



PRE-ARRIVAL SOUTH AFRICAN OFFER AND REPORT AUGUST 2014

With the first container on the water, I thought it was an appropriate moment to publish this provisional South African Report to coincide with the launch of the 'new' Dreyfus Ashby.

For those who have a reasonable knowledge of the Cape, one will find a couple of familiar names who, for various reasons, have been mostly absent from the UK trade for the past few years. I am thinking specifically of Beaumont and Villiera here - producers who are very highly regarded on the local market - whilst the likes of Eagles' Nest and Solms Delta might have been on some people's radars for the past decade or so. Those who have followed some of my previous musings on South Africa will also recognise Fable Mountain Vineyards (albeit by its previous incarnation - with the prefix 'Tulbagh') who, after a four year hiatus, are back on track and we re-launch the wines into the UK market with a brace of Platter Five Stars.

Then, we have some new names. John Seccombe of Thorne & Daughters, who only released his first wines in the Cape in June - and managed to sell out within a fortnight. Thankfully the UK allocation was already secured, but I suspect they may well go the same way on arrival. Yardstick, as a new project, may not be known to you, but invariably its creator, Adam Mason (once of Klein Constantia and now Mulderbosch) will be. He joins an elite band of winemakers with enlightened owners, comfortable with allowing their charges a degree of independence. Neither Mason nor Seccombe own (or have any interest in investing in any) vineyards and the same could be said of Ginny Povall who started Botanica at the end of the 2000s. A shrewd operator, Ms. Povall has over the past few seasons managed to secure positions in what are now considered to be some of South Africa's most sought after Chenin Blanc vineyards, sharing parcels with the likes of Eben Sadie.

We start this report, however - with a political deference to listing producers alphabetically - with Alheit Vineyards. Catapulted from nowhere with their maiden 2011 release, these have quickly become the most sought-after wines in the Cape. Invariably, they will all be sold on allocation, so now is the moment to put your hands up.

The majority of these wines are due to land to coincide with The Beautiful South Tasting in London on the 9th and 10th September. All of the growers detailed in this Report will be in attendance to present their wines in person, and we all very much look forward to introducing you to the new Dreyfus Ashby South African Collective at the show.

For the record, this is not the definitive list of the Cape Crusaders we will be working with for the future and there will be some further additions. Watch this space.

Richard Kelley MW

Alheit Vineyards, Western Cape

www.alheitvineyards.co.za

The good news is that after two vintages of hard work and planning, there has been an increase in the production of Cartology and we have secured a commensurate amount to try and sate the demand. According to Chris, it's closer in style to the inaugural 2011 vintage release, describing it as being the 'slickest, most complete and grown-up Cartology to date'. The downside is that there is no Radio Lazarus this year. Chris thinks that he picked it too late and as such it now forms a 12% component part of the Cartology blend (which is where it started out in 2011).

Chris and Suzaan have, however, introduced Magnetic North, an old vine Chenin planted on its original rootstock ('makstok') sourced from a 'rescue block' planted at 520 metres on the Skurfborg. Our allocation is meagre (as was the production) and as it stands, there is unlikely to be enough wine for everyone who may be interested to benefit. Noting the price, I for one couldn't claim for a moment that it is twice as good as Cartology, but all I will say is that the wine is exceptional. Clearly, that's not just my opinion; Tim Atkin MW placed Magnetic North as the single highest scoring wine in his recently published South Africa Report.

White

2013 Cartology WO Western Cape
2013 Magnetic North Mountain Makstok

WO Olifantsrivier

Beaumont Wines, Bot Rivier

www.beaumont.co.za

This farm, known as Compagnes Drift, was an outpost for the Dutch East India Company until the middle of the 18th Century. Jayne and her late husband, Raoul, liberated themselves from the co-operative system in 1994, electing to refurbish their rustic cellar (last used forty years before), deciding to produce and bottle under their own label. Today, the cellar is under the tenure of their son, Sebastian, whilst sister Ariane helps with marketing.

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There are two expression of Chenin Blanc. The first is raised in concrete and stainless steel tanks, but is both serious and durable. The Hope Marguerite (named after Sebastian's grandmother), was first released in 1996 and comes from two vineyards planted in 1974 and 1978. It spontaneously ferments in barrel, a small proportion being new. The 2012 was a 'Five Star' in the 2014 Platter Guide. The 2012 Pinotage remains on the right side of rustic, whilst the Shiraz/Mourvèdre is clean and fresh. Beaumont was the first estate in the Cape to bottle a single varietal Mourvèdre, although production remains small. The Vitruvian takes its name from the restored watermill on the farm, and is a five variety Cape red blend with 30% Pinotage at its core. The last two wines are produced in limited quantities and only shipped to order and are subject to availability.

White

2014 Chenin Blanc WO Bot Rivier
2013 Chenin Blanc 'Hope Marguerite' WO Bot Rivier

Red

2012 Pinotage WO Bot Rivier
2011 Shiraz Mourvèdre WO Bot Rivier
2012 Mourvèdre WO Bot Rivier
2011 Vitruvian WO Bot Rivier

Botanica, Western Cape

www.botanicawines.com

Located in Devon Valley within Stellenbosch, Ginny Povall makes wine whilst simultaneously running a luxury guest lodge and protea farm. Until now, all of the wines produced have come from contract fruit, whilst the American-born Ginny waits for her own vines to mature. Known up until recently as 'Botanica' the wines now carry the name of the 18th Century British artist, Mary Delany, whose botanical cut-paper collages adorn the label.

The grapes for the Chenin Blanc come from 50 year old bush vines on the arid Skurfberg Mountain, some 40 kilometres from the Atlantic and just shy of 500 metres altitude. The wine is fermented in a combination of 400 litre barrels with a 50% tank component. The 2012 represents the fourth vintage to be released, with each of the 2009, 2011 and this 2012 being awarded a Platter 'Five Star'. The 2012 Pinot Noir is sourced from grapes grown on the Paul Cluver farm in Elgin and accounts for just 300 cases. The wine is raised in old oak barrels in order to maintain elegance and delicacy.

White

2012 Chenin Blanc WO Citrusdal Mountain

Red

2012 Pinot Noir WO Elgin

Eagles' Nest, Constantia

www.eaglesnestwines.com

Originally a section of the Groot Constantia estate (historically the wine supplier to European nobility), the farm has been in the hands of the Mylrea family since 1984. It was a massive fire in 2000 that destroyed both the native fynbos and the commercially planted pine forests which opened up the opportunity to develop the site as a wine estate. Whilst Sauvignon Blanc remains Constantia's signature variety, the aspect of the land means there is none planted on the farm. These are some of the steepest slopes in agricultural use in the Cape, with the vineyards located at between 150 and 400 metres above sea level, yet are located only ten kilometres from False Bay and in the path of the summer trade winds. With vineyards facing north and east, along with the only west-orientated slope in Constantia, the farm is planted mostly to red cultivars, notably the four Bordeaux varieties, plus Shiraz.

The 12 hectares that are planted are dedicated to producing two red wines: a Shiraz and one of the Cape's few notable Merlots. The only white is Viognier, planted at the insistence of Executive Director, Peter Stewart, who loves the variety. In retrospect, it was an inspired selection. I challenge anyone to find a better example produced in the Southern Hemisphere.

White

2013 Viognier WO Constantia

Red

2009 Merlot WO Constantia
2011 Syrah WO Constantia



Fable Mountain Vineyards, Tulbagh

www.fablewines.com

Tulbagh's history is practically as old as the South African wine industry itself, although it has never been a region associated with quality wine. But, as we've seen in the past twenty years, the industry has expanded in a series of concentric circles away from the traditional areas of Stellenbosch and Paarl, and it was only a matter of time until Tulbagh would start to attract a small band of pioneers keen to exploit the region's unrealised potential. None more so than Charles Banks who headed an American consortium to acquire (what was then known as) Tulbagh Mountain Vineyards in October 2010. Banks, as you may be aware, was a previous investor in Screaming Eagle.

It would be fair to say that there has been something of a four year hiatus with a couple of name and brand changes in between, but one thing has remained constant during this period; the dedication and attention to the vineyards and the quality of the wines themselves. What is about to be released and what is still to come are best described as amazing.

The Jackal Bird comes from grapes purchased widely around the Cape: Chenin from the Swartland, Chardonnay from Elgin and Stellenbosch, Viognier from the Voor Paardeberg and Grenache Blanc from as far away as the Karoo. Raised in both barrel and concrete eggs, the wine goes through partial malolactic fermentation. The vintage available here was awarded a 'Five Star' rating in the Platter Guide. The Night Sky 2012 is based on 60% Syrah, blended with 25% Mourvèdre and 15% (of bought in) Grenache. Whilst not an estate (or certified organic) wine, it displays a real sense of the shale and graphite notes that one has come to expect from wines grown on the farm. The most impressive wine, however, is the estate-grown Syrah 2011 with which we launch. It's another Platter 'Five Star' wine, and demonstrates the same freshness and focus as the Night Sky, but with an even greater sense of minerality to the finish.

White

2012 Jackal Bird WO Western Cape

Red

2012 Night Sky WO Coastal

2011 Syrah WO Tulbagh (o)

Quando, Robertson

www.quando.co.za

Fanus and Martin Bruwer are 6th generation farmers in Robertson working 190 hectares on the banks of the Breede River, growing artichokes and citrus alongside 8 hectares of organically orientated Sauvignon Blanc on ancient dry stone riverbed soils. Before 2000, these grapes were delivered to one of the local co-ops, until Fanus answered friends who repeatedly asked 'when are you going to make your own wine' by naming the winery Quando.

The Sauvignon comes from two adjacent blocks, with the grapes harvested by hand over four successive pickings at different levels of ripeness in order to build in complexity. The result is a dry, mineral Sauvignon, more Old World than new, but with a spectrum of both tropical and herbal flavours. The alcohol is a modest 12.5%, so pleasing to those who are fatigued by the most extreme examples from the New World. Still literally made in a garage on the farm using olive oil grade plastic tanks and an old wooden wine press, it shows what a little ingenuity can achieve.

The Pinot Noir was introduced in 2012, with the grapes coming from a small vineyard site situated above the town of Ashton, a few kilometres away on the opposite side of the Robertson Valley.

White

2014 Sauvignon Blanc WO Robertson

Red

2012 Pinot Noir WO Robertson

Solms Delta, Franschhoek

www.solms-delta.co.za

This old farm, dating back to 1690, is a compelling place to visit, not just for its wines, but for the sense of history it evokes in its museum; telling the story of human interaction on the estate from long before the colonists arrived, through the dark periods of slavery and apartheid, and onto a hopefully more positive post-Mandela South Africa.

There are 23 hectares planted at the Paarl-end of the Franschhoek Valley, with the first wines produced on the farm from the 2004 vintage. Owner (and renowned neuroscientist), Mark Solms, became fascinated with the ancient concept of desiccation through the drying of grapes on the vine, a technique that is evident in at least two of the wines featured below. The names are all Afrikaans and, just like the wines and the labels, express the unique identity that one associates with the history and culture of the Cape.



Recent changes in management of the farm, the introduction of Rosa Kruger as consultant viticulturist, and the arrival of two young and talented winemakers in Hagen Viljoen and Joan Heatlie have given the farm a greater focus, with the prospect of some very exciting wines due to emerge from the cellar within the next year.

White

2014 Vastrap (Chenin Blanc) WO Western Cape
2013 Amalie (White Blend) WO Western Cape
2013 Koloni (desiccated Muscat) WO Western Cape

Rosé

2013 Lekkerwijn (Grenache Mourvedre Cinsaut) WO Western Cape

Red

2012 Langarm (Cape Red Blend) WO Western Cape
2012 Hiervandaan (Rhône Blend) WO Western Cape
2012 Africana (desiccated Shiraz) WO Western Cape

Fortified

2011 Gemoedsrus (fortified Shiraz) WO Western Cape (**F**)

Thorne and Daughters, Western Cape

www.thorneanddaughters.com

It was Chris Alheit who introduced me to John 'Thorne' Seccombe, at the time when this maiden release was maturing quietly in barrel at the Alheit cellar. The project was started at the back-end of 2012 by John and his wife Tasha, taking inspiration for the names of the wines from their two young daughters. The grapes are all sourced on contract, using Rosa Kruger as a conduit to finding some of the oldest and most interesting vines the Cape has to offer.

The 'Rocking Horse' is a Cape white blend, but rather than using Chenin as the central variety, John has elected to lead with Roussanne, incorporating both Chardonnay and Semillon along the way. The grapes were sourced from vineyards in the Overberg, Franschoek, Voor-Paardeberg and Stellenbosch. With the South African allocation sold out within two weeks of being launched, it wasn't long before the jokes about the wine being as 'rare as rocking horse shit' came into existence. Luckily, we have secured one quarter of the production for the UK, although I suspect it may just disappear as fast.

Even rarer, if that's possible, is the Tin Soldier. We have just 120 bottles for this market. Unique, in South Africa, at least, is red Semillon. No other vineyard in the world is believed to exist. It's a natural mutation, where one finds both red and white berries on the same plant and it would seem that a couple of vineyards in Franschoek is where one finds it. The whole crop from this particular site found its way into the Tin Soldier, and even when blended with 50% 'white' Semillon the result was just three barrels. It's a curiosity, but something that is worth seeking out. For those who might be familiar with Pineau d'Aunis, the wine shares the same peppery profile.

White

2013 Rocking Horse WO Western Cape
2013 Tin Soldier WO Franschoek

Villiera Wines, Stellenbosch

www.villiera.com

This substantial farm on the edge of the Stellenbosch appellation was purchased by the Grier's in 1983. Of the 400 hectares, around half is dedicated to vineyards with the balance set aside as a wildlife reserve. This is the quintessential family business, with cousins Simon and Jeff working in the vines and cellar respectively, whilst Jeff's sister, Cathy runs the sales and marketing. One the early supporters of 'green' viticulture, the Grier's also run several social upliftment projects off the farm. The name 'Monro' that appears on two of the wines is a reference to the families Scottish heritage; member of the Clan McGregor.

The cellar has always had a reputation for bottle-fermented sparkling wines, representing some 40% of the total production. The 'Tradition' Brut uses 50% Chardonnay as its base, with the red grape component derived from Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and a little Pinotage. Something of a curiosity is the single varietal Pinot Meunier, a limited 'experimental' parcel that was produced in 2010. With four years on its lees, it's a steal. As I write, the wine is still being disgorged, but we will have some available towards the end of the year. Try it before it disappears. The Jasmine is a recent addition to the range and is an off-dry aromatic white based on Muscat (45%), Gewurztraminer and Riesling.



Sparkling

NV Pinot Meunier Brut Cap Classique (**Available Late 2014**)
NV Tradition Brut Cap Classique
NV Tradition Brut Cap Classique (37.5cl)
NV Tradition Brut Cap Classique (150cl)
NV Tradition Rosé Cap Classique
2008 Monro Brut Cap Classique

White

2014 Down to Earth (Sauvignon/Semillon) WO Stellenbosch
2014 Chenin Blanc WO Stellenbosch
2014 Sauvignon Blanc WO Stellenbosch/Elgin
2014 Jasmine (aromatic varieties) WO Stellenbosch
2014 Bush Vine Sauvignon Blanc WO Stellenbosch
2014 Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc WO Stellenbosch

Red

2013 Down to Earth (Touriga/Shiraz) WO Stellenbosch
2012 Merlot WO Stellenbosch
2012 Cabernet Sauvignon WO Stellenbosch
2012 Pinotage WO Stellenbosch
2009 Monro (Cabernet/Merlot) WO Stellenbosch

Sweet

2010 Inspiration NLH (Chenin Blanc) WO Stellenbosch

Yardstick, Stellenbosch

www.yardstickwines.com

Yardstick is a collaboration between Mulderbosch winemaker, Adam Mason and McGrath Collection chef, Peter Tempelhoff. It encompasses two different ranges: the Yardstick wines themselves are based on the two classic Burgundy varieties. The 2013 Chardonnay is sourced from vineyards in Piekenierskloof, Elgin and the Agter Witzenberg (close to Tulbagh and Ceres), whilst the 2013 Pinot Noir is from three sites in Elgin with a further component coming from the same Agter Witzenberg site. The Marvelous (that is the correct spelling) wines are a different proposition. All blends, the Yellow a pioneering (and very clever) blend of Chenin, Clairette, Viognier Semillon and a deft addition of some air-dried Muscat. The Red is based on Syrah and Cinsaut, with a seasoning of Grenache, Mourvèdre and Viognier. The Blue is in deference to the wines of Aquitaine and includes all five of the classic Bordeaux varieties.

Adam states "I love the journey between the primary agricultural product and the final article. In my chosen profession it happens to be following the grape from the vineyard to the bottle, but Marvelous allows the chance to follow food from the garden to the table." The Yardstick and Marvelous wines will be available in the UK in October.

White

2013 Marvelous Yellow (Cape White Blend) WO Western Cape

Red

2013 Marvelous Red (Rhône Blend) WO Western Cape
2013 Marvelous Blue (Bordeaux Blend) WO Western Cape

White

2013 Yardstick Chardonnay WO Western Cape

Red

2013 Yardstick Pinot Noir WO Western Cape



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