

22 October 2010

Launch of 2009 Le Vin de Francois  
Stellenbosch  
Chef: Stephen Fraser



## Vintage Report 2009:

A superlative quality vintage, one of the best ever. Lower yields and intensely concentrated flavours from very healthy grapes, produced excellent wines. Earlier ripening red cultivars such as Pinotage are indeed exceptional with very intense colour and fruit and fabulous ripe tannin structures.

## 2008 Growing Season:

After a very cold, wet winter, late September rains enabled accumulation of good moisture reserves in the soil, which was of great benefit to most of our producers who either practice 'dry-land' farming, or maybe only have the luxury of one supplementary irrigation. Late spring and early summer were essentially cool months, causing vigorous growth, which slowed down ripening and enhanced flavour accumulation. Thanks to unseasonably cool weather in late December and early January, producers could allow the grapes to reach good phenolic ripeness with acceptable sugars prior to harvesting.

## The Harvest:

The cooler ripening season caused the harvest to start two weeks later than usual. Late February and early March temperature spikes had cellars going into overdrive with tremendous pressure on resources and logistics. By that time however, all the Pinotage grapes were safely in the cellars and out of harm's way. The later cultivars ripened at the usual time and not two weeks later and the picking season was more than a month shorter than usual.



## The Wines:

Smaller berry size gave excellent fruit to skin ratio, thus enhancing colour intensity in the reds. Exceptional must analysis indicated excellent quality from the onset, especially for the early to mid-season cultivars. Once again, our producers pulled out all the stops in the vineyards as well as in the cellars and produced amazing wines.

## Tasting Note Le Vin de Francois 2009

"Deep and intense crimson colour. Attractive nose of ripe plums, black cherries and a mélange of black-and-red berries combined with a spicy cigar box character. Ripe juicy flavours of dark plums and cherries perfectly integrated with fine tannins - dry but smooth, ensuring a long finish and great promise of maturation potential."

Alc: 14.56 vol% T/A: 5.71 g/l pH: 3.49 R/S: 3.2 g/l

## Tasting notes of the different 'Component' Wines:

(All from Vintage 2009) Alphabetical order

### 1. Beverskloof Pinotage (Anri Truter)

(Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

Two wines from this renowned Pinotage producer. The first from 13 year old bush-vines, from the famous gravel soils in the Bottelary Hills area outside Stellenbosch. Handpicked at optimum ripeness and fermented in traditional open fermenters with punch-downs done every 2 hours. Matured in a specially selected new French oak barrel for 13 months.

"Very dark intense colour and same intense nose of blackberries, black cherries and a touch of chocolate. The taste is full with sweet ripe berry fruit, spice and firm but pleasing tannins, that causes the flavour to linger in the mouth."

The second wine was produced from trellised vines in the same area as above, with crop reduction being done by leaving just one bunch per shoot. This added a lot of colour, flavour and middle to the wine. Aged in a new French oak barrel for 14 months.

"Intense deep crimson colour with a nose of dark fruit and some savoury notes. The palate is full and rich with a fruity 'mince pie' character. The aftertaste is long and lingering, with superbly balanced tannins."

### 2. Delheim Pinotage (Brenda van Niekerk)

(Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

Two wines from this top supplier again. Firstly, from the now famous 14 year old 'Protea' bush-vine block. Grown on the lower slopes against the Klappanskop, of the family's Vera Cruz Estate looking onto Table Mountain in the distance. Made & matured in the Delheim cellar. The wine had Malolactic fermentation (MLF) in a new French oak barrel and then further matured in the same barrel for a total period of 17 months.

"Deep purple-red colour. Intense nose of dark fruit, spice and a touch of 'fynbos'. Rich plummy fruit on the palate with firm but ripe tannins that carries the flavour to a long finish."

Secondly - produced from two different blocks on similar South-Western slopes at Vera Cruz; a 15 year old bush-vine block and a 13 year old trellised vineyard.

The wines were blended together after MLF in tank and then racked to a 2nd fill tight grain French oak barrel, to minimize increase in tannins and to mature for a period of 16 months.

"Great colour with a slight touch of smokiness in combination with red-berry fruit. Intense fruit flavour with elegant tannins and a superb balance and finesse."

### 3. Freedom Hill Pinotage (Francois Naudé & Kowie du Toit)

(Wine of Origin Durban)

First time for this property. Produced from the highest vineyards overlooking the legendary Victor Verster Prison (now Drakenstein Prison) where Nelson Mandela took his first steps to freedom. The Western slopes of this property are cooled down by the prevailing 'South Easter' wind which enabled the production of a tremendously fruity and elegant wine, that was matured in a 2nd fill French oak barrel for 14 months.

"Ruby red in colour with a lovely red-berry 'candyfloss-like' nose. The palate is soft and fruity with silky tannins that make the wine glide down the throat into eternity."

### 4. Kanonkop Pinotage (Abrie Beeslaar)

(Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

This wine originates from a 20 year-old dry-land bush-vine block, situated on the South-Western

slopes of the Simonsberg at 250 to 300 metres above sea level, to catch the cool evening breezes of the nearby Atlantic Ocean. Fermented in traditional open fermenters with two-hourly punch-downs over a period of 4 days. After MLF the wine was transferred to a new 'Nevers' French oak barrel to mature for approximately 14 to 15 months.

"Deep red colour with a plum and blackberry aroma and a touch of vanilla oak. The palate is full and rich with dark fruits like blackcurrant, black cherry and ripe plums dominating. A classic wine with firm tannins that has a long and lingering dry finish."

### 5. Lanzerac Pinotage (Wyman Lategan)

(Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

The third time for this vineyard's wine to be selected. From one of the highest blocks on the Northern slopes of the Bottelary Hills. A bush-vine vineyard that mostly due to the wind always delivers low yields and deeply flavoured grapes. The resulting wine had MLF in a new 300 litre tight grain French oak barrel and then matured further for approximately 16 months.

"An inky colour with dark berry fruits and a touch of dried banana. Juicy fruit-cake mélange of flavours - rich and intense with superbly balanced tannins."

### 6. L'Avenir Pinotage (Timus Els)

(Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

Again two different wines, from my old 'hunting ground'.

This time both wines are from the same vineyard, being the oldest bush-vine block on the farm, planted by me 17 years ago. Situated on a South-Western slope overlooking the town of

Stellenbosch. The low-yielding vines are meticulously managed to produce evenly ripening grapes that is solely for the Estate's flagship wine. The first wine was matured in a small extra-fine grain new French oak barrel for 15 months to retain and enhance the flavour profile of the wine.

"Intense deep red colour with dark fruits, black cherries, plums and spice on the nose. A big full mouth with ripe integrated tannins and a touch of elegance."

The second wine had MLF in a new medium-to-fine grain French oak barrel with a total maturation period of 16 months.

"Slightly darker in colour than the first wine, with sweetish vanilla oak notes and a hint of mocha on the nose. The palate is big, with flavours of Christmas pudding and spice complemented by a firm tannin structure."

### 7. Simonsig Pinotage (Johan Malan)

(Wine of Origin Stellenbosch)

The last component of the blend comes from the famous 'Redhill' vineyard. A sixteen year-old bush-vine block growing in weathered shale soil. As always, picked at full phenolic ripeness to express maximum fruit character, with soft tannins. Matured for 15 months in a new small French oak barrel with tight-grain staves from the Allier forest in France, toasted to M<sup>+</sup>.

"Deep intense colour. Dried banana, toasty oak and ripe plums on the nose are followed by spicy oak flavours intertwined with blackberry and cherry. A juicy wine with smooth tannins and a super elegant finish."

## François Naudé



After qualifying and practicing as a pharmacist for 18 years, François decided to exchange his home town of Pretoria for the gem in the Cape wine lands namely Stellenbosch. By 'the grace of God' his passionate hobby turned into an extremely successful career when he first tried his hand at winemaking in 1991 and then joined L'Avenir Estate in 1992 where he remained as winemaker until the end of 2005.

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.

During his time at L'Avenir he 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 & Spirit Competition in London, from which he has brought home the coveted Berald Trophy (for the best Pinotage in the world) three times. His L'Avenir Pinotage have also been a winner in the ABSA Top 10 Competition for a record 7 times.

Since his 'retirement' from L'Avenir in 2005 he has become a much sought after consultant in his field of producing fine wines; became an honorary member (Keeper of the Key) of the prestigious Cape Winemakers Guild and an honorary member of the Pinotage Association. He 'gave birth' to the first Le Vin de Francois in 2008 and is the current chairman of the Stellenbosch Wine Circle (second oldest in his 'alma-mater' in Pretoria).



LE VIN DE  
**FRANCOIS**  
SOUTH AFRICA

The wing nut symbolizes the actions of the founder - clasp together 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'!

*Signature*

FRANÇOIS NAUDÉ