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**A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ...****Rudi Buys - viticulturist and estate manager of Uitkyk**

From the heart of the maize industry in the former Western Transvaal, his early stomping grounds, to the heart of the Cape Winelands where he now lives and works, Rudi Buys puts his sound agricultural knowledge to good use running the historic Uitkyk wine estate in Stellenbosch.

"I quickly learned to make the right decisions in the hard, practical world of winemaking" said Rudi of his early experiences under the guidance of Frans and Francois Malan of Simonsig where he started his career in viticulture.

"Growing up around the maize industry influenced me to choose a career in agriculture and viticulture was an obvious choice once I relocated to the Western Cape. All my skills were honed from an early stage by viticultural guru Eben Archer who is not only a mentor but a very good friend as well," he adds.

Making the farm run smoothly from day to day is more of a lifestyle than a job for Rudi: "Uitkyk is absolutely unique in its diversity, with an altitude ranging from 256m to 500m, aspects ranging from north, west, south and east and top soil potential throughout the whole farm combined with huge areas of fynbos and renosterveld (rhino fields)."

Rudi considered his appointment at Uitkyk as Estate Manager as a milestone event as he believes the estate to be the best wine farm in Stellenbosch. Uitkyk, established in 1712 at the foot of the Simonsberg mountain just outside Stellenbosch, has magnificent views of the Cape Peninsula with Table Mountain in the distance, False Bay and Table Bay and is famous for its Carlonet, a Cabernet Sauvignon wine cultivated from its own exclusive position in the 'Bordeaux block'.



For Rudi maintaining a cost-effective enterprise in the modern economic climate is the most important challenge facing the wine industry today. His approach to viticulture and winemaking is rooted in the fact that grape quality relates directly to wine quality and therefore vine balance is of utmost importance. This philosophy is the basis of every working day on the farm.

Although he has not worked overseas, he has visited several of the great wine making regions several times, which he says greatly broadened his viticultural experience and knowledge and even changed his way of thinking.

When settled down with a glass of wine, Rudi likes to pair his food and wine to get the perfect match and is reluctant to ascribe a particular favourite to his list of best wines without taking the influence of the accompanying food into account.

Similarly he feels that cultivars have the same complexity and is reluctant to single out a favourite. While all his vines are his pride and joy, he does admit to a preference for upright growers as they are easier to tend.

When Rudi is not busy on the farm, he enjoys a vigorous round of golf or the more primordial hunting expedition in the bush.

## NEWS FROM THE FARMS

### New-look Neethlingshof signals new wine style and eco-friendly focus

Neethlingshof, the award-winning Stellenbosch wine estate, has revamped the look of its entire range to mark a renewed emphasis on elegance and rejuvenation. The new-look labels, adopted across the range, have also created an opportunity to highlight the winery's commitment to eco-sustainability, having recently become a member of the Biodiversity & Wine Initiative (BWI).

The image featured on the mainstream Neethlingshof labels still grants pride of place to the avenue of stone pines that herald the entrance to the historic estate but gives greater emphasis to the surrounding vineyards.



At the same time, the reserve tier, made exclusively from hand-picked grapes, has been named The Short Story Collection. Drawing attention to Neethlingshof's rich and varied narratives, the three-limited edition wines in the collection each focus on a specific aspect of the estate's philosophy or history. They are a Bordeaux blend, named after the **Caracal** now that these animals have returned to the farm since the rehabilitation of part of the estate to indigenous habitat; the **Owl Post**, a single-vineyard Pinotage; and the **Maria**, a Weisser Riesling Noble Late Harvest that honours Maria Magdalena Marais, the resourceful and feisty young widow who took over the building of Neethlingshof's manor house after the death of her husband, Charles, in 1813.

The Owl Post recognises Neethlingshof's integrated pest management system. Owls play an important role in keeping rodent infestations in check (and without the use of chemicals). To encourage the return of these nocturnal birds of prey to the estate, Neethlingshof successfully erected breeding-friendly owl posts in the vineyards.

But these efforts are just the beginning; Neethlingshof has undertaken a commitment to create fine wines that are in perfect harmony with Mother Nature.

Also making its debut under Neethlingshof's mainstream label is the 2008 Malbec, discernible by its floral fragrances and dark chocolate notes, rich plum flavours and very approachable tannins. This newcomer already has the vote of approval of Sunday Times wine columnist Neil Pendock who picked it as one of his No.1 wines in his weekly Top 10 listings, describing it as a "Maiden vintage of a varietal destined to become Neethlingshof's calling card."

## Hill&Dale website sports new blogging page

In keeping with the latest marketing trends, acclaimed winemaker Guy Webber now voices his thoughts on a new blogging page, aptly named On the Couch with Guy Webber, that is featured on the Hill&Dale website. Guy intends to spend quite a bit of his spare time here, so visit [www.hillanddale.co.za](http://www.hillanddale.co.za) to see what is on his mind or drop him a line by leaving your comments.



## Rare find at Lomond Estate

A very exciting discovery has been made at Lomond Estate, the distinctive Cape Agulhas winery known for its single-vineyard wines situated in the Uilenkraals River valley near Gansbaai, at the very southerly latitude of 34° 34', just 8 km from the sea as the crow flies. A few plants of the rare *Erica axilliflora*, commonly known as crimson heath or klokkiesheide, were found near the farm's dam. It is the first time ever that this particular species has been recorded off the Soetanyberg.

Lomond is a member of the Biodiversity & Wine Initiative (BWI) as well as the Walker Bay Conservancy. Accenting its eco-sustainable growing principles and its initiatives to conserve indigenous habitat, the estate has the tradition of naming its single vineyard offerings after flora found on the farm.

## The Wild Fig Restaurant and Neethlingshof matches up



The Wild Fig Restaurant and Bar serves classic fare with a contemporary spin focussing on fresh ingredients, unfussy preparation and natural flavours. This established eatery is known for its well selected wine list and is the holder of the coveted 2008 Platinum Diners Club Wine List Award.

Co-owner, Janet Slater, chose the Neethlingshof Merlot as the perfect taste partner to the restaurant's signature dish, the famous double roasted duck served with Van der Hum and orange sauce. Janet describes the Neethlingshof Merlot as a richly fragrant wine with a delicate fruity nose that has minty undertones with subtle vanilla and caramel flavours. Perfect to accentuate the Van der Hum liqueur whilst giving a delectable buttery finish to the roasted duck.

"The citrus in the Van der Hum and orange sauce enhances the deep tones of honey on the palate, with ripe soft tannins and a smooth richness which makes this an exceptional pairing."

## Another major accolade for Lomond

Lomond's debut white blend, the 2007 Snowbush has won the Cape Agulhas trophy on this year's International Wine Challenge (IWC), it was announced in London. Earlier this year, the competition judges awarded the wine a gold medal.

Winemaker Kobus Gerber says it's the wine's vibrant, grassy and capsicum intensity offset by a rich and creamy depth, that's so appealing. He has combined Sauvignon blanc, sourced from both the Agulhas estate's Sugarbush and Pincushion vineyards, to provide mineral, green and tropical flavours, with Nouvelle, which has amplified the Sauvignon's zesty freshness and then tempered it with the soft, full and rounded qualities lent by barrel-matured Semillon. The Nouvelle, indigenous to South Africa and created by crossing Ugni blanc with Crouchen blanc, has created the bridge between the other two varietals, he explains.

Sauvignon blanc represents 50% of the blend, with Semillon contributing 27% and Nouvelle, 23%.



## NEW RELEASES



### Flat Roof Manor releases exciting new Pinot Rosé blend

Just in time for summer, Flat Roof Manor has released an exciting new blend under screw cap made of Pinotage and Pinot Grigio grapes.

A tantalising blend of 70% Pinotage and 30% Pinot Grigio grapes, the Flat Roof Manor Pinot Rosé 2009 is a lively zesty wine with an intensely fruity character fit for any joyous occasion.

This wine has a pretty pink-reddish colour with ample strawberry and candy floss flavours on the nose that follow through to the palate.

Open a bottle and savour it with friends or serve at an alfresco lunch on a warm summer's day with light salads and cold meats.

Crafted by winemaker Estelle Lourens, the Flat Roof Manor screw cap range depicts the flat-topped roof of the 18th century townhouse at the winery where she is based and features a cat that, according to local legend, stayed long after the original owners had moved on, to lap up the sun on the parapet.

### Plaisir de Merle releases special blend for Denmark

Plaisir de Merle has released a special once off blend in celebration of its 15th anniversary for Denmark which has also been selling Plaisir de Merle wines for the past 15 years and is one of the largest markets for these wines. This special blend that comprises 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Cabernet Franc and 30% Shiraz has a glowing ruby colour with aromatic red fruit, sweet vanilla and spice on the nose with American and French oak flavours on the palate. It has a solid structure with firm tannins and a soft, smooth finish on the aftertaste.



### Hill&Dale Chardonnay teams up with creamy pasta

The Hill&Dale recipe and wine pairing challenge, run in association with [www.food24.co.za](http://www.food24.co.za), focuses on Chardonnay and delectably creamy pasta dishes during September. With over 300 000 unique monthly impressions Hill&Dale Chardonnay will be top of mind amongst their regular food lovers especially with a case of wine up for grabs for the most imaginative creamy pasta recipe.

An advertisement for Hill &amp; Dale Chardonnay. On the left, a woman in a vibrant green, multi-layered dress with a crown-like headpiece is walking. The background is a dark green with a large, stylized leaf graphic. The text reads: 'HILL &amp; DALE WINES FROM STELLENZICHT', 'Feeling optimistic? Win a free case of Chardonnay with Hill &amp; Dale!', 'Hill &amp; Dale Chardonnay - imaginative, optimistic and harmonious.', 'IT'S IN OUR NATURE', 'www.hillanddale.co.za', and 'Not for sale to persons under the age of 18.' A bottle of Hill &amp; Dale Chardonnay is shown in the center.

### Flat Roof Manor rewards cool cat stories

Flat Roof Manor's 'purrfect' on-line promotion in association with the trendy fashion and lifestyle [www.channel24.co.za](http://www.channel24.co.za) and [www.woman24.co.za](http://www.woman24.co.za) give their 350 000 site visitors the opportunity to win a case of the Sauvignon Blanc Sémillon blend during September for the coolest cat stories.

An advertisement for Flat Roof Manor. On the left, a white cat is sitting on a white ledge. Below it, the text reads 'FLAT ROOF MANOR' and 'HOME TO FINE WINE AND A CAT'. In the center, there are several bottles of wine. On the right, the text reads '“Even if you roam, you'll always come home”' and 'Not for sale to persons under the age of 18.' The background is a warm, golden-brown color.