



NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2006

FOCUS ON: ANKIA COETZER

Ankia Coetzer is just what Robertson Winery needs: bright, beautiful, enthusiastic and hard working, and what's more, she grew up in the Robertson Valley.

But, she hastens to add; she is the local minister's daughter, and NOT a wine farmer's daughter. She was appointed on merit, and it's not hard to see why. Besides growing up in the valley, and attending the local school, Ankia studied for her B Comm degree in Marketing Management at Stellenbosch University, just around the corner from the Robertson Winery marketing office.



While studying she earned pocket money by waitressing and baby-sitting, and once she had graduated she headed for Taiwan where she taught English to the locals for a year to pay off her study loan. In fact she worked at three schools, starting at 8am every morning with a kindergarten class and ending at around 9pm teaching children of all ages, six days a week.

And it's a good thing that she's used to working hard as she jumped in at the deep end when she took up her job at the marketing office. Her official title is Marketing Assistant, a position she took over from Gaenor Loubser who was promoted to Junior Brand Manager late last year.

Ankia's main function is to assist Marketing Director Johann Meissenheimer with the day to day running of the marketing department. "And he's BUSY," she says, wide-eyed. She organizes all the functions, trade shows and media days, manages the budgets, supervises the point of sale material and fields all queries. So it's her friendly voice you will hear at the end of the telephone line and her efficiency you might notice behind the scenes.

"I am passionate about wine," says Ankia, eyes sparkling, "and I always hoped I would end up in the wine industry, I just can't believe it happened so quickly and is so close to home." Of her plans for the future: "I want to grow with Robertson Winery, it's such a vibrant company and there is so much development that I can see a lot of scope for myself.

And grow she will, for this small lady has a big heart.

ROBERTSON WINERY LAUNCHES NEW PACKAGING

Robertson Winery's new look reflects its strong presence in the market as well as its superb quality at all price points.

Robertson Winery's existing packaging was developed over time for specific opportunities. As new products were produced their packaging was developed independently. So while each brand looked great, they had little connection with each other. Consequently, the consumer had no idea that the Old Chapel range was related to the Robertson Natural Sweet range, or to the top end Vineyard Selection, for that matter.

For these reasons, Marketing Director Johann Meissenheimer undertook the daunting task of investigating ways of creating a uniform brand identity that would work for all the ranges of wines, on all tiers of the market.

Because Robertson Winery is such a long name, it was decided to place it on two lines, using the initials RW as the logo, and this was used on all the packaging through the entire range.



The Old Chapel range was rejuvenated to include the new Robertson Winery corporate identity.



The the same shape label and bottle was retained on the Natural Sweet range, the logo was changed.



Similarly, the varietal range label retained its easily identifiable oval label, but it now features the new Robertson Winery logo.



The vineyard selection was also redesigned to conform to the rest of the range.



For the first time the entire range will be supported with an overall advertising campaign from the bag-in-box right to the flagship No.1 Constitution Road Shiraz, strengthening the position of the brand in the market and increasing its overall presence.

Watch out for the exciting new advertisements in local magazines, and there are also a number of fabulous competitions in the pipeline.

HARVEST UPDATE

Harvest time is always exciting, especially in a place like Robertson where the whole valley is involved in some way or the other. Everyone is talking sugar levels, weather predictions, varietals, pumps and presses. Driving into the village you are very likely to get stuck behind a load or two of grapes on their way to the presses, and you'll pass rows and rows of lush green vineyards just waiting to be relieved of their grapes.

Walking through these vineyards with Viticulturist Briaan Stipp is an educational experience. To the untrained eye, all the vineyards look more or less the same, but not to Briaan. He has devised an intricate grading system for all the Robertson Winery vineyards dotted around the valley. Each one is carefully assessed throughout the year and given a rating which dictates exactly what wine its grapes will be made into.

As early as June, Briaan will walk through each vineyard with the farmer and assess its potential. In October Briaan will advise again regarding the management of the canopy. For instance, a high grade vineyard has to have its yield restricted to increase the quality of the grapes, where a lower grade vineyard needs to look at quantity too, and therefore might trim the leaf canopy differently.

He will also advise regarding irrigation and crop control during the following months so that when the harvest starts at the end of January, the vines are producing their optimum. It's then merely a case of keeping a close eye on the development of each vineyard and regularly assessing the sugar levels in the grapes so that they can be harvested at just the right time.

Once the grapes arrive in the cellar, Briaan hands over the reins to the winemaking team. And this is where the adrenalin starts pumping.

The noise inside the cellar is deafening, grapes are being tipped into the crusher, presses are running and pipes snake between tanks, pumping one batch of wine off the lees, another into barrels, still more into open fermentors. "You have to keep your wits about you," grins a surprisingly calm looking Jacques Roux, winemaker for the top tier wines, as he synchronises the progression of various wines.

The last batch of the Kings' River Chardonnay was just being pressed while the Retreat Sauvignon Blanc was fast coming to the end of its fermentation process in the tank. Further into the bowels of the cellar, the first batches of Wolfkloof Shiraz were being matured, some in barrel, some in tank, and some with oak chips - all experiments that need careful monitoring



24 hours a day.

"We have three teams that work day and night," explains Jacques, who arrives at work at 6:00 every morning and only leaves when the various processes he has set in motion that day have been completed. "I only have one chance, you see, if I mess up there are no more grapes out there for me to get a second chance. So I have to make sure that everything happens perfectly all of the time."

The winemakers agree that the 2006 harvest will go down as an excellent vintage. While the strong winds caused some uneven ripening, it also eliminated all threat of disease. Relatively cool temperatures caused slow ripening and minimal stress on the vines. So make sure you have space in your cellar for the first of the 2006 release around July this year, they're going to be worth keeping.

OLD CHAPEL COMPETITION COMES JUST IN TIME FOR WINNER

Renette Piva was packing for Perth when she was surprised with the news that she had won the Old Chapel wine competition.

The competition was all about bringing the 'small town to the big city' and offered the winner a party worth R15 000 including the Old Chapel range of wines.



However, things were not so simple for this competition winner as she was about to leave the country. After a whirlwind romance with an Australian that she had met at a cricket test match, Renette had married Ozzie Drew Piva on 29 November, sold her house and most of her possessions and was heading for Australia along with her new husband and her two sons. But after some quick deliberation it was decided that this was the perfect opportunity to throw a farewell bash for Renette's family and friends.

An events co-ordinator was hired and a venue was found in double quick time. The Villa Toscana in Summerstrand was elaborately decorated with beautiful flowers and drapes and a four-course meal was served to the lucky fifteen people that were invited to share in the prize. Each guest received a beautiful jeweled photo frame in which Renette put a photograph of the departing family. The music played and the wine flowed and much fun was had by all - the perfect send off for the new family!

FUN RUN TO MAKE YOU SMILE

While many would think that smiling and running were hardly bedfellows, the Robertson Winery Miles of Smiles 24km race from Bonnievale to Robertson is arguably one of the prettiest in the country and would definitely elicit a smile or two from even the toughest of runners. The race starts just outside the picturesque village of Bonnievale and follows the R317 through several of Robertson's more famous wine cellars ending up at the Robertson Winery cellar.



The race will form part of the Wacky Wine Weekend on 3 and 4 June 2006, which has become an annual event in the Robertson Valley when all the cellars offer special events and everyone has a lot of fun.

For more information on the race visit their website (which will be live from 1 April) at www.milesofsmiles.co.za.



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