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Press Release

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BREATH OF FRESH AIR AT VETERAN RIEBEEK CELLARS



South Africa, Swartland, May 2007; Riebeek Cellars is a veteran farm on the Swartland map, having been established in 1941. Much has changed since the early days and in recent years the cellar has made a name for itself not only in the Kasteelberg region but in the Western Cape and upcountry as a cellar that produces highly accessible but quality wines that reflect the character of the Riebeek Valley: informal, friendly, down to earth yet creative and innovative.

The newly-launched labels give expression to the vision of keeping a hold on tradition yet moving on with the times and drawing consumers to a wine which looks as good as it tastes.

Since winemaker Zakkie Bester joined the cellar in 1999 the wines have been taken a step further with a major replanting programme that has seen the appointment of a dedicated viticulturalist in Hanno van Schalkwyk and Zakkie's two right hands: Eric Saayman, senior winemaker and Alecia Hamman, who is responsible for red wine production.

Sixty shareholders from 42 farms now produce grapes for the cellar and the replanting of several varietals has brought forth some exciting new wines to the stable, such as Tinta Barocca as well as the promise of Viognier, Malbec, Cabernet Franc and Tinta Roriz, from which it is foreseen that

future single varietal wines or blends will be produced.

Almost everybody in the valley and certainly, Chenin Blanc aficionados, know about Riebeek Cellars' superlative example of this varietal - which is the winery's most popular wine.

But Zakkie is enthused not only about this engagingly crisp and charming white but all the wines at his cellar and says: "All our varietals are at a point where they are very good. I want to make really quality wines for everybody and that's where blends come in - that's what I want to achieve now."

To this end, Zakkie says he is planning a Rhone styled blend, hence the planting of viognier, mourvedre and carignan. "But in general all the wines here hopefully express the uniqueness of the region where temperatures are fairly mild in winter and hot in summer, allowing for full, ripe flavours. "This is a beautiful valley and village with lots of enjoyment and pleasure and we try to bottle that in our wine."

THE LABELS:

The new labels for the Riebeek Cellars range, says Zakkie, attempt to be "informally formal". The previous labels had been in existence since 2001 and "we felt that we needed a new look to do justice to our wines and to make the right impression on the shelves - now the labels match up to the quality of the wine".

"This new design indicates a classy yet accessible wine - again reflecting the valley which is serious about quality yet at the same time informal in lifestyle."

The front label describes each cultivar in a zesty, handwritten style - cheeky and insouciant, something akin to the valley, while the back label with its description of the wine written in crooked, uneven lines further reflects the feeling of relaxation, says Zakkie.

THE WINES:

A selection of ranges to meet all wine lovers' tastes are reflected in four different tiers of wines. Top of the range is the Reserve Selection which as the name denotes, is the best quality for each varietal produced in that specific vintage. Some are single vineyard selections or a blend from various producers; whichever produces the best quality. All are barrel matured and testimony to the excellence is the fact that they have received several local and international awards.

New on the market is the Limited Release range which includes hand-crafted wines made in small volumes, and cultivated in an experimental way.

For example, the Swartland has a unique selling point with its cultivation of Tinta Barocca and this cultivar is one of the wines in this range, here quite heavily wooded resulting in a somewhat gamey and savoury wine. Also part of the range is the exclusive 2005 Pinotage, a wine to be taken seriously, fermented in barrels and produced in small quantities.

A Few Good Men again offers wines from selected farms and vineyards. The range has made a considerable imprint on the market since having been introduced in 1999, and like the Reserve Selection, all wines are barrel-matured. One of the success stories in the range is the Chardonnay, consistently offering up top-notch quality.

The Riebeek Collection can best be considered as the everyday drinking range and like the other ranges, makes full use of the diverse terroir and micro-climates of the region. Says Zakkie: "This is the most popular range of our wines and the quintessential expression of a typical Riebeek Valley wine".

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