



Words by Conrad Louw  
Images supplied by Le Sueur Wines

# PARADOKS

*what's in a name?*

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"What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet."

Juliet expresses to Romeo that a name is a reproduction and worthless resolution, and that she loves the person who is called "Montague", but she knows neither the Montague name, nor the Montague family. So what does Shakespeare's quote have to do with a paradox? Well, according to the Dictionary, paradox (noun), means; a seemingly absurd or contradictory statement or proposition which when investigated may prove to be well founded or true. Or is it?

The key to this arbitrary remark is born from Louis Le Sueur van der Riet's wine, The Le Sueur Paradoks 2015, which is a 50/50 blend of Cinsaut and Pinot Noir, the two parent grape varieties of South Africa's own Pinotage. Louis, who is the winemaker at De Krans, thought long and hard over this paradox, and liked the idea of blending the two components that should result in an excellent union. That is exactly what he did.

I had the privilege of tasting the Paradoks before its launch, thanks to the influence of good friend Denise Lindley, who is also a friend of Louis Le Sueur van der Riet. At first I thought the wine was merely a novel idea, blending Cinsaut and Pinot Noir, or paradoxical Pinotage. But after tasting it, I was astonished by this absolutely "big, yet elegant" wine. It ticked off all the boxes that you want to taste in a well-made, well-balanced and serious wine. Packed with flavours of red berries, black cherries, mulberries, spice, earthiness, and subtle hints of oak, the wine was very multifaceted and multi-layered.

It was consequently reason enough to ask Louis more questions about this interesting wine.

A big Hollywood smile appeared on his face when he was asked to elaborate, and he eagerly continued to elucidate. After toiling with this (ambiguously) unique idea for quite some time, Louis made his wine from Cinsaut and Pinot Noir, of which the latter grows at 600m altitude in a cool pocket in the Outeniqua Mountains. The grapes had ripened very slowly, and produced healthy berries of exceptional quality. "These grapes were hand-harvested at the end of March, and the grapes were still cold when they arrived at the cellar. The juice was fermented in an open tank for five days on the skins, says Louis, and it had a light pump-over twice a day." Afterwards, it underwent malolactic fermentation, where it spent 14 months in 3rd fill barrels.

With regards to the Cinsaut, it is an old work-horse that has been around for centuries, but of late has become "the new kid in the block", and has certainly become a buzz-word on many maverick-like winemakers' lips. When it came to the winemaking of the Paradoks, it was like a hands-on parent "mothering" a precious baby. 600kg of selected Cinsaut bunches were harvested, and care was given to select



*The two components of this blend meet shortly before bottling yet create a stunning result.*

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only the darkest berries, and deliberately omit any rotten ones.

Van der Riet continues fervently, “I left the pulp and a portion of whole bunches to start natural fermentation, after 2 days I could see the skins had started to form a cap on top of the juice. I then weighed the cap down with a screen and weights, so the skins would stay submerged in the juice to extract as much colour as possible. After three days, the whole bunches had stayed at the bottom of the fermenter. I tasted the whole berries on the bunches and they had this amazing, still sweet, fruity taste as the fermentation in the unbroken berries is much slower.”

Louis was quick to realise that he wanted to capture this amazing taste of the whole berries, so he cautiously took these whole bunches, and berry-for-berry removed them from the stems, painstakingly and lovingly crushing each berry with his fingers, then discarding the stems. This tedious but meticulous process took all of two days. After a light press in a small basket press, it completed fermentation in barrels, where it also aged for 14 months in 3rd fill barrels.

The two components met for the first time when they were blended shortly before bottling, unfiltered and unfined. The Paradoks is a wine to look out for, and worth the effort to obtain a bottle or six. It drinks beautifully now, but will undoubtedly age into an even more serious wine over the next couple of years. Regardless if “Paradoks” is semantics or wordplay, this Cinsaut/Pinot Noir blend promises magnitude, just like some of South Africa’s iconic Pinotages.

So whether Juliet could disregard the Montague name or not, Romeo remained a Montague and Juliet a Capulet. Can one then ask if a sweet smelling rose remains a rose by any other name?

Let us think ‘Paradoks’ - Is this well-crafted Cinsaut/Pinot Noir blend hypothetically a Pinotage, or not? Before you answer, the plot thickens. Bertus van Niekerk from Somerset West, and his “Osbloed” (Oxblood) wines, produce a wine called “Wonderbare Raadsman” (“Wonderful Councillor”). This is a three-way blend of “Pinotage, Cinsaut & Pinot Noir”. So, talking about a paradox/Paradoks, one can only wonder if this thought ever crossed Professor Perold’s mind. Undoubtedly, I would say. ☺