

# Boschendal

## Harvest Report 2010

### **Boschendal rises to the challenge of 2010**

*Somehow, new decades are always met with heightened expectation, perhaps none more so than 2010, as the long anticipated Soccer World Cup has finally arrived for South Africa. For the winelands of the Western Cape, the 2010 harvest season will be remembered as challenging, although our Boschendal team is satisfied with their results.*

### **Game on**

A third consecutive cold wet winter made for excellent moisture rich subsoils allowing the vines extended dormancy before late budding began in spring. Just as the vines bloomed in early November, unusually strong winds and rain lashed the vineyards resulting in looser bunches and ultimately a much lighter crop. "We experienced wind speeds of up to 166km in the Helderberg," says Boschendal viticulturalist, Stephan Joubert, "this forceful exposure resulted in 20% to 50% losses in some vineyards."

Fortunately by December the violent wind had tempered making way for a very hot start to January, with good sunlight hours on the ripening berries. "Uneven ripening meant that we had to do a lot of green harvesting," says Stephan, "although challenging, nothing to worry about."

Picking began on 15<sup>th</sup> January with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay for the Boschendal bubbles first to arrive. Cool mornings in February bodes well for the intrinsic pH levels and flavor formation.

A heat wave in late February extending into March suddenly changed the goal posts of an otherwise evenly spread harvest schedule, with a final mad dash as the ripening of the red varieties accelerated. Thinus Kruger, Boschendal's red wine maker stressed the importance of timing this season, "The sweltering conditions that we experienced in February/March made well tended vineyards in the preceding 6 months critical. At the end of the day, the grapes really relied on a good canopy to prevent sun burn in the final stages, yet not too dense preventing movement of air in the bunch zones. Access to water was also crucial."

White wine maker, Lizelle Gerber reports the first Boschendal harvest where the final white varieties arrived at the cellar *after* all the reds were in, "I received Weisser Riesling from Elgin last!" Lizelle has long been eager to add a Riesling to the Boschendal portfolio. "Hold your breath," she says, "This might just be the year!"

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### **Soccer year Sauvignon Blanc**

“2010 really tested the skills of the winemaker,” says Lizelle. “Every block had to be singularly assessed and handled quite differently.” The elevated vineyard sites on the Boschendal farm as well as the cool regional blocks from Stellenbosch and Somerset West succeeded in delivering quality concentrated fruit although much smaller yields.

Boschendal is well known for being on top of the game when it comes to Sauvignon Blanc. Although 2010 wanes somewhat in the shadow of the exceptional show stopping wines of 2009, Lizelle is pleased with the progress of her young wines so far, “The flavours of the wine are very fruit intense and well balanced with good structure.”

Concentrated. Opulent. Rich. Complex.

These are traits that Boschendal Sauvignon Blanc has developed a reputation for.

What is Lizelle’s secret?

First is vineyard site selection. Heavier soils make for greater concentration of fruit and climate plays a big role in achieving optimal ripeness without sacrificing minerality and elegance.

Fermentation with a slow acting yeast strain at higher temperatures helps develop that signature concentration and rich mouth feel.

“Although duplicating the booming fruit intensity, minerality and finesse of 2009 is not likely, I would bravely predict that Boschendal’s 1685 Grande Vin Blanc Sauvignon Blanc 2010 will turn out more elegant.”

### **A good season for Shiraz**

This year, the playing field was changed by the sudden stampede of red varieties in the wake of the heat wave. Thinus Kruger was kept on his toes, as the intensity of harvest consumed the middle weeks of March. By April, it was all over. Boschendal’s signature Shiraz was saved by Stephan’s excellent vineyard management and timing, avoiding sun burn and penalties caused by the heat.

The Shiraz was harvested at an average 25°B from blocks yielding between 7 and 8 tons per hectare. Thinus says, “ The best performing vineyards this year are the cooler sites where there has been good flavour formation in spicy, peppery style so typical of Boschendal.”

In the winery the pumpover regime was adjusted during the latter part of the season to compensate for potentially harsh and aggressive tannins. Thinus is excited about the early expressions of the Shiraz. By all accounts, Boschendal 1685 Shiraz 2010 is pitched to have typical clarity of fruit and spice and be widely appealing.

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### **2010 Season Round up**

Boschendal's Méthode Cap Classique Grande Pavillon Blanc 2010 looks like a vintage that might be talked about when it finally makes its debut in 2 years time. Lizelle brought in the Pinot Noir slightly earlier at around 0.5°B leaner than previously. The base wines have natural elegance, great balance and good structure.

Early signs are that our Chardonnay seems more elegant than previous. The fruit was physiological ripe at an earlier balling. The full potential of this vintage rested in the winery, with phenolic management being critical, and well judged oaking regimes imperative to maintain gracefulness. "Fermentations went all smoothly and there might be something special going to bottle this year," hints Lizelle.

Chenin Blanc has been a star performer this year. Boschendal Chenin Blanc 2009 is still glowing having received one of only 2 gold medals for South Africa in the 2010 Monde Selection International competition recently. "The 2010 Chenin Blanc has amazing fruit intensity and complexity at this early stage. This vintage might just outshine the last!"

Thinus rates this year as a top notch vintage for Cabernet Sauvignon. The young wines in barrel are showing fantastic potential. There is great phenolic ripeness with no sign of any green flavours in the wine. This should be a good year to watch out for.

### **Team Honours**

Winemakers across the Cape certainly met their match in the natural challenges presented this season. This was a year that has required strong teamwork and seamless synchronization between our viticulturalist, winemakers and nature. Boschendal's team are confident that after hard work and harsh conditions, every goal was achieved, every corner covered and the wines will be top quality in Vintage 2010.