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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ...**JACQUES VANDEWALLE, MANAGER: BERGKELDER VINOTÈQUE WINE BANK**

As head of the Vinotèque Wine Bank, a unique boutique wine purchasing and maturation facility based in Stellenbosch, Jacques Vandewalle manages the incredible journey to perfection of each wine-in-waiting that is kept here to reach optimal maturity in a controlled environment.

Born to French speaking parents in the Belgian Congo, Jacques came to Cape Town with his family in 1960. Wine was a natural, everyday beverage in their home and Jacques and his four sisters enjoyed wine, diluted with water, from an early age as Coke was banned.

"Wine is a wonderful beverage, so interesting, shared with so much passion around the world and it brings people together so well, yet people generally know so little about it. My passion is to spread the message and help people understand wine, and when they do, they tend to trade up which is my second aim in the process," Jacques said.

Although the oldest wine he has ever tasted was from the 1920's – a French Chateaux red that was actually still drinkable – he has tasted many far superior wines where the cork was drawn when the wine was ripe rather than over-matured. "My aim at the Vinotèque is to ensure that members enjoy their wines when they are at their best and we work hard at consistently getting this message through to our members. Few things are more disappointing than an over-matured wine. What a waste!"



At the helm of the Vinotèque, Jacques never knows what to expect on any day. He deals mostly with private clients who are members and own wine in the cellar, offering them tastings of their wines. Furthermore, his day to day tasks includes handling client requests, attending the required meetings, tasting new or older wines for maturation reports and deciding together with the winemakers which wines to put away for maturation. He also handles the Vinotèque newsletters to keep enthusiasts informed of wine offers.

His incredible knowledge of wine is a result of working in the wine industry from a young age. His career started at the then Oude Meester Group, where he worked in the quality control laboratory whilst training in winemaking, spirit production and bottling. After a number of years, he was offered the position as Wine and Spirit Controller and later promoted to Head of Quality Control of Distillers Corporation in Stellenbosch. With all the necessary technical knowledge obtained, he was promoted to Wine Promotions Manager for the group, before joining the Vinotèque. In between, he also managed the London office for five years.

Presenting wine tastings and attending wine shows took him around the globe and his many overseas travels include visits to Japan, Canada and the USA as well as throughout Europe.

“With so many new wines out there, it is a challenge today to keep the old wine favourites alive and well. Old-time gems such as Uitkyk and Le Bonheur are easily forgotten unless we keep reminding wine drinkers about them.”

Jacques is definitely into reds and in his current position he is spoilt for choice. The wine he believes is most drinkable at the moment is the 2003 vintage of Uitkyk Carlonet. “It is just so ripe and perfectly balanced, one of Uitkyk’s best ever. It is soft yet deliciously plummy,” he said enthusiastically.

In his spare time, this family man and proud grandfather of two little girls, enjoys designing and making things such as spinning, circular wall-mounted CD racks, Lazy Susans and unique wine racks out of oak. He even made a merry-go-round for his two year old granddaughter for Christmas.

To purchase a selection of the Cape Legend brands within South Africa please contact the Vinotèque on 021 809-8280.

AWARDS

STELLENZICHT SÉMILLON RESERVE STRIKES GOLD AT OLD MUTUAL TROPHY WINE SHOW

Stellenzicht Sémillon Reserve, one of South Africa’s top white wines, made from a single vineyard block on the verdant slopes of the Helderberg outside Stellenbosch, was awarded a gold medal for its 2004 vintage at the 2008 Old Mutual Trophy Wine Show.

“It’s great that this 2004 Sémillon Reserve has now been recognised "officially" by the Old Mutual Trophy Wine Show as it confirms what our customers have been telling us (and what we have thought all along) - that this is another great vintage.” said elated winemaker, Guy Webber.

Guy believes that its appeal is due mostly to the fact that it is such a wonderful "gastronomic" wine, with such a wide range of complementary dishes with which it can be served and enjoyed. One of Guy’s favourite dishes to enjoy it with is a rich seafood tagliatelli with lots of butter and a hint of chilli.

“Its limey undertones love all the bits of crab, crayfish, mussels, squid and fish whilst the almost oily finish is livened up by the vibrant chilli”, he added.



NEWS FROM THE FARMS

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING FOR VINEYARD WORKERS

Professor Eben Archer, viticulturist for various Cape Legends wine farms, has started an upliftment initiative in an effort to train and educate LUSAN vineyard workers in the basics of vineyard practices in ensuring optimum performance of the vines.



This upliftment in skills development courses prove to have a positive outcome and as a result the productivity of workers are raised by about 20%. Furthermore, these courses give a sense of ownership to the workers, to such an extent that after completing the courses some of the workers work without supervision, some even acting as supervisors over contract workers.

The upliftment courses are held throughout the year during the different cycles of the vine. They cover the theoretical and practical principles of basic vineyard practices including planting of the vines, training and trellising of the young plants, pruning and canopy management.

SWEET SURRENDER WITH LORD NEETHLING WEISSER RIESLING NOBLE LATE HARVEST

Steeped in his Afrikaans culinary roots, Chef Johan Odendaal of Emily's chose the delectable Lord Neethling Weisser Riesling Noble Late Harvest as the ultimate dessert wine and loves serving it with his decadent frozen Nougat Parfait.

"This amber tinted noble wine has a very perfumy nose with ample dried apricot, peach and honey, whilst the palate does not disappoint with orange marmalade, tangerine and honey flavours. A major plus point of the wine is that the great acidity tempers the sweetness, making it a delicious wine to serve with the nougat parfait as the combination of flavours complement one another perfectly," said Johan.

The frozen nougat parfait is made with honey syrup that is accentuated with toasted almonds, apricots steeped in rooibos followed by a Van der Hum offset with orange blossom water that is served with nectarine coulis.



NEWS FROM ABROAD

CAPE LEGEND'S BELGIAN AGENT REPORTS:

Stellenzicht wines were recently quoted in La Libre Belgique, a renowned Belgium newspaper that is published in French, as: "Every wine of Stellenzicht is a wine to take with you to a deserted island and just enjoy it."