



The Cape Wine

# Master Copy



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## In this issue...

As 2010 winds down we reflect on all the excitement that the Soccer World Cup brought to our shores. Many fans visited our winelands and experienced a warm welcome and a taste of our unique wines and brandies! In this issue Dave Hughes reports on the first ever inclusion of Brandy at Veritas, Carel Nel visited the Douro, Jeff Grier juggled a few wine balls, while Marilyn Cooper judged the international sommeliers in Cape Town. Andy Roediger tells about numbers in wine, Bennie Howard judged wine in Spain and Danielle le Roux speaks passionately about Pinotage.

Enjoy the festive season safely and celebrate with the best from the Winelands!



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## Brandy Masters



**L-R: Dave Hughes, convener of brandy tasting panel, Winifred Bowman, Andy Roediger and Bennie Howard, chairman ICWM**

Veritas celebrated two decades of South Africa's most respected competition for market-ready wines this year. To mark the occasion Brandy was invited to join the proud Veritas tradition. With South African brandies being judged consistently as the best in all manner of international competition it is surprising that our National competition had not included brandy before.

It was decided to judge the brandies in two categories: Standard brandies and potstill brandies with the latter in various groups according to the length wood-aging.

The Brandy Foundation and Veritas management combined to select a panel representing a wide spread of competent judges for all aspects of the industry. The final panel was convened by Dave Hughes with six judges. Brink Liebenberg, Group GM Spirits, and Johan Venter, Director of Primary Production from Distell; Kobus Gelderblom the Brandy Master at the KWV with Cape Wine Master's being represented by Dr Winnie Bowman and Dr Andy Roediger. An international interest was added by Denis Lahouratate the Cellarmaster of Bisquit in Cognac France.

The standard brandies category yielded two Gold Medals, along with six Silver and one Bronze. In the Potstill Section no fewer than five Double Gold medals were awarded and seven Gold, Seven Silvers and four Bronze medals.

The success of including Brandy in the annual Veritas will hopefully encourage more producers to participate in the competition next year. There is no doubt that South Africa leads the world in quality brandy production and it is good to see Veritas include this very important part of our industry in the Competition.

I am very pleased to see that not only were Cape Wine Masters included in the judging panel but that they acquitted themselves as well as they did. It would be good to see more CWMs judging in International Brandy Competitions.

**Dave Hughes, Honorary CWM**

**Members:** Chris Bargman, Margie Barker, Berenice Barker, Rolene Bauer, Francis (Duimpie) Bayly, Paul Benade, Kristina Beuthner, Duane Blaauw, Tom Blok, Winifred Bowman, Cathy Brewer, Marietjie Brown, Sue Brown, Marilyn Cooper, Henry Davel, Dick Davidson, Greg de Bruyn, Ginette de Fleuriot, Chris de Klerk, Heidi Rosenthal Duminy, Stephan du Toit, Pieter Esbach, Margie Fallon, Mary-Lyn Foxcroft, Margaret Fry, Vashti Galpin, Peter Grebler, Brad Gold, Penny Gold, Karen Green, Jeff Grier, Bennie Howard, Dave Johnson, Val Kartsounis, Peter Koff, Hymli Krige, Michael Lee, Danielle le Roux, Hennie Loubser, Gerald Ludwinski, Andy Mitchell, Gerda Mouton, Alan Mullins, Boets Nel, Carel Nel, Sarah Newton, Elsie Pells, Jenny Ratcliffe-Wright, Andy Roediger, Christine Rudman, Andras Salamon, Lynn Sheriff, Caroline Snyman, De Bruyn Steenkamp, Clive Torr, Eftyhia Vardas, Junel Vermeulen, Irina von Holdt, Meryl Weaver, Cathy White, Lyn Woodward

**Honorary Members:** Colin Frith, Phyllis Hands, Dave Hughes

## Master in the Douro



**Carel Nel in the Douro Valley**

This valley, some 150 km from Oporto, upstream in the Douro River, must be – with the Cape Winelands, the Mosel, Burgundy and Napa Valley – ranked as one of the most beautiful wine growing regions in the world. Wine growing has been vitally important to Portugal for hundreds of years. In Oporto a monument is dedicated to the riches of Portugal: the sea, the land, wine growing and the people.

Tourism is exploding in the Douro - hotels, wine shops and restaurants fill up with tourists from all over the world. A mere 20 years ago no electricity was available. 30 years ago it took more than 3 hours to drive through the narrow winding roads from Oporto to Pinhao. Today, with new highways the trip is completed in about 1½ hours. Visitors are enjoying not only the Ports, but also new sophisticated table wines. Gone are the old style red table wines. Many small producers are producing small-volume Single Quinta wines. Plenty of innovation comes from younger winemakers such as well-known Dirk Niepoort. At Quinta Roriz the Symingtons, in partnership with Bruno Prats, use Bordeaux style techniques to produce their impressive Chryseia from the Portuguese varieties T Nacional, T Francesa and Tinta Roriz. The Symington family own about 23% of the total Port market – a production of about 10 million cases annually. And that was before they bought Cockburns! Port production is increasingly concentrated among the big players, Cruz, Symington and Taylors/Fonseca/Croft. Charles Symington has taken over the responsibility of winemaking from his father, Peter, upon his retirement. Peter, a walking encyclopedia of wine experience, started his career in 1964. Peter and Charles produced the stunning 2007 Dow which scored a 100 points in *The Wine Spectator*.

When asked why the Symington, Guimaraens and Niepoort families are so successful in tough economic conditions - the answer lies in their love of the Douro, long-term commitment and hard work. It is not uncommon to work 7 days a week during the 5 week harvest, with the highest volume of grapes coming in on Sundays and picked by family growers.

Team Nel were guests of the Symington family at Quinta Bomfin. Discussions were had about Port trends, especially the growing new Pink Port. Some expect the style to bring new young Port drinkers to the market, while others feel it may tarnish the image of Port. Another topic was the production of Vintage Ports amongst serious Vintage Port Producers. Increasing appreciation exists for tradition: mixed vineyards, *lagars* with or without robotic treading, no irrigation, terracing and cultivars that have lost favour. During the Nels' three day stay Old Vintage Ports, including some from Boplaas, were opened every night. Both Peter Symington and Dirk Niepoort were amazed at the deep black colour and the fruit intensity of the 2006 Boplaas Reserve. Dirk Niepoort also opened a bottle of 1863 Niepoort Port. "This lovely old Port was still in perfect condition and it showed why Port is a drink for Kings."

**Carel Nel, CWM**

## Master in Roussillon



**Jeff Grier**

Life in Wine remains exciting but the economy is creating greater demands on producers to maintain their position. The escalation in wine related activity means we all have to improve our delegation skills. This was never a strength of mine but I am learning and handing over responsibility was critical in October 2010.

We had a hectic week leading up to the CWG Auction on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. That night I flew to France for the Domaine Grier harvest in Roussillon and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October I returned to Villiera before all the fermentations were complete. Obviously I had to delegate on both sides and due to supremely competent staff it was easy.

Our French harvest was controlled by our new French winemaker, Raphael Graugnard, assisted by two young South Africans looking for an overseas experience. I was an extra hand but most importantly, I assisted with decisions, motivated the staff and did a lot of tasting.

Generally it was a wet year in Europe although it was dry in Roussillon and quality was way above average. Ripening occurred gradually and we achieved perfect phenolic ripeness on the Maccabeu, Syrah and Grenache. The Carignan ripens late and it was the first year that we had an opportunity to push the limits. Previously we had a South African team that had to get back here and the Carignan was often picked a bit early in order to finish on time. This year we had a French winemaker in place and we could wait, provided the weather played along. On Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October we checked the last of the Carignan and decided it required 2 or 3 more days for perfect ripeness. A bit of rain was forecast and on the Sunday it began raining but it didn't stop until 3 days later. By then we had recorded over 200mm of rain. The river bordering our property was flooding and it was impossible to get a vehicle into the vineyard. Needless to say, the remaining crop took a big knock but a week later we were picking and the result is better than expected.

When we started in Roussillon we were advised to take out insurance against weather, mainly hail, because storms, especially at the *Equinox* can do a lot of damage. They even have a name for the occurrence we experienced. It is the *Aquat*, caused by cool Autumn air off the Pyrenees meeting the warmer air mass above the Mediterranean. Although rain is always experienced around the Equinox, flooding occurs every 15 to 20 years.

The insurance cover protects you from loss of volume not quality but we were advised to claim and after a lot of negotiation by our vineyard manager on our behalf, we received a small payout.

It was all very exciting and a new experience for me and the wine was better than expected. Even after experiencing the flood I believe the risk of attempting to achieve phenolic ripeness is worth taking. **Jeff Grier, CWM**

## Master Sommelier Judge



**Marilyn Cooper**

What an honour it was to be invited to be a judge as part of an international panel, at WOSA's Sommelier World Cup held in Paarl. Among the judges was Hans Jurgen from the German Wine School. A letter of collaboration with the Cape Wine Academy was signed, ensuring that our Cape Sommelier program keeps up to world standards.

Sue Birch, the organiser summed up the objectives of the competition: "The idea for the competition, came about in the run-up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup. We wanted to capitalise on the international focus on South Africa and the soccer tournament in the lead-up to the games by creating a contest for professionals to test their understanding of South African wines. Contestants, all of whom had to be full-time employees of restaurants or hotels, were put through a series of examinations in their home countries to assess their understanding of our wine styles and what makes our offerings distinctive and unique. The national winner of each country was then flown to South Africa and spent a week visiting the Winelands, meeting winemakers and dining in some of the Cape's finest exciting restaurants."

There were twelve finalists from around the world. Each finalist spent a week visiting various wineries in South Africa as their prize. They were all enormously impressed by the quality of our wines, as well as the hospitality of the producers.

The competition took the form of a written examination, blind tasting and a practical, which involved each candidate offering and serving SA Cap Classique, with the opportunity of up selling. At the end of this round four finalists remained. The final three practical examinations took place on stage in front of an audience of 140. WOSA had invited estate owners, restaurateurs, press, sommeliers and industry players to participate and experience the judging.

Three scenarios were presented to the candidate e.g. "This is a birthday celebration for first-time guests in South Africa, wanting to enjoy a South African inspired menu, only South African wines from different regions/wards and grape varieties to be used, as they would like to learn more about South African wine".

Christopher Bates (USA), the winner, was outstanding. He was technically correct on all levels – which way to move around the table, lighting the candles, offering and pouring wine and water. His food knowledge gave him the edge - only two candidates knew the difference between an artichoke and a Jerusalem artichoke.

I must congratulate WOSA on a wonderful event and hope that this competition takes place again in the future.

**Marilyn Cooper, CWM**

## Master Tester



**Andy Roediger**

Phenolic ripeness (PR) according to the method set out by Glories in the late 1980's is employed in South Africa to gather more information about the ripening grapes during the season. It is an additional tool that can be used to confirm various aspects of the grapes which are found by tasting. PR, however, puts numbers to various measurables and thus can easier be ranked and compared to either different regions or different vintages.

The main measurables are the seed and skin tannins and the percentage contribution these tannins make to the total number of phenolics, expressed as "Mp%". Besides the tannins, the quantity of anthocyanins (ac) - the colourants and flavourants, are measured as well as how easily these are liberated under wine making conditions expressed as "Ea" (ripeness). Thus the ripeness as well as the quality of the grapes can be achieved in numeric terms. This will lead to a quantitative measurement of the suitability of terroir to the grape as well as yield some outcomes on viticultural practices employed in the vineyard. So grape ripening in a particular season becomes a numbers game. The 2010 vintage showed some interesting results in terms of the numbers game:

<b>SHIRAZ</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Ripeness</b>
Ea (%)	52	58	>60
Blocks with > 2g/L ac	28	66	
Ave skin tannin	37	43	35-40
Ave seed tannin	11	14	15
MP(%)	16	20	<20
<b>MERLOT</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Ripeness</b>
Ea (%)	55	56	>60
Blocks with > 2g/L ac	30	12	
Ave skin tannin	37	35	35-40
Ave seed tannin	19	22	16-22
MP(%)	20	22	<20
<b>CAB SAUVIGNON</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Ripeness</b>
Ea (%)	48	59	>60
Blocks with > 2g/L ac	70	69	
Ave skin tannin	40	40	35-40
Ave seed tannin	15	14	15
MP(%)	20	22	<20
<b>CAB FRANC</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Ripeness</b>
Ea (%)	57	60	>60
Blocks with > 2g/L ac	5	6	
Ave skin tannin	33	34	30-40
Ave seed tannin	24	30	22-25
MP(%)	22	26	<20

The 2010 vintage thus was clearly a Shiraz vintage in South Africa as can be seen by the increased number of quality blocks sampled, yet the tannin count was almost 20 per cent higher than in 2009. Merlot could not keep up the excellent quality that was achieved in 2009. Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc were equal in quality in 2010 and 2009, while a greater ripeness was achieved as is indicated by the higher anthocyanin extraction as represented by "Ea". All red grape varieties showed a better extraction in 2010. **Andy Roediger, CWM**

## Master meets Bacchus



**L-R: Bacchus Director Fernando Gurucharri, Bennie Howard and General Manager of Bacchus, Miguel Berzosa**

Bennie Howard judged at the 10<sup>th</sup> International BACCHUS Wine Competition held in Madrid, Spain. Bacchus remains the largest wine show in Spain. The judging takes place in the centre of Madrid in the Casino de Madrid, a majestic building dating back to 1836 and used since then as a private club for the businessmen in Madrid.

Experienced international wine judges are invited, representing each country from where wines have been entered for the competition. The wines are tasted by 12 panels over a period of four days.

Bennie Howard, Chairman of the Institute of Cape Wine Masters and Vice – Chairman of the Veritas Wine Competition, South Africa's largest wine competition, was the only taster invited from South Africa.

A total of 1624 wines from 20 countries competed at this biennial show. This year four wines were awarded "Grand D'Oro" medals, 168 wines achieved gold status and 296 silver medals were awarded.

"I was very impressed with the organization and standard of the judging at Bacchus" says Bennie. "The judging follows the standards as set by the OIV, which includes that no more than 45 wines are judged by a panel per day. Furthermore, the OIV suggests that no more than one third of the wines may receive a medal."

"Given my experience at the competition I will recommend that more South African wine makers take part at Bacchus. The publicity that South Africa receives for award winning wines, particularly in Europe, has great value."



The tasting room in the Casino de Madrid

**Bennie Howard, CWM**

## Master Ode to Pinotage



**Danielle le Roux**

The history of Pinotage started in 1925 when Prof Abraham Perold planted the seeds of his experimental crossing of Pinot Noir and Hermitage in his garden in Welgevallen, Stellenbosch.

In 1991, Beyers Truter was named Winemaker of the Year at the International Wine and Spirit Competition for his 1989 Pinotage. The award led to significant international interest and also contributed to the idea of the birth of the Pinotage Association in 1995. The goal of the organization was to uplift the standards of Pinotage production and to share knowledge among its members.

Pinotage has come a long way from those early days with the helpful activities and research undertaken and sponsored by the Pinotage Association. The Association does not market individual labels, but the generic promotion of Pinotage wines. Each year the best new vintage Pinotage is elected from the different wards and all the winning wines are then offered in a new-vintage tasting. Knowledge regarding the viticulture and vinification methods, as well as and new experimentation is shared.

The Absa Top 10 competition was launched in 1997 and annually the winning wines establish the criteria for distinctive styled Pinotage wines. This ensures their uniqueness in the international wine world. The winners also receive marketing exposure on SABC's Top Billing, Wineland and other magazines, as well as exposure during country-wide festival participation and road-shows. 2010 saw the announcement of the ABSA Perold Cape Blend Competition aimed at creating a signature style for the composition of true Cape Blends. These wines should contain a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 70% Pinotage to qualify.

Pinotage is a uniquely South African cultivar and represents the African spirit. Why is Pinotage so special? Off course it's unique to SA, but apart from patriotism, Pinotage is also so versatile: from the most elegant Cap Classique, to refreshing Rosé, to a robust grand red wine that can mature for many years - Pinotage can hold its own. It won't be boxed into one category and can rise above its' disadvantages with individual personality and flair.

Pinotage is also grown in so many other parts of the world: from the Judean lowlands in Israel, Okanagan in British Columbia, Lodi California as well as New Zealand to name a few sites.

One can never rest on one's laurels with Pinotage, but getting it right is very rewarding! Pinotage has become more than a novelty with an ever growing following.

**Danielle Le Roux, CWM**