wynand Lategan)

Two different components from this producer. From a bush-vine block, which is one of the 'highest' vineyards on the Northern slopes of the Bottelary Hills. Aged in new 300litre French oak barrels.

"Almost pitch black in colour. Very ripe fruity black cherry nose. A full wine with firm acidity reflecting the origin of the grapes. Long aftertaste with fine tannic structure"

The second wine made from grapes grown high up on the North-Western slopes of the mountain, just outside Stellenbosch on the way to Jonkershoek. Matured in small 'Chateau Ferre' style French oak.

"Excellent deep red colour. Good ripe fruity nose with subtle vanilla-oak on the nose. Lovely juicy palate with great balance between fruit and wood. A full wine with superb balance and complex but elegant wood flavours"

4. L'Avenir Pinotage (winemaker – Tinus Els.)

Two different wines here again: Firstly from the oldest bush-vine block on the farm. Low yielding dry-land vineyards situated about 180m above sea level looking onto the picturesque town of Stellenbosch.

"Beautiful complex nose of ripe plums, cherries and blackberry fruit, which is echoed on the palate. Intense taste with a touch of mocha, from the new oak barrels. Similar to some of my earlier Pinotages made here. Great acid/tannin balance and a long finish."

Secondly, from a younger North facing vineyard. Aged in 3rd fill 'thin stave' French oak to preserve the elegant fruit.

"Slightly lighter in colour than the first wine, but an intense berry fruit nose; raspberries and blackberries come to mind. The palate is soft and juicy with very elegant tannins and a fruity aftertaste. Another 'great' component to increase the complexity of the blend."

5. Neil Ellis Pinotage (winemaker – Neil Ellis)

Made from grapes grown on the higher vineyards at the farm in the beautiful Jonkershoek Valley. Renowned for meticulous nurturing from vineyard through to barrel maturation.

"Lovely deep red/purple youthful colour. Typical varietal character of dried banana and black fruit. A flavoursome palate with hints of savoury spice and sweet vanilla oak; complimented by good acidity and a friendly tannin structure."



TASTING NOTE

LE VIN DE FRANÇOIS – 2007

Deep ruby red colour with a purple rim. Complex nose of plum pudding; dark berry-fruit and cedarwood, with whiffs of vanilla & chocolate. The palate is rich and juicy with blackberries; plums and ripe black cherries all coming to mind. The sweet spicy flavours and superbly balanced tannins ensures a long pleasant aftertaste.

Alc: 14,46 vol% • T/A 5,65 g/l • pH: 3,76 • R/S 2,85 g/l



FRANCOIS NAUDÉ

Francois qualified and then practised as a pharmacist for 18 years in his home town of Pretoria, before making the break to Stellenbosch and turning a passionate hobby into an extremely successful career. He first tried his hand at winemaking in 1991 and joined L'Avenir Estate in 1992.

This past chairman of Les Chevaliers du Tastevin de Pretoria (one of the first wine Guilds in South Africa) and self-taught winemaker has used his unerring instinct and skills as a pharmacist to take on the best winemakers in the world and has proved himself their equal.

He has earned many awards and collected an enthusiastic following at home and abroad, where he has excelled in competitions such as the Chardonnay du Monde and the International Wine and Spirit Competition in London, from which he has brought home the Perold Trophy (for the best Pinotage in the world) three times.

L'Avenir Pinotage have also been a winner in the ABSA Top 10 Competition for a record 7 times.

Since his retirement he has become an honorary member (Keeper of the Key) of the prestigious Cape Wine Makers Guild, an honorary member of The Pinotage Association and is the current Chairman of The Chenin Blanc Association.



The wing nut symbolizes the actions of the founder – clasp together the ideals of his family with different wines from a variety of terroirs to create a product that contains all the properties of something great; unique, exclusive and a touch of "magic"!

FRANCOIS NAUDÉ