



NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2008

FOCUS ON: ANNEMIE GROBELAAR, QUALITY CONTROL MANAGER, BOTTLING

Annemie Grobelaar's sole function is to make sure the customer buys a safe, top quality wine. To this end she administers all the quality systems already in place at the winery including ISO, Haccp and BRC. "There's a lot of paperwork for each system, and I have to constantly make sure it is all up to date as we get audited regularly," she explains. "No bottle of wine leaves the premises without my approval.

"I'm also the Customer Complaints Officer," she explains, "so if the customer has a problem, his or her query comes straight to me and I make sure both the customer is happy, and the problem is sorted out."

Annemie was born in nearby Montague, but grew up in Pretoria. After school she studied for a B.Sc. Agric in Food Science and Technology at the University of Pretoria before joining food retailer Pick 'n Pay as a technologist. She moved down to the Cape and worked for several other companies before moving out to Robertson when she married Nelian Grobelaar, an accountant at the local branch of a large accounting firm. The couple have a baby girl, Mia, now 6 months. "I love living in Robertson," she says, "it's slow and friendly and peaceful, I could never be a city slicker."



HARVEST REPORT

The 2008 harvest got off to a poor start with unseasonal humidity and rain that got the farmers worried. However, this soon blew over and according to the Briaan, the viticulturist, the quality was 'surprisingly good'.

"Fortunately the Robertson Valley has a Disease Warning System," explains Briaan the viticulturist. This system warns the farmer several days ahead as to what the weather is expected to do so he can make informed decisions about whether to spray or when to harvest and so avoid problems.



Overall the harvest is about 10 days late, which has counteracted the recent trend of earlier and earlier harvests, due to the relatively cooler temperatures, which allowed the grapes to ripen at a slower pace.

"Everything is very late this year," says Jacques, the Vineyard Selection winemaker, "but we expect to have all the grapes in the cellar by the first week in April.

"We started off with the Sauvignon Blanc on Retreat. We picked half of the vineyard first at a lower balling, and then waited 3 days before picking the other half to allow more tropical flavours into the wine. We have also barrel-fermented a portion of the wine to add more body. I'm really excited to taste the end result as the wine in the tanks is tasting fantastic."

Jacques continues: "We fermented the King's River Chardonnay only with the natural occurring yeast from the vineyard and it went off without a hitch which I am very pleased about. All the reds are looking great so I think we can look forward to some stunning wines."

WACKY WINE WEEKEND

MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE

Rupert and Liz de Vries's picturesque farm on the banks of the Breede River is the perfect venue for the Robertson Winery Mountain Bike Race planned for the Wacky Wine Weekend on Saturday, 7 June 2008.



While their Phanto Ridge vineyards are situated along the river, the farm runs up the slopes of rugged hills and through Karoo Fynbos that is the mountain bike riders' paradise.

The race, which has been accredited by the PPA, sports 3 different routes: 12km, 29km and the 42km route.

Some pointers:

- The 42km route is a rewarding route for the fittest of the fit, as this route includes challenging and technical mountain climbing and 'downhills'. Please note that only experienced riders should attempt the long route.
- The 29km route is an enjoyable scramble through Fynbos Karoo, hilly sections and vineyards. It is not as technical as the 42km route, but is also very rewarding. Expect a combination of jeep and single-track sections on both.
- The 12km short route consists only of jeep tracks and is suitable for children and novices.

This funride forms part of the Wacky Wine Weekend Festival in Robertson. Each participant will receive either a bottle of Robertson wine or grape juice on completion of the race. An adult must accompany all children under 10 years. Standard PPA fees do not apply for this event. The Western Province MTB Cross Country 2008 Final Champs will take place on the same day.

To enter online go to our Robertson Winery website - www.robertsonwinery.co.za - this will link you to PPA. Early morning entries will open at the start on race day at 07h30.

Prize Giving - 12h00

Three lucky draw R1500 Maverick Cycle Gift Vouchers Speedy prize giving at 12h00, including lucky draws Cash prizes for first three men and women in each category.



MILES OF SMILES

Once again Robertson Winery is organizing the Miles of Smiles which consists of a half marathon, a 10km race and a 5km fun run. The race, which starts and ends at the Robertson Winery cellar, begins from 08:00 on Saturday, 7 June 2008.

As usual there are goody bags and fantastic prizes so make sure you get your entry in by 20 May 2008. For more information visit www.robertsonwinery.co.za.

STRONG MAN COMPETITION

South Africa's six strongest men will be taking part in the Strong Man Competition held at the cellar also on the Saturday of the WWW, "including the world's second strongest man", says Hans Lizemore the cellar's Technical Manager, who is organizing the event once again this year.



The men will be performing similar feats to last year, starting at 09:30 and ending at around 14:00 with a break for lunch. "The public is also very welcome to come and try their hand," says Hans, but he looked doubtful as to whether anyone else could pick up 200kg wine barrels or pull the cellar's truck.

The Strong Men will also be visiting the school in the area to show off their amazing strength and promote their "Don't do drugs" message. They were a great hit last year and the local children and looking forward to their visit.



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