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MISE EN BOUTEILLE - A WINE BLOG

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Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Haskell Vineyards - A rising star in Stellenbosch, Part III

Have you followed my posts on **Haskell Vineyards** and **Dombeya Wines**? If not; please do! Even better; taste the wines! **Rianie Strydom** has proven her skills in creating excellent wines at reasonable prices and today I was given the chance to check out the premium wines signed Rianie. And meet her in person!



Rianie is such an easy person to talk to; non-coquettish, comprehensive (*you know what I mean Rianie!*) and humble. It's like I've met her before. Rianie gives me a tasting of the wines I haven't had the opportunity to sample yet; the award winning **2007 Pillars Syrah**, the **2007 Aeon Syrah** and the new project - the Bordeaux blend **2007 Haskell IV**.

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MAD ABOUT MADEIRA

Do you keep a bottle of this at home? - 14 February 2011



Pillars

Before checking out my tasting notes on the wines please note these are all limited production wines at the moment. Don't let this discourage your attempts in finding a bottle - it's simply worth the struggle!

Tasting note on the 2007 Haskell Vineyards Pillars Syrah



Finally I get to taste the acclaimed Pillars! 2007 is Rianie's debut and the Syrah from a vineyard around 200 meters above sea level is only planted in 2002. That obviously, is worth keeping in mind when talking about old vines versus young. For a closer look on the terroir details visit the [website](#).

Dark red color. Restrained bouquet with notes of cherries, currant, a lovely violet scent, pepper, meat and careful oak treatment. There's plenty of stuffing on the nose just waiting to explode. Although it indicates it's ready for consumption the taste indicates another thing. Sure, the tannins are velvety but at the same time compact. The fruitiness is classy and both restrained and seductive at the same time. Violets, cherries, a touch of raspberries, pepper, bayleaves, humus and toasted oak. Great concentration although elegance is the wine's trademark. Awesome length with pure seductive fruit. Perhaps it is good I don't have any bottles of this one? I would have popped it way too early! Ten years is probably no match for the Pillars. **(94 points)**

Tasting note on the 2007 Aeon Syrah



Monday, February 21, 2011

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5 quick ones to Peter Reutter - 06 February 2011

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Nostalgia is great if you lack patience... - 15 February 2011 - Niklas Jörgensen

Dude, where's my vinegar? - 11 February 2011 - Niklas Jörgensen

Wine recommendation of the week: get to know yourself better! - 21 January 2011 - Niklas Jörgensen

MISE EN BOUTEILLE

Roberto Cipresso; squaring the circle

10 signs why Cheetah fur isn't the thing....

High-altitude Müller-Thurgau is, is....awesome!

Words come easy...

Charles Smith; you rock!

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Able Grape



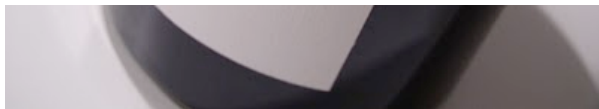
Blogroll - English

The Wine Detective

Wine Relief – a couple of Cape crusaders - Today I'm presenting a Sip & Savour South African wine lunch at Tamarind restaurant so, with the Cape in mind, here are two top tips which form part of Mar...

1 hour ago

STEVE HEIMOFF | WINE



More clay in the soil here and hence another style of wine compared to the Pillars. Also, Rianie adds 5% Mourvedre to the Aeon. More new oak is also used, 65%, but still, it's not a wine dominated by the barriques - not even at youth!

Darker red color. At first confusing, Rianie suspects bottle shock, but slowly it regains. I would love to try a bottle in better condition to fully comment on the Aeon, but no doubt there was a lot going on in this. Compact fruit, more dark berries to it, white pepper, funkier nose but still with that fine violet scent, reminiscent of a Northern Rhone Syrah. Less elegant than the Pillars, this has a more generous structure, rougher tannins but is still a really good wine. Humus and blackberries on the palate, backed up by sweet licorice, violets and pepper. Long finish. **(92 points with reservation due to an bottle schocked Aeon)**

Tasting note on the 2007 Haskell IV



The IV is the latest addition to the Haskell portfolio and consists of classic Bordeaux grapes. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot was planted in 1999, Cabernet Franc 2001 and the Petit Verdot in 2000. The topography varies from around 170 meters to 320 meters above sea level. 10 barriques produced and please, do what you can to pick up a bottle or two!

Dark red color. Good bye Bordeaux! Give me some more of this! Restrained but classic Bordeaux nose with scents of blackcurrants, lead pencil, newly cut grass, leather, humus and toasted oak. A great nose, still youthful, but with so many layers. Awesome tannin structure backed up by equally impressive fruitiness and an acidity giving the wine the necessary backbone. Blackcurrants, dark cherries, leather, grass and violets in the taste. Careful oak treatment. Great finish. Love it! **(93 points)**

All three are wines with personality and although I do keep the Pillars as the best in show it's hard to ask an old Bordeaux addict not to pick the Haskell IV as favorite!

Will there be a part four? You bet! I will keep on watching Haskell with great interest and oh, yes - of course there will be a next part. I have to visit!

Rianie rocks!

*All wines were made possible for me to try thanks to the Swedish importer; **Kajsa Wines**.*

***PS.** The high resolution quality pictures are shown with the friendly permission of Haskell Vineyards. The crappy pictures of the wine bottles are shot by a true amateur in stress.*

Upplagd av Niklas Jörgensen kl. 12:09 AM 4 kommentarer 

[Länkar till det här inlägget](#)

BLOG

Doing the right thing - When I put myself through grad school, I worked on the campus of my college, a state university in which most of the workers were unionized (SEIU). We were...

3 hours ago

UNDER THE GRAPE TREE A LITTLE SUNDAY NIGHT

RANTING 'N RAVING: FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME - I've been on hiatus all week, taking a much-needed vacation (like sleeping on the couch with my cat Phineas (above)) to sort out the junkyard that has beco...

8 hours ago

Brooklynguy's Wine and Food Blog



You be the Sommelier - One of my favorite cuts of beef is the hanger steak. The hanger

steak, or hanging tender, along with the skirt steak are the muscles that make up the diaph...

9 hours ago

jamie goode's wine blog

Morton Estate: serious New Zealand fizz - This is a top class Kiwi fizz that I've never tried before. It has gained some proper complexity from long ageing on the lees, and it's delicious. Morton...

11 hours ago

Jim's Loire



Tim Atkin MW gives an agnostic's view on natural wines -

*Jean-Christophe Garnier: Vin

mousseux de Qualité* Interesting and well balanced but agnostic look by Tim Atkin MW at the 'natural' wine phenomenon. Orig...

12 hours ago

another wine blog

Why I keep writing this blog - Writing a blog can be a very difficult thing. It didn't start out that way, but after almost four years and close to 600 posts it can be tough to keep plug...

13 hours ago

Bigger Than Your Head

Wine of the Week - At the end of October, I touted the charms of the inexpensive Li Veli Orion 2008, a primitive wine from Apulia. Today, for Wine of the Week — and consumed ...

17 hours ago

Rockss and Fruit

Etiketter: Cabernet Franc, Dom Pérignon, Haskell Vineyards, South Africa, Stellenbosch, Syrah

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

Haskell Vineyards - A rising star in Stellenbosch; Part two

The **Dombeya** range from **Haskell Vineyards** are all modernly styled wines but with a great respect for the cultivation site. Add the winemaker Rianie Strydom's European touch to the wines and there you have it; Stellenbosch wines with lovely personality!



Rianie's approach is both innovative to say the least - and curious. For the South African skeptics, myself included, these wines are just one big "Yes, finally!". Away flew yet a prejudice although I'm still a bit scared of the burnt scent issue. Maybe **John Platter** can guide me in the future? I need to find more Dombeya's out there!

Tasting notes on the Dombeya Wines from Haskell Vineyards



2009 Dombeya Sauvignon Blanc

For the curious: 2009 in Stellenbosch gave, on an average basis, cooler temperatures which suited Sauvignon Blanc. This wine consists of grapes from three different vineyards of which one was Semillon. Handpicked early in the morning to preserve the grape's flavor and then fermented at an average temperature below 15 C. Prior to fermentation dry ice and Nitrogen sparging were used to protect the Sauvignon flavors from aeration as much as possible. The Semillon part was fermented in old barrels and kept on the lees until bottling in July.

Tasting note: Light color, almost like water with a green hue, the wine shows a restrained Sancerre like nose. Wet rocks, green notes, slightly floral, green apple peel and just a hint of passion fruit. Fine palate with plenty of fruit and acidity, all in fine balance. It's first in the taste you sense the Semillon - contributing with a slightly fatter texture than a Sauvignon Blanc alone would be able to. Still restrained and mineral driven with a quite long finish. I like it a lot and Rianie has definitely found her own style in interpreting the grape. (88 points)



No Words. Germany 2010 Edition. -

1 day ago

Good Grape: A Wine Manifesto

Wine Research and Amazing Coincidences - Wine Intelligence, a wine research firm based in London, released their "Portraits USA 2011" report this week highlighting six distinct groups of consum...
1 day ago

oenologic

Elsewhere - While I'm editing the next exercise in verbosity (I *swear* I'm trying to remove words!), there's a parade of imbibery going on over on the tasting notes b...
1 day ago

VinoFictions

Goings on - *Alcohol by any other name*... The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) wants us to know that the federal government releases its 2010 D...
1 day ago

1 Wine Dude

Weekly Twitter Wine Mini Reviews Round-Up For February 19, 2011 - 08 Stepping Stone Syrah (Napa Valley): An aggressive come-on, but after the fun, jammy black raspberry, vanilla tryst all is forgiven. \$20 B # 09 Stepping ...
1 day ago

RJonWine.com

Harry Karis visit pt. II: Old Châteauneuf-du-Papes from his cellar - As Harry explains in the video clip below, he conceived of the tasting as an opportunity to show California winemakers that Grenache-based wines, raised in...
2 days ago

paulg's blog – unfined & unfiltered



put a cork in it! - From Wine Business online comes the news that Supremecork, the company that pioneered the synthetic cork in the early 1990s, is suspending operations. No...
2 days ago

Terroirist

Weekly Interview: Alex Davis - Each week, as regular readers know, Terroirist poses 16 questions to a winemaker. This week's featured winemaker is Alex Davis who crafts wine



2008 Dombeya Chardonnay

For the curious: A tough year for Chardonnay if you picked late resulting in the need of monitoring the grapes for noble rot. The grapes picked at an earlier stage though gave excellent acidity and were in very fine shape. Handpicked at four different times to spread the flavors and then pressed as whole bunches. Out of the four, one batch fermented naturally - most in barriques except a smaller part which fermented in stainless steel. Ageing on 30% new oak for 10 months. Interesting to know is that 10% of the 2009 vintage was blended into the wine before bottling.

Tasting note: Light color. Gently oaked aromas, green apple, floral, lime peel, herbs and wet rocks. A most elegant appearance almost resembling an oaked Chablis in style. High and delicate acidity, firm and steely mineral. Green apples and a sweet grape fruit note adds depth. Long finish. This one got me directly - what a fine wine and at a great price as well! (90 points)



2007 Dombeya Merlot

For the curious: This is the first release of a 100% Merlot and the second vintage of harvesting the grape from vineyards Haskell manage themselves. A lot of effort is put in the crop management to open up the canopies in order to get the black cherry and plum character in the Merlot. The vineyards are on north facing slopes which consist of rocky clay of 10 - 15% - resulting in an excellent water retention ability. Supplementary irrigation was used sparingly and on a needs basis during the growing season.

Handpicked at different times due to the diversity of the soil. Handsorted and then fermented with two yeast cultures at 25-28 C with 3-4 pump-overs and punch downs evenly spread from 06:00 to 22:00. Maceration time, including fermentation, was 11-15 days after the wine was pressed and allowed a partial malolactic in barrels and the balance in stainless steel tanks. The wine was racked twice during the barrel maturation time of 16 months. This wine has 30% new oak and the balance are 2nd and 3rd fill barrels.

Tasting note: Young, quite dark color. Plums, sweet licorice, herbs, slightly stinky, bitter cherries, dusty summer road and just a hint of oak. Quite French actually! On the palate it shows sweet plums, herbs, licorice and wet earth. Nicely balanced and the 14% is well hidden. good finish. Classic Merlot. (89 points)



... Alex Davis, who states the wine
Porter Cree...
2 days ago

Dr Vino's wine blog

Headaches, histamines and GM yeast [ML01] - Hennie van Vuuren (right) suffers headaches after drinking young red wine. As a result, the professor in Biotechnology at the University of British Columbi...
2 days ago

Wine Peeps

Book Review: A Discovery of Witches (A Novel) - Do you enjoy reading about witches, vampires, and daemons? Did you enjoy Harry Potter and Twilight? If you answered "yes" to either of these questions and ...
2 days ago

Wine Blog

Patty Bogle's Memorial Service - This image has been borrowed from a story written by Chris Macias, entitled, "Remembering Patty Bogle," in the Sacramento Bee. Tonight at Dark & Delicious ...
2 days ago

California Wine Report

Selling point at Ed Sellers - Paso Robles is at the moment one of the most interesting appellations in California. One thousand vines were planted already at the Mission San Miguel Arc...
3 days ago

Fermentation: The Daily Wine Blog

A letter About The Wine and Beer Wholesaler Protection Act - HR 5034, the bill introduced into Congress last year that would have altered the balance of power in the realm of alcohol beverage sales and consumer access ...
3 days ago

wineconversation.com

Jacobs Creek champions wine regions - "Jacobs Creek has almost got a responsibility, as one of the major brands out of Australia, to teach the consumer about some of the great regions within Au...
6 days ago

Through The Walla Walla Grape Vine™



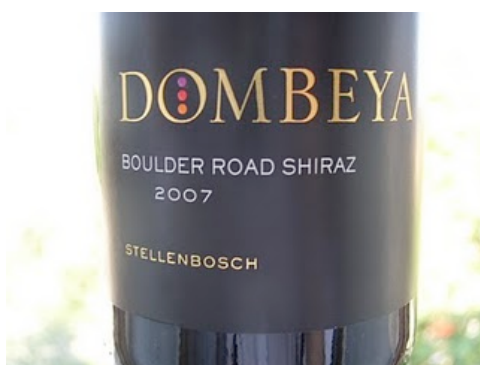
Good For the Heart: Bergevin Lane She-Devil Syrah - 2007 - This morning I've been pondering what Walla Walla wine would be perfect to blog about this Valentine's Day. I kept tickling



2007 Dombeya Cabernet Sauvignon

For the curious: Just like the Merlot this is a single varietal wine from north facing slopes. Planted in 1999 the 2007 is the second vintage they produce. Harvested at different occasion but the majority of the Cabernet Sauvignon ripens in the first two weeks of March. The treatment of the must when it comes to fermentation and maceration, is almost identical with the Merlot and both wines are matured for 16 months in 30% new oak; the rest being second and third fills.

Tasting note: Dark red color. Classic Cabernet Sauvignon with scents of cedar, grass, black currant and a floral note reminding me of violets. Very fine integrated oak. Would I put this one in South Africa if tasted blind? Most likely not considering I wrote modern Margaux style on the 2007! Mineral driven taste with abundant amounts of fruit, excellent acidity and plenty of tannins. A slightly green note which shouldn't be read in a negative way, fine black currant fruit, Faber Castell lead pencil and hay. Long finish bearing the alcohol without any problems! Keeps on evolving during the hour I taste it. Impressive and my favorite red! (90 points)



2007 Dombeya Boulder Road Shiraz

For the curious: A stellar vintage in Stellenbosch in style with the just as great 1997. Handpicked from three different vineyards. All three were vinified and kept separately in order for Rianie to monitor their respective potential. In order to bring out the flavors and structure from the growing sites, and to enhance the red fruit and pepper flavors as well, Rianie went for Anchor 372 yeast.

The grapes were crushed and went directly for fermentation. Four pump-overs a day followed by punch-downs. The grapes spent ten days on the skin. After pressing a part of the wine received maturation on new oak, the rest on second or third fills. After the malolactic procedure the wines were racked - followed by yet another one later on. Before the bottling, 5% Mourvedre from the 2008 vintage was blended into the wine. The soil in the three vineyards consists of minor amounts of clay complemented by sand and coarse gravel. One of the blocks also consists of substantial amounts of rocks.

Tasting note: Dark as the night! Generous aromas of dark sweet plums, violets, cherries, toasted oak (vanilla), wet earth and licorice. Although sending out signals that this is one concentrated red, it still manages to balance on the elegant side. Packed with fruit, this has enough stuffing to do well in the cellar for a couple of years. Lots of tannins, a touch of sweetness, minerals, black cherries, violets, licorice and toasted oak (vanilla). Long, extract filled finish. A bit stubborn today so give it a year or two - or several hours in the decanter. Followers of the 2007 Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape vintage will probably like this one! (91 points)

through my mental notes
about a...
6 days ago

Reign of Terroir

Greybeard's Corner – Quiet January, 2011 - Where did January go? After the excesses of Christmas and New Year the month seemed to fly by with barely a growl, at least in my corner of the world. Ther...
1 week ago

The Food and Wine Diarist Sunday Lunch at the Stapleton Arms

- On the occasion of a dear friend's birthday last Sunday, we were invited to lunch at the Stapleton Arms in Buckhorn Weston, a pretty North Dorset village...
1 week ago

Beyond the Bottle

The Hands of Harvest - Here's a short video containing several dozen photographs from last Fall's wine harvest in the Willamette Valley...best viewed in full-screen, HD mode...enjo...
1 week ago

Blogroll - other languages

Johan P



2009 Charles Smith Riesling Kung Fu Girl - *2009 Charles Smith Riesling Kung Fu Girl* Att tillaga

lax i olja som *jag gjorde för ett tag sedan*, var en riktig höjdare som jag ville att Jen också sk...
23 hours ago

DrunkIn © ®



Encostas de Estremoz Grande Escolha 2004 Tinto - *Português*:

Feito a partir de um blend das seguintes castas: Alicante Bouschet, Touriga nacional, Touriga Franca e Cabernet Sauvignon. Aparência: Cor gra...
23 hours ago

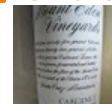
Svenssonsmakaren



Querciabella Chianti Classico 2008. - Både dynamiskt och biodynamisktVad är detta?

Termometern letar sig ner till -30, tur att solen tittade fram och lurade ut oss på en stillsam eftermiddagsp...
1 day ago

Le Francophile



2006 Mount Eden Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Estate - Tycker man att



Kajsa Bergqvist imports to Sweden

Where can i Buy the Dombeya Wines? My Swedish readers can order the **2008 Chardonnay**, the **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon** and the **2007 Boulder Road Shiraz** from **Kajsa Wines**. It will also be possible to get a bottle of the award winning 2007 Pillars Vineyard Shiraz. Miniscule amounts in though.

In UK the Dombeya wines can be purchased at **Lea & Sandeman** at very competitive prices. You will also find the **2007 Haskell Vineyards AEON Syrah**. To find out if the wines are available in your country ask Grant Dodd at Dombeya's **Twitter account** or **e-mail** him.

** First photograph shown with the friendly permission of Haskell Vineyards.*

Upplagd av Niklas Jörgensen kl. 12:31 PM 2 kommentarer

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Etiketter: [88 p](#), [89 p](#), [90 p](#), [91 p](#), [Dombeya Wines](#), [Haskell Vineyards](#), [Rianie Strydom](#), [South Africa](#), [Stellenbosch](#), [Wine importers](#)

Monday, July 19, 2010

Haskell Vineyards - A rising star in Stellenbosch

A former world champion athlete decides that now it's time; time to end a long and successful career as a high-jumper. Nothing spectacular with that - what really raises the eyebrows would rather be her next calling; wine importer and sommelier. You know, the temptation writing this article and focusing on the athlete that converted to a wine importer, were present from the very start ; a feeling growing even stronger when finding out that one of the co-owners of the winery I am about to present, was a golf pro for 12 years. But then, one should be judged by her or his skills finding the good picks - or making good wine - not because of a former career.

Kajsa Bergqvist recently started **Kajsa Wines** in Sweden. Having been on several training camps in South Africa it was only natural she developed a taste for the Stellenbosch wines considering she more or less lived amongst the vines while training. And that her first 'baby' ,as she calls it when we meet, would be a South African producer is hence no surprise.

Haskell Vineyards in Stellenbosch, and their brands **Dombeya** and Haskell, has lately gained a lot of attention for its wines and their brilliant winemaker **Rianie Strydom**. I came in contact with Haskell Vineyards and one of the co-owners **Grant Dodd** on Twitter - *what a great and easy way of communication that is by the way* - when Grant told me they recently signed with a Swedish importer. One thing led to the other and shortly after I was invited by Kajsa to sample the Dombeya wines of Haskell. five of

Kalifornien känns en gnutta historielöst med ständigt uppdykande nya boutiquevinerier med cabbar i månghundraollarklassen kan man med förd...

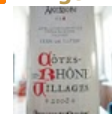
1 day ago

Winepunker - Drucket & Smakat

Leitz 2007 - Efter förra veckans snabba avvikelse till 2008 är C & jag tillbaka och vältrar oss i den underbara högen av 2007:or i förrådet. Senaste vi provade en Leitz...

1 day ago

Billigt Vin



Vin i kartong och must på flaska - Det brukar ju heta att man inte ska skåda given häst i mun. Samtidigt är det väl just det man förväntas göra när man får ett varuprov. I veckan anlände en...

1 day ago

Finare Vinare



Toscana 2006: Fontalloro vs. Monsanto Il Poggio - Fredagskvällen börjar med prisutdelning på Vinbaren, detta ljuvliga vattenhål för vinpimplare. Tidigare gånger vi träffat vinnaren av nyårets bildgata ha...

1 day ago

Pingas no Copo



Barão de Nelas, a arte de apaziguar! - Semana *encerrada*. Foi dura, atribulada, cheia de enviesamentos. Abastada de truques perversos. Malvado jogo que não tem regras limpas, claras. *Vivemos u...

2 days ago

Korkdragaren



The Square - Dags att ta tag i skrivandet igen, börjar med ett restaurangbesök första dagen på semestern. The Square ligger i London och har haft sina två stjärnor rätt...

3 days ago

vinovis



3 x Tonåring - *Inte så illa för en torsdag.* *Först en lunch med den nyfunna vinvännen Chris, som givetvis tar med en bra flaska till lunchen. *Selsele Initiale* (Degor...

3 days ago

wine factory

...erly after I was invited by Rieja to sample the Dombeya wines of Haskell, five of them were tasted and you will find my notes in a post following up on this initial article.

Being surprised by the finesse and restrained style of their wines, which is right up my alley, I simply had to find out more about Haskell and Dombeya. Grant generously took the time to enlighten me and you will find his answers below.



Grant together with Rianie

Hi Grant! Tasting Dombeya's wines were such a great eye opener for me - making me realize prejudices were holding me back from buying South African reds. Since your wines are a totally new discovery for me I wonder if you could tell me more about Haskell Vineyards/Dombeya, the people behind it and how it all started?

Well, it's a bit of a tale. It all started in 1999 when I was playing golf on the European Tour in Moscow at the Russian Open. I met a guy called Preston Haskell, we became friends, and when I stopped playing at the end of 2004 we started a business shipping Australian wines into Russia. Preston had purchased vineyards in Stellenbosch in 2002, and began building a cellar in 2004. In 2005 he asked me to come on board as a partner and I have been overseeing the running of it since.

At the start of 2005 we were fortunate to be in the right place at the right time when winemaker Rianie Strydom became available. She had been the winemaker at Morgenhof for ten years and was looking for a place to exercise her creative side, and it has turned out to be a great match for us. It takes about ten years to become an overnight success in the wine industry but we've made a great start and are making wines that we are proud of, and perhaps more importantly wines that are making people sit up and take notice of.



Do you own the vineyards yourself or do you buy in grapes on contract?

We own the vineyards, and manage them ourselves. The exception here would be for

WFFV #85 – Número 9, Winery Arts - Wine Factory smager på moderne spansk vin, med en meget fancy etiket. Den kommer fra et område der hedder Ribera del Queiles i det nordlige Spanien. Den ko...
5 days ago

Vintresserad

Madeira - Madeira, den gröna ön mitt ute i Atlanten har ett lite mytiskt skimmer över sig. Vinerna är sensationellt långlivade (och svåra att hitta i Sverige). Därfö...
6 days ago

Café Rotsunda



Gastro den 12 februari - När man stannar över i Helsingborg bör man gå på Gastro, en krog med höga ambitioner och riktigt gott rykte. Hit har jag gått många gånger genom åren och ...
6 days ago

WCTC

Reypenaer VSOP - Efter att ha smakat på ett antal goda Gouda-ostar av olika mognad visar Max Rovers, ägaren av ostbutikerna Gamla Amsterdam, mig butikens pärla – en Reypenaer...
1 week ago

Winelover

Vinklubbens smagning af sydafrikanske vine - Lördag den 28. januar var der Danmarks Indsamling, som gav alle danskere mulighed for at støtte Afrikas unge. Men det var også dagen, hvor Lars fra vinkl...
2 weeks ago

Don't forget these wine sites!

90pluswines
BobsWineReviews.com
Catavino
Cellartracker
Decanter
For the love of port
Snooth
The Connoisseurs' Wine Blog
Wine Spectator
Wineberserker

Most Recent Comments

we own the vineyards, and manage them ourselves. The exception here would be for small volumes of Petit Verdot and Malbec that we buy in to make up the mix for our Bordeaux blends, and for the Sauvignon Blanc that goes into the Dombeya range.



Châteauneuf du Stellenbosch!

What's the typical Stellenbosch soil like? Does it vary a lot in your vineyards?

There is a lot of variation across Stellenbosch, and especially so on the upper slopes of the Helderberg range where we are located. The soil type across some of our vineyards, and particularly the ones that are planted to Syrah, is integral to the character of the wines. The Pillars and Hades Vineyards (Hades is yet to come into production) are planted on sites that have a high stone fraction (mainly granite and sandstone) and so far we are seeing that these sites impart a very individual aromatic quality to the wines. They show a perfume on the nose that is quite feminine and have a lovely vibrancy of flavor with characters that sit somewhere between the red and black fruit spectrum, and which also show a pronounced varietal spice note as well.

Some of the lower slopes have a higher clay quotient, and are planted accordingly, but generally I would say that our site has low fertility and very good drainage. These factors are a few of the reasons why our vineyards have the capacity to grow grapes that show concentration and balanced flavor.



Pillars Vineyard

My immediate thoughts when tasting your wines were that these are mineral driven one's. What do you strive for in your wines – how important is the expression of a wine's growing site?

Expression of site should be the ultimate goal of any wine producer with the ambition to make great wine. The greatest wines in the world all come from specific places, and the rest of the wine producing world uses them as benchmarks by which to judge where

barricas wrote...

If you knew me better (which is probably fortunate for you that you don't), you would know that I've given up on the varietal concept.

Niklas Jörgensen wrote...

You love this one Ingvar! Believe me.

Ingvar Johansson wrote...

I have never tried any high end Müller-Thurgau but during summer stays in Italy I always make sure to get some m.t from Val di Cembra. There used to be some grown in Friuli but it was a while since I...

[Continue >>](#)

Niklas Jörgensen wrote...

And this was just a few stories...What strikes me when digging in to this, is that Italian producers seems overrepresented in these cases. Just a coincidence or what? Best Niklas

Niklas Jörgensen wrote...

Hi Mats, Again, this is the ultimate way to taste wine - paired with food and the winemaker next to you! I believe many will reject these wines at a classic tasting but they just need the right...

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What wine label are you?

Biodynamic farming; quasi-religious hocus-pocus or...

Gimme gimme Grenache!

Haskell Vineyards - A rising star in Stellenbosch,...

Apprentices meets teacher.

The Northstar leads the way!

they are at quality wise. Cote Rotie for Syrah, Burgundy for Pinot Noir, Mosel for Riesling and so on. In the New World we are by and large still working on identifying the best places for growing certain varieties, still working on clonal selection, still working with challenging the status quo and working out whether to rewrite it.

More than most wine growing countries, South Africa is still a work in progress, which is the exciting part of being involved in the industry here. South Africa's greatest wines, the wines that will define its identity in the future, are undoubtedly still to be made, but there are plenty of people working on that right now. There is a huge amount of investment taking place in the South African wine industry and the sense of purpose is tangible. Those of the new wave that are able to maximize the potential of their 'terroir' the quickest will be first in the queue for recognition.



For me, the Chardonnay almost resembled a gently oaked Chablis and the Cabernet had similarities with a modern Margaux. The Sauvignon Blanc, although having some Semillon in it, sent me right off to Sancerre! South Africa goes way back as a wine producing country. Since Dombeya are relatively new on the wine scene I'm curious where you turn for inspiration. Do you consult and listen to other South African producers or do you simply follow the European regions we so intimately link with the grapes you cultivate at Haskell Vineyards?

We aim to make wines of restraint and power. Our goal every year is to achieve phenolic ripeness at lower alcohol levels. So much of what we do in the vineyards is working towards that goal, but you need to be supremely patient in this game as nothing happens quickly, especially vine maturity and learning lessons. You get one chance a year to make great wine, then a while later you look back on what you have done and think, "Well, that was fantastic," or, "I might do that differently next time." It is the nature of the beast when you are a wine producer.

In terms of modeling, we look around the world for inspiration and taste as widely as possible in attempting to work out where our wines sit against their peers. It is the only way to be honest about whether you are achieving your goals or not.



When I'm sixty-four....

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- 92 p (4)
- 92-93 p (5)



Haskell, your marquee label, seems to have reached cult status in South Africa already. Tell me more about the Haskell Vineyards Pillars Syrah!

We started with the ambition of creating a world class wine brand. Obviously that doesn't happen overnight, but you put systems in place for that to happen and keep working towards that goal consistently. Last year, the first Haskell wines released found immediate acclaim. The Haskell Pillars Syrah 2007 became the first South African wine ever to win the Tri Nations Challenge against the best wines of Australia and New Zealand, in the process winning the trophies for Best Syrah, Best Red Wine and Best Wine of Show.

Then we also received 5 stars in the John Platter Guide 2010, one of only 41 wines in South Africa to do so. Jancis has been saying nice things, along with plenty of other critics so we seem to be doing something right.



Rianie Strydom

One can't mention Haskell Vineyards/Dombeya without discussing your winemaker Rianie Strydom! I'm truly impressed by her wines and obviously I'm not the only one. Tell me more about Rianie's background.

As mentioned, she was the winemaker at Morgenhof for ten years. She came with a lot of experience making Cabernet blends, and this blend is her real passion. I think it surprises her somewhat that the wines Haskell has become renowned for in its infancy are made from Syrah but she has taken to the grape like a duck to water. I'm loathe to ascribe a 'feminine' touch to her work but I think most people see a sense of restraint in the wines Rianie crafts and in some ways the cap fits. At Haskell she has the artistic freedom to make wines the way she sees fit and she does that without compromise. She's a woman of her convictions.



Pillars Vineyard

93 p (9)
 93-94 p (5)
 94 points (4)
 94-95 p (3)
 95 p (1)
 95-96 p (2)
 97 p (2)
 97-98 p (1)
 98-99 p (1)
 Achaval-Ferrer (1)
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 Auction (1)
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 Blog depression (1)
 Boal (5)
 Bolgheri (3)

Vineyard techniques such as pruning, yields, green harvest to mention a few - could you tell me a bit about the 'Haskell way'?

We treat all our vineyards the same, with great attention to detail, low yields and very strict bunch and berry selection in the winery. We green harvest when necessary, but the extent of that changes from season to season. We started with unashamedly ambitious goals in that we wanted to be recognized as a maker of some of the finest wines in South Africa and to do that you can't take any shortcuts. It took us three years to get things to where we needed them to be in the vineyard, and therefore three years to produce a Haskell wine. All the vineyards receive the same treatment, and every grape the same attention in the winery.

How much vintage variation can I expect in your wines?

South Africa is no different to any country in that the seasons are not homogenous. And already we see subtle changes from year to year, but fortunately for us the years since we started in 2005 have been by and large very kind. There is a consistency about our wines that we're very proud of as a result.

What's the ageing capability on the wines you produce?

The Haskell wines are built to age longer than the Dombeya range. That said, I think it is a little hard to make grand predictions about where the wines will end up this early in our evolution. But the first Bordeaux blend that we made (2005 Dombeya Samara) has evolved beautifully and just keeps getting better which is very encouraging.

How big is your annual production?

At the moment across the two labels we produce around 8000 cases (roughly 100 000 bottles).



What's your attitude towards biodynamical cultivation? Anything you strive for - or at least minimal involvement of chemicals?

I'm a fan of organic viticulture, and believe that having a healthy eco-system helps to grow better grapes. We work on a minimal intervention approach- all of our vineyard and winery waste is composted and goes back into the vineyards. We use an introduced, natural predator program to control insect issues which saves us having to spray for a number of potential problems in this area, and we'll continue to look at anything that enhances our ability to maximize the potential of our vineyards.

I have some issues with the 'spiritual' component of biodynamics. If a wine producer had to stand in front of a group of consumers and explain to them what is involved in being 'certified biodynamic' it would raise a few eyebrows. Cows heads with oak bark inside, buried in the vineyard? Stag bladders filled with yarrow , buried in the vineyard? Horn of a cow, filled with manure? To control weeds, apply the ashes from burnt weed seeds to vineyards after they have been lightly sprayed with the urine of a sterile cow, after the urine has been exposed to a full moon for six hours?

Look past the dynamism of the word and its strength as a marketing term and a lot of the practices involved seem to have little relevance to agriculture. It all makes a lot of sense until you get to the proscriptive elements dictated by someone who formulated the doctrine in the 1920's.

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 Calvert (1)
 Campania (1)
 Canon-Fronsac (1)
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 Catena Zapata (2)
 Central Otago (1)
 Ch Berres (2)
 Chambolle-Musigny (1)
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 Champoux Vineyard (1)
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 Charles Smith (1)
 Chasselas (1)
 Chateau Pavier (2)
 Chateauneuf-du-Pape (8)
 Chateay Ste Michelle (1)
 Chenin blanc (3)
 Chianti (3)
 Chile (2)
 Chris Camarda (1)
 Christmas (1)
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 Colchagua Valley (1)
 Colheita (1)
 Collioure (1)
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 Coonawarra (1)
 Cork Defect (2)
 Cornas (1)
 Corton (1)
 Cossart Gordon (1)
 Costers del Segre (1)
 Cote de Brouilly (1)
 Cote-Rotie (1)
 Cotes-du-Rhone (4)
 CP Lin (1)
 Craggy Range (1)
 Crozes-Hermitage (2)
 Cru Bourgeois (2)

That said, there are some magnificent wines being produced under the banner of bio dynamics. How much of that is owing to the 'organic' base to the philosophy and how much to the bio dynamic preparations and applications is a debate that will rage on forever. As the old saying goes, if you are a believer, then no proof is necessary.



Healthy leafs!

When discussing South African wines, the issue of the burnt character that, in my opinion, many wines are haunted by, never fails to be brought up. In your case it is for me especially interesting since none of your wines are nearby the burnt scent and that makes me wondering; what are you doing that so many else aren't?

It is a really good question. The problem exists (but less so every year, in my experience), and there is a lot of research going into finding the cause. Still, no-one has a definitive answer yet. Some point to virus issues, given that leaf roll virus is a problem in South Africa that other countries don't see to the same extent. I certainly used to think that this was the case, but now I lean more towards it being purely related to reduction, and therefore largely a wine making issue.

Those rubbery mercaptan-like aroma's and flavors that you describe are often a telltale indicator of reductive compounds, which I suspect are created in the wine making process perhaps through ferments that are not seeing enough aeration. A well regarded foreign winemaker has also suggested that it may be as a result of using dried yeasts that have nutritional problems in South African musts.

As I said though, I think the issue is becoming much less common anyway. There is a far greater awareness now after the criticism of the past couple of years, and given the competitiveness of the commercial environment no-one wants to be a brand living with such a tag.

Ironically, critics considers the burnt character to be a flaw, WOSA is looking more and more into it, but the consumers in my home country seem to enjoy the character a lot considering South African wine's popularity in Sweden. I don't like it at all but that is my very own opinion. However, should we just let the burnt notes be left alone since they obviously are appreciated by many?

I see it as a flaw. I also think that if South African wine is to be taken seriously and to achieve its full potential then this needs to be eradicated. It can be overpowering on some wines and can mask varietal characters and nuance in the affected wines. But if people like drinking wines with such characters then good for them. There is plenty of wine in the world, and something for everyone's taste. The bottom line with wine is that if it tastes good to you, drink it!



Crémant de Bourgogne (1)
 Côtes de Castillon (3)
 Dalsheimer Hubacker (1)
 Daniel Schuster (1)
 Danmark (5)
 Dao (2)
 David Oldham (1)
 Demeter (1)
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 German e-shops (2)
 Germany (1)
 Gevrey-Chambertin (1)
 Gewurztraminer (3)
 Gimplatt dust (1)

I'd like to visit Haskell Vineyards - is that possible?

Everyone is welcome. The cellar door is open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am- 5pm, but if anyone is really interested in having a good look around then give us a call on +27 21 881 3895 or e-mail: infoathaskellvineyards.com. We also have a great restaurant (Long Table Restaurant and Cafe') that is open Tuesday to Sunday for breakfast and lunch, with an interesting range of imported wines on the list as well to offer something a little different from the average fare.

** Photographs shown with the friendly permission of Haskell Vineyards*

*** If you're a 'terroirist' then check out the map at Haskell's website, showing all locations and their soil.*

**** Part two of the story soon to be published as well, consisting of tasting notes on the 2009 Dombeya Sauvignon Blanc, 2008 Dombeya Chardonnay, 2007 Dombeya Merlot, 2007 Dombeya Cabernet Sauvignon and the 2007 Boulder Road Shiraz.*

Upplagd av Niklas Jörgensen kl. 7:25 PM 2 kommentarer 

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