

habitat

THE ART OF LIVING - JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1995



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Through the Glass Lightly

BY SUE BROWN



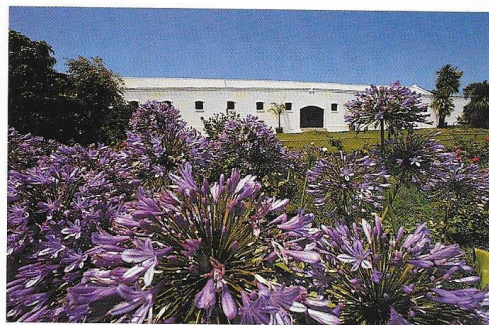
Amiable Red

Whilst some wine drinkers recoil with horror at the thought of a sweeter red wine, for many people this is just the stuff they have been asking for for years. Cellar Cask have come to the rescue: Johannisberger Red is a sister wine to the Johannisberger Select white and is sweetened with grape reserve for those who wish to indulge their honeyed instincts. With a whopping 48.5 grams per litre of sugar this decidedly untannic wine, best

served chilled, will retail below the R10.00 mark.

Vinoteque's Pre-release Offer

The annual sale of specially selected young wines from the Bergkelder is currently taking place. When ready for release the wine can be stored for a further length of time in the Bergkelder's maturation cellars at a cost of under R1.00 per case per month. So much cheaper this, than going



WINNING WINERY OF ALTO ESTATE, STELLENBOSCH.

through all the hassles of cellar-ing yourself.

Presently resting in the barrels are seven wines and one port. Already bottled is a selection of five different styles of wine.

Along with Cape Wine Master, Margaret Fry, wine writer Geoff Carter and a couple of serious buyers we put our taste buds to the test to assess this year's selection:

We kicked off with a 1994 Meerendal Pinotage. The colours of these reds obviously indicated intense youth. The nose shows its recent marriage to the oak with subtle plum-type fruit showing through. A lightweight now on the palate, the Bergkelder expect to release this wine in mid-1996.

The 1994 Uitkyk Carlonet Cabernet Sauvignon is also expected to be released at the same time. It presently exhibits a spicy, berry nose with good structure and long berry aftertaste, it was one of the favourites of the group assembled.

Allersverloren's 1994 Shiraz, demonstrates what South Africa can achieve with this varietal from a warm area. It has good brackish undertones with warm fruit flavours showing through and is due for release in mid-1997.



GLASS INSERT IN THE FRONT DOOR OF ALLERSVERLOREN'S MANOR HOUSE.

Early in 1997 the 1993 Alto Rouge will be ready for release and with a few more years maturation this soft, fruit cake-essence wine, with less tautness than exhibited in earlier vin-

tages, should guarantee some memorable drinking.

The 1993 Fleur Du Cap Pinotage, with its warm berry nose and wood already well integrated, will probably need less cellaring. Due for release at the end of 1997, its long berry after-taste should guarantee satisfaction for aficionado's of this varietal.

Two wines though stood out from this barrel selection line up. The 1993 Stellenryk Cabernet Sauvignon, a wonderful cacophony of spice, wood and fruit on the nose which followed through on the well structured palate, is due for release early in 1998.

Equally, the 1994 Meerlust is a totally seductive, opulent wine, with a greater depth of flavour than seen in previous vintages. The usually reserved Master Fry, enthused over its velvety, lead pencil character, the release can be anticipated in mid-1997.

Those wines lying bottled included a Middelvlei Cabernet Sauvignon 1991. This good example of warm climate-style, the group felt, would not benefit from too long a maturation. The Bergkelder will only be releasing this wine though in the year 2000.

The 1992 Le Bonheur Prima exhibited a kaleidoscope of essences on the nose, but is presently demonstrating lightness on the middle palate. Of the La Motte Cabernet Sauvignon of the same vintage, an almost rose-hip nose was detected, with a sweetish finish and the scoring was very diverse on this wine.

The 1993 Fleur de Cap Merlot, was showing early accessibility and is not destined for great longevity, but it is a well assembled wine from the varietal. The 1990 L'Ormarins Cabernet, reveals a warm berry, meaty nose with young berry flavours on the palate. Tannins are severe at pre-

sent though but time should soften them out, this wine is not expected to be released until 1997.

For more information on the wines and how to obtain them through your wine merchants, contact Jacques Vandewalle on (021) 887-2440. The Bergkelder vinoteque also updates the participants of the scheme as to the wine's maturation progress and the optimum time for drinking.

Frothing Foulkes

Judging by Oscar Foulkes meteoric rise in the wine retail business it is time to move the Porsche out from under cover. Oscar started off a couple of years back, selling wine obtained from a defunct export order, out

of his garage. Now he operates from larger premises known as the Wine Warehouse in Woodstock.

His watchword is 'user-friendly wine' sold at user friendly prices. Eclipse, Mystery, Kuthula and the somewhat questionable label 'Blotto' are among his portfolio of wines. John Platter even manages to hiccup a couple of red arrows amongst the range.

It is however the latest release of wines which has brought Oscar Foulkes to prominence in wine circles. A Cap Classique, the new acceptable name for sparkling wine made by the Champagne method, retails at less than R10.00 a bottle – *quelle horreur!* And, the sparkling OF Pinot Noir may not be great but

the Chardonnay is definitely palatable.

The first question which comes to mind is where does it come from? Well, the label answers that – resplendent in either silver or gold foil – Mystery Reserve Cap Classique is exactly that, a mystery as to its origins.

Basically Foulkes acquired the wine already lying on the yeast from two different sources. The disgorgement – the removal of yeast in the bottle, and the dosage – the addition of sugar to make the acidic base wine more palatable – was accomplished in a building next door to his warehouse. Wine of Origin Woodstock?

We are let in on one mystery: if it has a silver label then it is a >

" ★ ★ ★ ★ "

**THAT'S WHAT
JOHN
PLATTER
THINKS OF OUR:**

GOUVERNEURS RESERVE 86-89
SHIRAZ 87/89
CHARDONNAY RESERVE 91
MERLOT 90
WEISSER RIESLING 90-93
CHARDONNAY 92
GEWURTZTRAMINER 91-93
NOBLE LATE HARVEST 90-92

You too can be sure of finding some stars in the making
when you visit our cellars.

*Open 7 days a week for wine tasting and sales, or
call us for a special delivery on (021) 794-5128*



THE JUPITER DRAWING ROOM CAFE TOWN 005

1991 Chardonnay, a gold label, meanwhile is a 91/92 Pinot Noir.

Try doing some sums, the fixed minimum price of wine as it was then, the capital investment tied up in storing the wine, the tax on sparkling wine and the cost of the bottles, all this before Oscar bought the wines. Then there is the extremely labour-intensive operation of disgorgement, labelling, cork and closures.

Next, the distribution, not to mention equipment needed for the operation, and all this adds up to under R10.00? I am intrigued as to who sold Mr Foulkes wine at such a bargain price, in fact approximately 8,000 cases of bargain wine.

Likeable as Oscar Foulkes is, I have difficulty in believing that his desire for the population at large to have access to a quality sparkling wine at an affordable

price is a totally altruistic exercise. I think we should be told.

A True Wine Friend

The Oxford Companion to Wine was recently released in South Africa and is priced at around R195.00. This means that you can now throw out all previous wine reference works, most of which I fear are outdated and in some cases blatantly inaccurate.

Edited by the renowned wine writer, broadcaster and Master of Wine, Jancis Robinson, she recently added to her list of accolades the title of 'the wine writers' wine writer'. This should be enough to authenticate the book as a kind of wine bible.

For once South Africa features strongly in the edition as early on as 'Academe' where Stellenbosch University is listed as an institution of viticultural



KOBUS LOUW OF SIMONSVLEI WINERY RECEIVES HIS AWARD FROM PRESIDENT MANDELA.

and oenological importance.

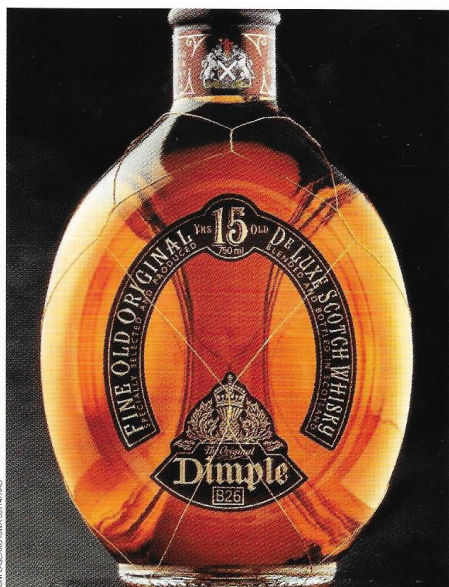
The South African section was written by John Platter who is surely the best person in this country to write such a section by virtue of his holistic understanding of the Cape industry.

His name appears with a whole host of world-renowned wine alumni contributing to the addition. So if there is anything

about wine you want to know from Abboccato to Wurzer, bend the plastic and buy – since this is a truly definitive work on wine.

Simonsvlei Rewarded

By 1992 Simonsvlei Co-operative had committed itself to becoming



*Some works of art
should not only be admired
from afar.*

Dimple 15 year old. From the oldest distillers of Scotch Whisky.
So fine a taste, every day becomes an excuse to indulge.





Bourbon's Buddies Delight

Bourbon is an exclusively American product. Made from a fermented grain mash which is distilled in column stills and matured in charred oak casks.

Recently arrived on the shores of our country is Thomas Jefferson straight Bourbon Whiskey. Jefferson, the man who drafted the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and later went on to become the third US president, is regarded as the father of American Independence. As he was a connoisseur of fine wines and liquor, inventor and independent thinker, the Castle Wine company imported this brand to tie in with South Africa's new found spirit of independence.

Twenty One

The Nederburg Auction will be held on the 8th April, and will be celebrating its 21st birthday. In recent years the Auction has traditionally taken place on the first weekend in April, and the organisers are obviously determined to show the serious nature of the affair by avoiding the 1st. Information on the pre-auction tastings taking place around the country can be obtained by phoning (021) 808-7911.

Heard on the Grapevine

Danie de Wet of the Dewetshof Estate, was awarded the Winemaker of Year trophy at the UK 1995 Grapevine Awards.

He was acknowledged for his dedication to the production of world class Chardonnays, and his commitment to good labour practices. The judges felt he epitomised the spirit, warmth and generosity of the New South Africa.

Ornithologist's Delight

Fancy a taste of a Pygmy Kingfisher? Translated from the Bottelary Wineries range of wine ▸

an aggressive exporter of wines. In that year 1,5% of the cellars total turnover was exported, by 1994 35% was exported which explains why they are the most recent winery to win the Presidents Export Award.

Kobus Louw, manager of the winery is optimistic. He said at the award ceremony: 'Our target for the future is to export 50% of our total harvest, without limiting our supply to the local market. The President's Export Award is the right incentive to achieve this goal.'

To show their continued interest in the local market Simonsvlei have just launched a new range of wines. Labelled under the Simonsvlei Reserve label, three specialised wines of the 1993 vintage – a Pinotage, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon – are now available.

Wine maker Philip Louw says he has been influenced by Australian wine-making meth-

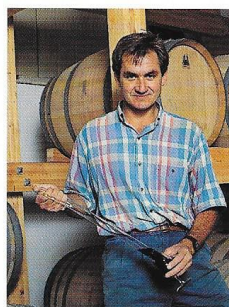
ods, ensuring that the wines have a great deal of accessible fruit early on. Keep a look out for the 1994 Sauvignon Blanc Reserve also newly released.

Changes at Eersterivier

Marius Lategan, previously the winemaker of the Alpen range of wines at Gilbeys, has just been appointed winemaker at Eersterivier Cellar. He will be working in tandem with award winning cellar master Manie Rossouw.

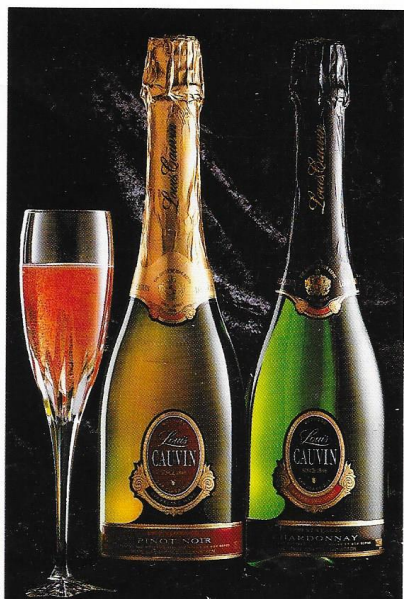
This Co-op, making great inroads via Vinifruco into the export market also has a 'flying winemaker' from New Zealand to add international input for this year's vintage.

Already collecting more medals than wall space will allow, it should be worth looking out for their 1995 vintage.



MARIUS LATEGAN, THE NEW WINEMAKER AT EERSTERIVIER CELLARS.





that would mean a Blanc de Noir 1994 or at least the label on the bottle would portray a pygmy kingfisher. There are nine different labels all depicting birds endemic to South Africa, so if there's a bird fancier you fancy, a bottle of wine – average cost R9.50 – has to be an acceptable gift.

Club's Choice

Lievland won the Wine of the Month Club's, wine of the year competition with their 1992 Lievland DVB, a 'Bordeaux-blend' style of red. A variety of panels during the past year heaped honours on the small estate situated between Stellenbosch and Klapmuts.

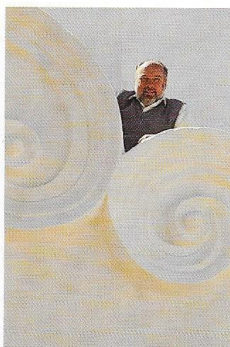
Mountain Views

Delaire has just opened up a timeshare operation for oenophiles who like to stay in the heart of the vineyards. Well designed chalets with every luxury,

along with stunning views and extra incentives such as lunching at discount prices at their restaurant are available. Contact (011) 884-1598 for further information.

Enthusiasts Selection

Meerlust Rubicon 1987 made the world's top twenty wines as listed by the American publication the "Wine Enthusiast". 3,380 Wines



WINE ENTHUSIASTS CHOICE, GEORGIO DELLA CIA OF MEERLUST.



TIM RANDS OF VINIMARK AND DAVID DE MARDT (RIGHT) OF PERNOD RICARD SA.

were tasted during the course of 1994 with 404 wines scoring on the 100 point system, 90 or more. From these wines 77 wines were selected and Meerlust made the top 20.

Abundant Sparkles

Louis Cauvin, Cap Classique Chardonnay 1990 and the Pinot Noir 1990, were in short supply at the end of last year but should now be on stream to brighten up 1995.

Robertson Battles On

Whilst the contention as to whether to certify or not to certify the Robertson Co-operative vineyards of wine remains unresolved, sales in the first year of launch have exceeded the million litre mark.

If the powers that be were to allow this handy half litre pack to be certified, the consumer would be able to know what grape variety they were drinking. There is hope for some enlightened legislation early this year.

Pastis Established

Pernod Ricard, the French liquor group have finally made a direct investment in Africa. Working with the national marketing dis-

tribution network of Vinimark, Mr David de Mardt will head the Pernod Ricard, South African operation from Stellenbosch. The portfolio of products now to sweep the nation in greater volumes is: Bisquit V.S.O.P. Cognac, Jamesons Irish Whiskey, Bushmills and Powers Irish Whiskey and Irish Velvet; Clan Campbell whiskey and Aberlour Single Malt whiskey for the scotch lovers and Bourbon enthusiasts should enjoy easier access to Wild Turkey.

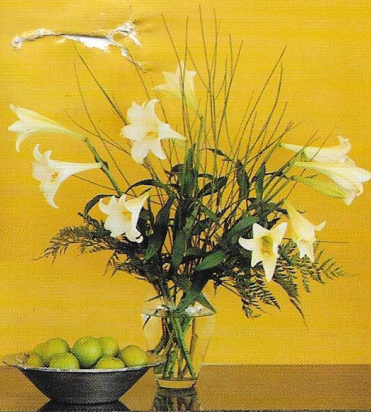
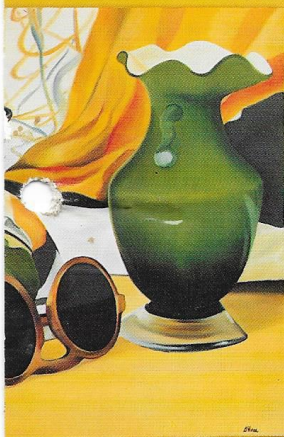
Hopefully we will also see a return to fashion of the milky pastis.

Simply Simpson

When I first started in the wine business there was this awesome lady, Sally Simpson. Having got to know her, I would now describe her as a warm, generous and slightly scatty, cat lover. Her sense of the ridiculous comes through in her latest book *The Cape of Good Cooks*, she acts as a catalyst for humorous situations she finds herself in with some of the Cape's best-known wine personalities. If you are looking for straightforward cook book, forget it. But, if you are looking for the Cape flavours in both people and food, I strongly recommend it; in fact I am hoping for a sequel. □

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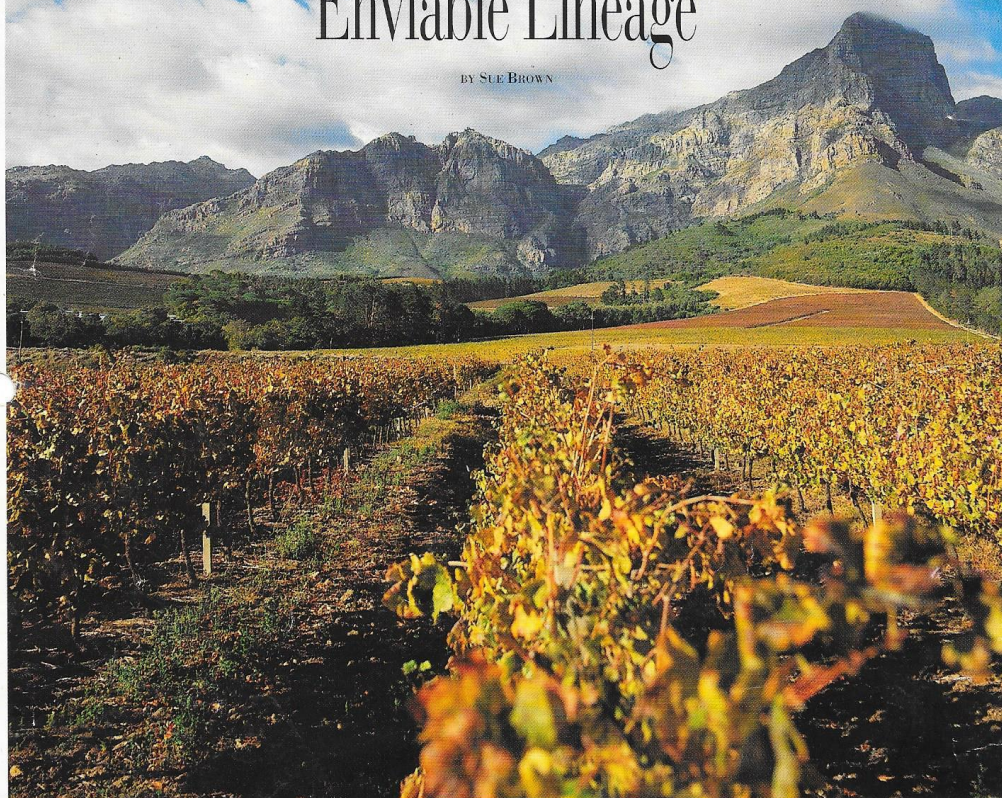


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WINE

Enviably Lineage

BY SUE BROWN



ABOVE: L'ORMARINS VINEYARDS

OPPOSITE TOP: THE L'ORMARINS HOMESTEAD.

L'Ormarins estate best demonstrates the remarkable renaissance the Franshoek area has undergone in the last two decades.

The name L'Ormarins is evocative of the French countryside where the original owners of the farm hailed from. It was here, in the fairy tale valley formed by the majestic Drakenstein mountains, that the bulk of the French Huguenot immigrants settled after their arrival in 1688. By 1694 the farm on which L'Ormarins now

stands was granted to one Jean Roi and later passed into the hands of the De Villiers family. The success of the farm's wine history is evident by the large oak casks, each exquisitely carved with the family's coat of arms. The long history of wine grown and made on the farm is noted later in 1833 when the then owner, Izaak Marais, won a silver trophy at the

Cape of Good Hope agricultural show for his Cape Madeira.

In 1969 Dr. Anton Rupert acquired the farm and handed over the reigns to his well-travelled son Antonij Rupert. Antonij has blended his love of tradition with his knowledge of worldwide wineries. The tasting room on the farm is both magnificent and functional and a visit to it is obli-

gatory for the wine pilgrim.

Wine maker Nico Vermeulen first bottled Sauvignon Blanc, Rhine Riesling and S.A. Riesling back in 1982, these varietals whetted the appetite for the wines we now see in the line-up.

Now, the renowned Sauvignon Blanc continues to receive favourable reaction from consumers while the Blanc Fumé, with a subtle hint of

oak, is the Estate's best seller. The Rhine Riesling is only bottled in the years when Nico feels it can show its true glory. Whilst the Franshoek Riesling is made in such small quantities it is only available from the farm, just another reason, should you need one to visit this estate.

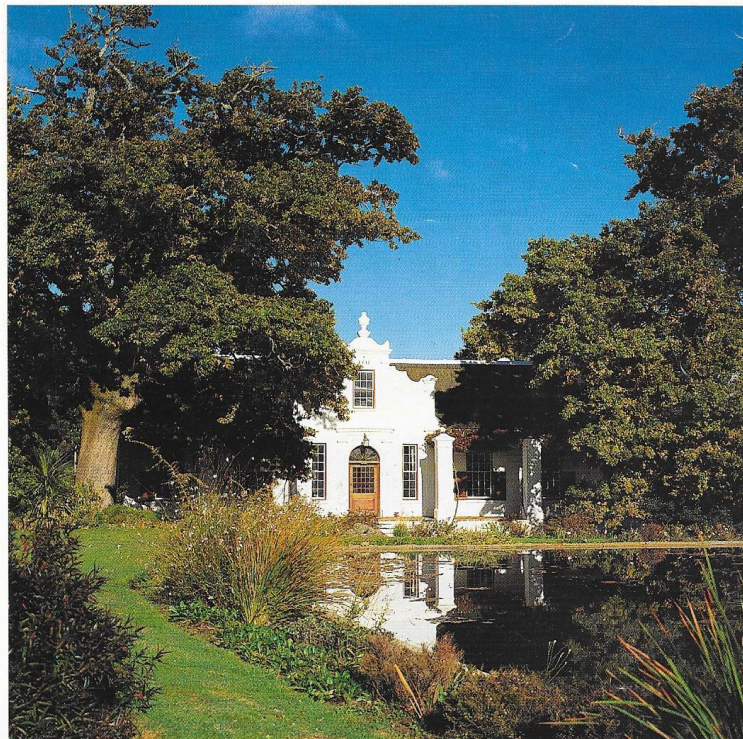
In the present line-up of white varieties now available the Chardonnay is an elegant open style of wine whilst for lovers of the fuller style, the Grand Vin Blanc would definitely appeal. For those who enjoy a light easy drinking wine, L'Ormarins Pinot Gris is a perfect pre-dinner tipple. For the sweeter toothed, Cuddepfennig Guldense surely is no introduction, a wonderful blend of Gewurtztraminer, Muscat Ottonel and Rhine Riesling.

The big guns of the estate are its reds. L'Ormarins Optima is an outstanding example of a Cape 'Bordeaux-style' red.

With judicious use of wood this wine is so finely tuned it is accessible in its youth whilst showing even greater dimension when cellared. The Cabernet Sauvignon is another exceptional wine. The new clone Cabernet blended with the old, gives the wine a solid structure, wonderful spice and fruit aromas and a mellow wine on the palate.

L'Ormarins Shiraz is considered by many to be one of the Cape's finest example of this varietal. Again the judicious use of oak marries well with the spicy, peppery nature of the fruit.

Nearly all these wines are bottled at the Bergkelder, but recently L'Ormarins have installed their own bottling line and one wine which you will only be able to obtain from the estate was bottled on the farm - Merlot. The 1989 vintage won the accolade of being the best Merlot at the SA



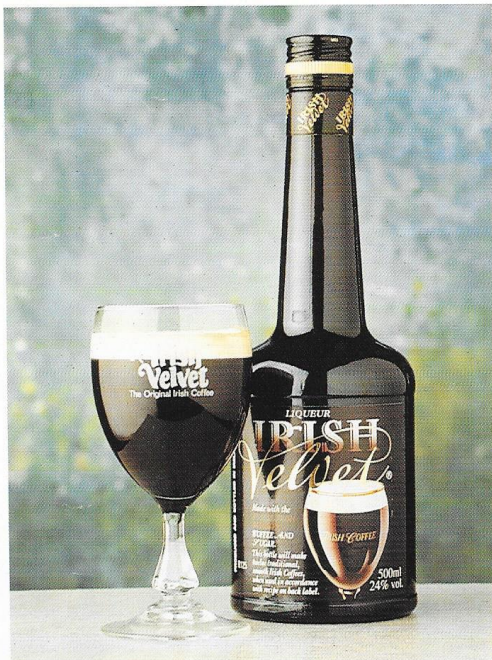
Young Wine Show. It is a come hither wine, and its approachable 'Christmas pudding' nose will mean that only the most stoic wine lover will be able to resist the temptation not to finish it all

before allowing further dimension to develop through cellaring.

For more information contact David Cobbold on (021) 837-3430 □

ABOVE LEFT: L'ORMARINS' BIG GUNS, OPTIMA AND CABERNET SAUVIGNON, THEIR BEST SELLER, BLANC FUMÉ AND EVER POPULAR CHARDONNAY.

ABOVE RIGHT: WINE MAKER NICO VERMEULEN.



San Marco Cream is a sensational drink which combines the Mediterranean spice aniseed, with the smoothness of fresh cream. It is an extension of the highly successful parent brand, San Marco Sambuca launched in 1986.

Available in a white frosted glass bottle this unique liqueur can be enjoyed chilled, over crushed ice, or even in coffee. San Marco Cream retails for R23.

Ethnic Magic

Boland Winery near Paarl has released two wines to raise funds for South African Bushman in Kaggga Kamma, a private nature reserve between Ceres and Calvinia.

Marketed under the label !Um Hap which in !Nomani means "conserve" the proceeds from the sale of these wines will go directly to saving the bushman.

The !Um Hap red is a classic

Bordeaux blend using Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. The white is a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc, showing a creamy texture and depth of flavour. The Chenin Blanc gives fruit and flavour to the blend. Labels depict Bushman paintings, and the charming Bushman legend which is printed on the back label.

Bushman lived in the Kaggga Kamma region over 20 000 years ago, where numerous rock paintings bear witness to their existence and record their nomadic lifestyle. As settlers moved inland claiming more land, the traditional hunting grounds of the Bushmen diminished and they were driven further afield. Today, with the exception of a few small tribes, they face extinction.

In December 1990, management of the Kaggga Kamma invited a group of 27 Bushmen from the Kalahari to settle in the area



where their forefathers had once roamed. The tribe has grown to 40. They hunt game, and earn a living by making ethnic crafts and artifacts used in their traditional lifestyle.

Velvety Smooth

Irish Velvet is every home's answer to home-made Irish Coffee. It is a blend of fine Irish Whiskey, strong black coffee and sugar, just add boiling water – stirred not shaken – and top with lightly whipped cream. It may also be served on its own or over crushed ice.

Irish Velvet is currently the top selling Irish Coffee mix in the United Kingdom and it is hoped to achieve similar success in South Africa.

Produced and bottled in Ireland, the imported liqueur is the only Irish Coffee liqueur available here. This premium product is distinctive in a jet black bottle with cream and gold lettering. Each bottle will make 12 Irish Coffees, and retails for R36 per bottle.

Sweet on the Nose

Remember the classic Grunberger Stein bottle, consumed *en masse* at parties, and turned into lamp bases after a good evening's imbibing? Well, Grunberger have released a new wine to complement the existing range of Stein and Spritziger.

Grunberger Freudenlese is a naturally sweet blend of 80% Sauvignon Blanc and 20% Gewurztraminer. The Sauvignon Blanc gives a fresh, crisp flavour to the blend, while the Gewurztraminer gives a spicey, perfumed, fruity taste. The added advantage of this easy-quaffing wine is that it has a low alcohol content of 7.5%, an advantage to weight-watchers.

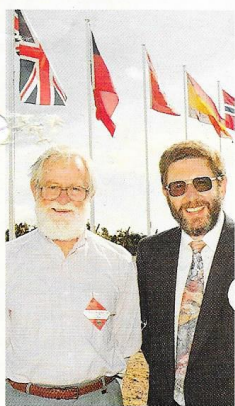
An ideal complement to food with Eastern flavours, match this wine to Chinese, Thai or Indian cuisine to enhance the spicy, rather hot ingredients like chilli, ginger, garlic and herbs, in the dish.

Grunberger Freudenlese is a perfect drink for those weekend luncheons where a touch of sweetness on the nose and palate is preferred. □

Fare Thee Well

by Sue Brown

For my last sortie to the Cape as the wine writer for Habitat, it was sweet of Nederburg to throw such a magnificent party for little old me and 1 600 guests to celebrate my leaving and the 21st Nederburg Auction.



ABOVE: DAVE HUGHES, FATHER OF THE CAPE WINE ACADEMY AND WINE GURU WITH AUCTION MANAGER BENNY HOWARD.

Paddle waving was also necessary for those with an eye to the current supplies of wine, or should I say the lack of local supplies. With Australia's small vintage the overseas scouts are out and about looking for New World wine to provide for the short-fall, and South Africa is poised to fill it.

Buying *en premier* is something all serious South African wine collectors should be looking towards.

Remember when Zonnebloem Cabernet Sauvignon 1976 was 'to die for doll', when Meerlust Rubicon and Le Bonheur Blanc Fumé broke new ground, when a container of the new Boschendal Blanc de Noir sold out in less than a week. Remember when Danie De Wet raised eyebrows for growing Chardonnay in Robertson of all places, when Tim Hamilton Russell was constantly under attack for growing French varietals in an unthinkable location. Those of you who caught onto those new trends, as they happened, benefited from that loyalty in the wine drought.

Keep your eyes open for the new reds from Louisvale, travel out to the Co-ops who are jacking up their acts. Ernst Gouws from Hoopenburg has one of the best Sauvignon Blancs of this vintage. Morgenhof will no doubt go from strength to strength, with their improved cellar and Jeremy Walker



TOP LEFT: RONNIE MELK WITH HIS WIFE ANNETJIE.

TOP RIGHT: MICHAEL FRIDJOHN, THE WINE INDUSTRY'S CONSCIENCE.



ABOVE: SYDNEY BUTHELEZI TESTING AND TASTING SA WINES.

Where else do the chefs of Southern Sun receive a standing ovation for the lunch served. Where else can you find the cream of Cape personalities in one gathering and where else can you watch, with your own eyes, some of the Cape's best wines reaching ludicrously high prices.

Although over 60% of the wine remained in Southern Africa this year, the local licensees were much in evidence with their paddle waving.

from Grangehurst is definitely worth keeping in contact with.

As I leave these shores for an unspecified time, I have to pack just a few bottles of wine: Klein Constantia Vin de Constance and some precious bottles of Nederburg Edelkeur to ensure some liquid sunshine to get me through those maudlin homesick days ahead. □