

BRINGING LIGHT TO LIFE

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The alluvial river soils, the limestone hills and clay soils of the valley's diverse geology express the versatility of terroir sought-after by the grape growers and winemakers of Robertson Winery. If you keep an eye out, you might spot the names of renowned vineyards like Almond Grove, King's River, Retreat, Phanto Ridge, Prospect and Wolfkloof – the source of these highly-rated vineyard selection wines. Around here, they don't have to make up new names for a wine label – each of the wines evokes a sense of origin and authenticity.

Take Rupert de Vries, a high-flying accountant who swapped life in the fast lane in Johannesburg for the tranquillity of a wine farm in the Robertson Wine Valley. Standing in his acclaimed Phanto Ridge vineyard in the foothills of the Langeberg on the Breede River, he declares, 'We don't do this for the money. It's for the way of life.'

To preserve the distinct character of these sites, the grapes are hand-harvested in small baskets and vinified separately in a small, boutique cellar within Robertson Winery. Winemaker Jacques Roux comments, 'It's every winemaker's dream to work in this way. We work closely with the grower to produce low yields of small berries with concentrated varietal flavour. Then, we vinify the wine in small batches in open fermentation tanks to extract fuller colour, flavour and tannins. We select only the best oak barrels to give the vineyard selection range special treatment.'

The result is that all six wines in the vineyard selection range are highly-rated by connoisseurs. They were all awarded four highly-prized stars in a series of rave reviews in *John Platter's South African Wines Guide 2008* – with Retreat Sauvignon Blanc and the flagship No 1 Constitution Road Shiraz winning 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Taste the Vineyard

Phanto Ridge Pinotage 2006.

Bouquet: Rich plum, mulberry and savoury aromas.

Taste: Soft ripe fruit and wood are well-balanced with spicy cedar tannins and an opulent mouth-feel.

With food: A great match for Karoo lamb or roast pork.

Prospect Hill Cabernet Sauvignon 2005.

Bouquet: Intense blackcurrant and brambly wild fruit.

Taste: Rich cassis and chocolate with liquorice notes, ripe, supple tannins and lingering spicy finish.

With food: Roast beef, porcini risotto or ostrich carpaccio.

Wolfkloof Shiraz 2005.

Bouquet: Mulberry, cinnamon and clove aromas.

Taste: Blackberries and peppery spice combine with soft, ripe tannins and oak.

With food: smoked sausage, confit of duck or venison potjie.

Kings River Chardonnay 2006.

Bouquet: Rich and yeasty with classic citrus character.

Taste: Leesy, brioche character with rich mouthfeel, lime and vanilla.

With food: Ideal with spicy Asian fare or rich, creamy pasta dishes.

WE CLIMBED UP PROSPECT HILL TO A SCENIC OUTLOOK OVER A GREEN SEA OF VINEYARDS IN THE ROBERTSON WINE VALLEY. THE PANORAMA OF VINEYARDS, WINE CELLARS, FYNBOS AND MOUNTAINS IS SPECTACULAR. WE WATCHED THE HARVEST UNDERWAY, THE PICKERS WORKING THEIR WAY ALONG ROWS OF VINES DOWN TO WHERE THE COGMANSKLOOF JOINS THE BREEDE RIVER. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BANKS IN THE FOOTHILLS LAY PHANTO RIDGE, ONE OF SIX HIGHLY-PRIZED VINEYARDS WHICH GROW THE SPECIALLY SELECTED GRAPES FOR THE PREMIUM VINEYARD SELECTION RANGE OF ROBERTSON WINERY.



Retreat Sauvignon Blanc 2007.

Bouquet: Grassy nettle and fig.

Taste: Herbaceous fruit, flinty minerality and zesty natural acidity with excellent length.

With food: Great with sushi and seafood.

Almond Grove Weisser Riesling Noble Late Harvest.

Bouquet: Orchard of aromatic fruits.

Taste: Dried apricots, almonds and honey with aftertaste of ripe peaches.

With food: Perfect as an aperitif with cheese and figs in syrup or almond torte.

Lighten Up

Robertson Winery has also launched a light varietal wine range made from the 2008 vintage – Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc and Pinotage Rose. This innovative new style of wine offers the health conscious wine-lover a wine with fewer calories and lighter alcohol levels, without sacrificing quality or taste.

The single varietal light range from Robertson Winery breaks the mould. Traditionally, light wines in South Africa have been nondescript blends. 'But why should the consumer compromise on flavour profile, simply because they are searching for lower calories and alcohol levels?' asks marketing manager Barry Kok.

All of the light wines are unwooded, allowing for full expression of the classic fruit profile of each variety. Winemaker Francois Weich explains, 'The off-dry Chenin Blanc and the semi-sweet Pinotage Rose both have lower alcohol levels, around 9% compared to the normal 12 or 13%. The extra-light

Sauvignon Blanc is a dry wine so both the alcohol and the sugar levels are low, resulting in a third less calories. It's an ideal wine if you enjoy a glass of wine every day, are on diet or at a party.'

The versatility of its vineyards enables the winemakers at Robertson Winery to make a range of wines that suits every occasion and lifestyle. Winemaker Francois and viticulturalist Brian Stipp select specific vineyards that can be harvested early but still have the same ripe fruit characteristics and classic taste profile of the wines of Robertson Winery. They looked for vineyards planted on marginal soils that ripen slowly, and have naturally low sugars, so the fruit flavours are complex at an early stage. Bottled under screw-cap to retain all the flavour, the new range includes:

Extra Light Sauvignon Blanc Dry 2008.

Bouquet: Crisp, green grass.

Taste: Refreshing, zesty with hints of freshly-cut grass, green pepper and nettles.

With food: An aperitif on its own or with oysters.

Light Chenin Blanc Off-dry 2008.

Bouquet: Tropical with apples.

Taste: Upfront tropical fruit with floral notes.

With food: Great with sushi or smoked salmon.

Light Pinotage Rose Semi-Sweet 2008.

Bouquet: Upfront red berry fruit.

Taste: Juicy, strawberry flavours.

With food: An aperitif on its own or with finger foods.

For further information visit www.robertsonwinery.co.za □