

ESTABLISHED 1941

# ROBERTSON WINERY



SMALL TOWN, BIG HEART.

The year 2004 will go down in the annals as a blessed one for Robertson Winery. With excellent growth recorded both in the local and international market; we posted particularly good figures in Sweden, Norway, Canada and the USA.

Our contribution to the domestic economy, both in terms of increased international trade and job creation, was rewarded by the Department of Trade & Industry, who rated us one of South Africa's top 300 companies - no mean feat when compared to the numerous large and listed companies going great guns in the cities around South Africa.

From a quality point of view, Robertson Winery has also performed exceptionally well. This year saw our first 5 star rating in the Platter Guide for the Wide River Noble Late Harvest 2002 as well as a Veritas gold medal for the 2004 vintage. We proudly launched our first flagship wine, Number 1 Constitution Road Shiraz 2002 that was very, very well received by critics and consumers alike. More about these two star wines later on.

I'd also like to welcome Jerry Stephan on board. Jerry joined our USA sales team earlier this month and will be responsible for Robertson sales in Florida, Illinois, New York, Texas and Wisconsin. We wish you the best of luck and great success as we venture into these new markets together.

From all the staff at Robertson Winery we wish you joy and happiness over the festive season and we hope that 2005 will be a happy and prosperous one too.

Kind regards,

Johann Meissenheimer  
Marketing Manager

## NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2004

### FOCUS ON: LOLLIE LOUWRENS

Lollie Louwrens' serious demeanour belies a quirky sense of humour and a wealth of experience garnered from years of traveling and working in wineries across the world.

With a name like Lollie, one must expect someone slightly offbeat, but he was originally christened a rather respectable Johannes. He grew up in Cape Town so never had any real exposure to the wine industry, but from a young age he decided that winemaking would be his career.

Once he had qualified, Lolly embarked on a winemaking career that would take him from a humble co-operative in Stellenbosch to prestigious cellars in Germany, California, Burgundy and New Zealand. "My overseas trips really opened my eyes," says Lollie, "seeing how other people do things gives you new ideas and teaches you that there is not always only one way of doing things."

However, in 1995 Lollie married Helene and settled down to family life in the idyllic village of Robertson and his job as chief winemaker at the Robertson Winery. This job harnesses all the varied experiences Lolly had enjoyed previously as the winery produces such a wide range of wines on varying scales from almost boutique quantities to bulk volumes.

Lolly is justifiably proud of the 5 stars awarded his Wide River Noble Late Harvest 2001 in the latest edition of the Platter Wine Guide, South Africa's definitive guide to South African wines. Around 4 000 wines are submitted for tasting by the Platter Guide's prestigious panel. Of these wines, only 17 wines were deemed good enough to be awarded the elusive 5 star rating, and the Wide River Noble Late Harvest 2001 was rated amongst that number, a first for Robertson Winery.



*Lollie Louwrens*

"Making Noble Lates is a great challenge," says Lourens, who has in the past won several prestigious awards for his Noble Latest, "you take a great risk leaving the grapes on the vine, and sometimes Noble Rot just doesn't set in, then you lose everything. And then once you've got the grapes in the cellar they're difficult to press and the thick, murky juice is also tricky to ferment. But when you've got that liquid gold in the bottle, it's more than worth the sweat."

The Wide River Noble Late Harvest is a full-bodied wine, which exhibits rich flavours of dried apricots, almonds and honey. On the palate the wine is delicate but concentrated with a fresh acidity balancing the sweetness and creating a smooth finish. This is the perfect wine for Christmas; given as a gift or served chilled for Christmas dinner as a dessert wine with strong cheeses, ginger crisps or a fruit tart.

#### **NEWS FLASH**

We are proud to announce that the 2003 vintage of Robertson Almond Grove Noble Late Harvest has just won a gold medal at the South African Veritas Awards proving that Robertson Winery continues to produce consistent quality. The words "Almond Grove" have been added to the label in honour of the farm on which the grapes are grown.

#### **SMALL TOWN BIG HEART GETS A NEW FACE**

Once a year the Robertson Winery magazine advertising campaign is refreshed to show other aspects, and other faces of the Robertson family. Few consumers realize that all the people in the print advertisements are real, live Robertsonians who all work on the various member farms or at the cellar.

This annual photographic jamboree has become quite popular with staff and farmers lining up to get the chance to appear in their very own advertisement. This year the focus was on Nando and Sylvia Baard originally from the farm Almond Grove.



*Photo shoot at Prospect Hill farm. with Nando and Sylvia*

*from the farm Almond Grove.*

The first execution shows a traditional Robertson family lunch, which took place on the Baard's stoep with various families invited. Unfortunately the Baards didn't have a table big enough for the party of 22, but General Manager, Bowen Botha lives just across the road and with his family of 7 children, he is well equipped for large parties, and his self-made dining room table was hastily carried over.

Getting 22 people to all smile at the same time might seem tricky, but it seems to come naturally to these jovial folk and the photoshoot was all over very quickly, leaving them to enjoy the food and wine.

The next execution took a little longer, however. It featured Nando and Sylvia Baard waving at the farm gate and for some reason things just didn't work out as planned. The couple stood there for hours as the photographers and stylist fiddled with light metres, scrims and polaroids trying to get the perfect pic with the Baard couple waving and waving most patiently. Eventually, after 2 hours, the shoot was in the bag and the Baard's could put their arms down: "I don't think I'll be waving at anybody for at least a month now," said Sylvia with a wry smile.

These two executions are currently being featured in local magazines with more to come early next year.

### **ROBERTSON WINERY RELEASES: NUMBER ONE CONSTITUTION ROAD SHIRAZ 2002**

In 1941 a group of grape growers in the Robertson Valley purchased an historic, abandoned missionary church to house their new cellar, calling it the Robertson Winery. The address was no.1 Constitution Road.



Today, much larger buildings surround that quaint little structure, where all the Robertson Wines are created, yet the address remains the same. The town was first laid out in 1853 and named after the Scottish minister in charge of the parish, Dr William Robertson. The road running past the church was called Constitution Road to commemorate the granting of the first British constitution to the Cape Colony in 1852 by Sir George Grey, the governor of the Cape at the time.

This year we commemorate a different constitution, that of the New South Africa established in 1994, marking the advent of democracy in this country. This constitution has been praised around the world for being the most progressive and inclusive of its kind.

Robertson Winery's entry into the international market began around the same time and since then this progressive winery's increase in quality and quantity has been remarkable. Last year, they launched the Vineyard Selection, a range of premium single-vineyard wines that have impressed across the board achieving excellent ratings in the Platter Guide, the Robertson Winery Retreat Sauvignon Blanc 2003 and the Robertson Winery Wolfkloof Shiraz 2002 making it onto the SAA First Class wine list, and proving conclusively that Robertson Winery can produce top quality wines.

This year Robertson Winery has gone one step further and released their flagship wine to commemorate its foray into the international market and salute South Africa's achievement over the past decade. Aptly named Number One Constitution Road, this 2002 Shiraz wine encapsulates not only the supreme quality that this winery is capable of, but also its Proudly South African status. The wine, which has already won a gold medal at the Michelangelo Awards in Johannesburg, was sold out on the local market within days of its release and is doing very well internationally.

This limited release wine was made by Jacques Roux and represents his barrel selection of the winery's top Shiraz vineyards. The wine was fermented using only the grape's naturally occurring wild yeast in traditional open cement tanks to allow maximum skin contact. After malo-lactic fermentation the wine was matured in French oak barrels for 24 months.

The wine is a deep, rich purple colour with intense aromas redolent of blackberries with seductive spicy fruit and black pepper. The velvety palate displays supple tannins and well-integrated oak. Roux feels the wine is ready to drink now but will age beautifully over the next 5 to 8 years. He suggests pairing it with full-flavoured red meat dishes like a pepper steak or roast lamb studded with garlic and rosemary.

## EXPORT REPORT



Jenny Ratcliffe

Jenny Ratcliffe and Karin Retief returned recently from a European trip where they attended the SA Generic Tasting in Copenhagen, Stockholm and London.

According to Jenny, all were a great success with a remarkable turnout. "There is big support for South African wines on all levels," she says, "as our products generally represent good value at entry level, and good quality at the top end of the market."

While Robertson Winery is well established in Sweden and the UK, Denmark is a new market and Jenny was particularly impressed with the organization of the tasting in Copenhagen, which was hosted by the SA Ambassador himself, Steve Gawe.

The export department is also pleased to report its first order from Japan. "We've been working at establishing relationships in this market for some time now," said Jenny, "so I am pleased that we've finally landed a substantial order. This not only marks the start of an exciting relationship in Japan but is also part of Robertson Winery's new focus on the East, which is still somewhat uncharted territory for South African wines in general.



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