



# BOSCHENDAL

*Founded 1685*

## **BOSCHENDAL HARVEST REPORT 2016**

Another very long harvest for **Lizelle Gerber of Boschendal** in Franschhoek. She started with the Pinot Noir for the Cap Classique base wines from the Boschendal property. Things got into full swing a week later, on 20 January, when Sauvignon Blanc grapes arrived from Boschendal's own vineyards, as well as Durbanville and Stellenbosch. Chardonnay grapes followed and it was only in early April, nearly 100 days later, that the harvest ended with the arrival of wrinkled and botrytised grapes, destined to be turned into a Noble Late Harvest under the label of this famous wine estate.

But Boschendal wines are not made exclusively from grapes grown at Boschendal anymore. Growth in the consumer demand has necessitated this. An increasing percentage of the fruit is sourced from Stellenbosch, Somerset West, Durbanville, and Darling — areas that complement the styles produced at Boschendal. And also now from Elgin, a district that has become very special to Lizelle and her team. So much so that a flagship range of wines has been developed called The Appellation Series, bearing labels that point to a cooler climate basin of vineyards. This Elgin range benefits from its close proximity to a natural airconditioner, the Atlantic Ocean. The winemaker is confident the Elgin class of 2016 will show pronounced elegance with extreme finesse. It seems the Elgin area wasn't much influenced by the heat spikes in the rest of the Western Cape, and expectations are high that the quality of the fruit will be exceptional.





Some of the Sauvignon Blanc is looking good too. “The fire on the Simonsberg in January came very close to our vineyards on the Priel side of Boschendal,” as Gerber recalls, “but the South Easter was blowing like crazy, blowing the fire away from us. We did not lose any vineyards and were fortunate not to suffer any smoke taint. We feel for the vineyard owners on the other side of the Simonsberg that had real damage.”

It is a promising year for Riesling, as it is for Pinot Noir — riper but more delicate. Moreover, for the second year, some Marsanne was made using grapes from Stellenbosch. “In the magnificent wine-lands of South Africa, we do not have disastrous seasons as they regularly experience in parts of Europe,” smiles Gerber. “Rather, there are years when certain varieties excel more than others.”

“Maybe one can talk about the best vintage when all of the varieties end up being great, which during the past ten years, in my opinion, were in 2007, 2009 and 2015. In the dry, hot vintage of 2016, the farmers who had irrigation were far better off than those who did not. With proper water management, the irrigated vineyards did not stress as much or as early. At Boschendal we are also fortunate to be able to source grapes from such a vast area — a great advantage when trying to maintain consistency.”

Nevertheless, 2016 was demanding at times. “We are used to hot and dry Februaries, but this vintage was hot and dry from late December,” says Gerber. “The acidity/pH balance was not always ideal. We had to make quite a few adjustments, mostly before fermentation, and probably the biggest challenge was pressing the grapes as soon as possible. Most of the white grapes came in over a two-week period and there were nine or ten particularly stressful days during which we were on 24-hour shifts.”

**Richard Duckitt, winemaker responsible for Boschendal Red,** says that he will remember the 2016 harvest mainly for its early start and the very small crops from Darling and the Swartland. He has high hopes for the vintage, expecting elegant wines that are not forced, not overripe, and not ‘too much’. Harvesting earlier meant lower sugar and therefore lower potential alcohol — but still rich and structured. The colour and concentration are good, and with some of the batches there is the promise of fine, chalky tannins with good mouthfeel.

“Though production at most of the vineyards was down, Boschendal volumes were not affected,” Duckitt reports. “Among the challenges of the vintage were the tiny green berries (millerandage) among the good ones on certain varietals and the raisin sunburn on others, but thankfully we have a de-stemmer/sorter that can remove these before fermentation. It has made a huge impact and is definitely an advantage to have in our winery.”

Exciting things are going on in the red wine cellar including trials of barrel rolling instead of punch-downs during the fermentation. Bordeaux varieties are where Boschendal's strengths lie — Cab Sauv, Merlot, Cab Franc, Petit Verdot, and Malbec. Although there is also an old-vine Shiraz (planted in 1978) that has gone through a natural fermentation in barrel which is looking really exciting.

Moreover, there are three new blends in the making that will soon be released in the classic 330 Boschendal bottle.



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