



Oldenburg Vineyards Spring Newsletter, September 2010

The vines have now rested over the Cape winter and September brings a burst of action in the vineyards. The days begin to warm and lengthen and from a standing start the shoots burst to life. Over a one or two week period the speed at which the vineyards awaken is quite outstanding.

The winter was relatively dry, with only May delivering a greater than usual quantity of rain. The run up to the 2011 harvest will be our busiest ever as more of the smaller blocks of blending components come on line. This will create further flexibility in the cellar and one we relish.

We have in the last week or so bottled our first Chenin Blanc. The exciting quality we picked up in the barrel tastings has continued into the bottle. The wine has had only a few months in French oak barrels to enhance its natural elements and has developed a nice complexity. It will be released towards the end of the year, but as we only have approximately 1600 bottles it will only be available in the tasting room, which opens early 2011.



We have also now bottled the 2009 Syrah and we expect good things from the wine. Barrel tasting revealed a slightly more intensive wine from the 2008, which is the positive progression we expect as the vineyards age. This wine will now rest in the bottle until we release it sometime mid to end 2011. In the meantime our 2008 vintages continue to be recognised both locally and internationally. Tom Cannavan, a UK wine journalist, gave our 2008 Cabernet Franc 92 points (<http://www.wine-pages.com/organise/berry-bros-2010-09.htm>) and Jane MacQuitty called the same wine "The Keeper" in a recent article of The Times, UK, (www.bbr.com/product-77340B-cabernet-franc-oldenburg-vin...).

Our valley, Banghoek, seems to go from strength to strength. It is a very small 'appellation'. It has approximately 300 hectares of vineyards out of a total of 110,000 hectares of vineyards in South Africa. There are twelve wine estates, if you include Thelema and Tokara, two of the larger estates. The point being is that given our relatively tiny size, we seem to have a very high showing at the top of the competition league tables.

Our neighbours have done a good job of collecting medals over the last few months, well done to them. The nice thing is that we have this with no compromise on beauty, as the valley is no doubt the prettiest in South Africa!

The Valley also continues to add to its list of restaurants. We recently tried Delaire's new one, Indochine. It was sadly quite empty, but we were very impressed with the food. Its great to have some Asian flavours so close by. Across the road, Tokara has opened its second restaurant, The DeliCatEssen, a brilliant view combined with good food for a nice relaxed lunch. Best to reserve a table.

We recently discovered that, with respect to volume, South African wines now outsell French wines in the UK, according to Nielson's. The really interesting fact is that in value terms (i.e. total sales), France is only about 25% ahead of South Africa, surprising given the hype and prices of the 2009 Bordeaux, for example. In 2009, sales of South African wine into the UK rose 21%. To our minds this clearly demonstrates that we are creating wines of increasing significance and preference.

The progress on building our tasting room has been good. We are just at the point of putting the roof on and then we can proceed without weather dependency. The roof will be made of thatch as this will compliment the natural surroundings, whilst being more environmentally friendly. We are hoping to open our doors early February 2011.

As always your feedback and/or comments are much appreciated.

Adrian Vanderspuy
Proprietor

www.oldenburgvineyards.com