

Graham Beck Wines Newsletter

February 2008



2007 was a great year in every respect for us at Graham Beck Wines and 2008 promises to be even better. In the knowledge that you touch our lives in some or other very meaningful way, we would like to share some of our highlights and expectations with you. May this year be full of sparkle for you, dear friend of Graham Beck Wines.

One for the books!

It's official: Graham Beck Wines is a Guinness Book Record Holder! It's not everyday that a wine cellar makes history by becoming a world record holder, but a recent unusual and rather challenging event secured us a coveted place in the 'mother' of all record books.

On 15 June 2007, Graham Beck Wines challenged the Guinness World Record for the most 'bubbly' corks popped simultaneously, in the Pop, Bubble and Sip Challenge held at the Born Free 'Freedom' Ball in London. This competition raised funds to facilitate the work of the 'Born Free' Foundation Big Cat Rescue Centre at Shamwari in South Africa. Graham Beck Wines successfully beat the record of 413 bottles popped!

Over 600, 375ml bottles of Graham Beck Brut NV, were specially commissioned for the occasion and air-freighted to the UK prior to this memorable event. For a minimum donation of £20 per bottle, guests were afforded the privilege of taking part in the Challenge. The 'Born Free' Foundation nurtures leopards and lions rescued from zoos, circuses and other captive facilities.

Directed by Born Free patron, and celebrated British actress, Joanna Lumley, accompanied by Graham Beck's Cellarmaster, Pieter 'Bubbles' Ferreira, guests took part in a 10 second cork-popping challenge. After a countdown 600 Graham Beck Brut corks were popped with gusto. "I'm delighted that a wine created at Graham Beck Wines is helping to raise funds for the commendable work of Born Free in South Africa. Our Brut is about fun and sunshine, and it was great to share this spirit with Born Free and their guests at this special occasion," commented Pieter.



Actress Joanna Lumley and Pieter Ferreira



Pieter with the Born Free 'lionesses'

Screw it, we did it!

It has been an exciting year as the first Graham Beck wines have been bottled under Stelvin/screw cap closure.

The decision to bottle our first wines under screw cap was taken after careful consideration. "This debate has been going on for some time within our team and we are happy with the way going forward," says Pieter. "After conducting trials with all the various different types of closures possible we now know that there are certain varieties and styles of blended wines that definitely benefit from the screw cap closure or alternatives to natural cork," he explains. In conjunction with some serious collaborative discussions with our business partners in America, the UK and Europe, as regards to the desirability and likely impacts on volume, etc. in their markets, we have developed a screw cap action plan for the wine portfolio of Graham Beck Wines.

We believe that we need to give consumers what they need. "It has certainly been an inevitable decision that had to be considered and I believe that screw cap has become a far more acceptable type of closure both locally and internationally. At Graham Beck we also understand that we have to produce a wine suitable for the closure we are going to use. In other words we cannot just take any wine and lock it under screw cap. We have become 'designer' winemakers in this sense. There are certain issues that we have to keep in mind when producing wine for screw cap," comments Pieter.

So far our new-look Pinotage Rose 2007 has been bottled in screw cap followed by our single identity, Pheasants' Run 2007, and our varietal wine, Viognier 2007. In addition, our Chardonnay/Viognier, Cabernet, Shiraz/Viognier, and Railroad Red blend are all due to follow under screwcap in early 2008. These wines are showing remarkably well and have paved the way for other varietals and blends to follow into screw cap.



First wine under screwcap Pinotage Rose



Winemaker: Irene Waller

A fresh new face for our Franschhoek tasting room

The Graham Beck Wines style is synonymous with elegance, timeless quality, class and cutting edge innovation. Over the years the Beck family has become known for their appreciation of the arts, culture and aesthetic integrity. The Graham Beck Wines Franschhoek cellar door experience underwent a series of super stylish enhancements, making this one of the wineland's most spectacular venues.

The revamped wine-tasting and sales facility on the Graham Beck Wines Franschhoek estate is sure to provide a memorable wine experience. Effortlessly weaving together understated old world charm with the height of cutting edge contemporary design this is one wine destination not to miss.

Exuding an ambience of contemporary elegance, the cellar door welcomes tasters into a relaxed yet sophisticated environment. The setting resembles a chic wine bar or cocktail lounge. "The new cellar door tasting room is a perfect 'brand home' for Graham Beck Wines - a state-of-the-art venue to showcase the latest vintages of their premium wines to wine lovers and aficionados alike," says Etienne Heyns, marketing and sales manager for Graham Beck Wines.



Spreading their wings

In 2007 four members of the Graham Beck Wines' team, Sylvia Booysen, Johanna Johannes, Sanette Piedt and Francois Samuels were selected to gain international experience in the management and maintenance of barrels in Beaune, France, in an initiative which promotes skills development in South African agriculture.

Each year, South African farm workers are selected to receive training at the Vineyard Academy, and thereafter at the Beaune Agricultural Training Centre in Burgundy. The objective of this exchange programme is to provide individuals from previously disadvantaged communities, who work in the wine industry in the Cape, with the opportunity to gain international experience.

Sanette, Johanna and Sylvia were delighted to have been chosen to participate in this inspirational endeavour. Sanette has been at Graham Beck Wines since 2002. She works at the Graham Beck Wines' Robertson farm as a technical assistant, gathering data in the vineyards and then capturing the data electronically. Johanna Johannes has been employed by Graham Beck Wines since 2002. She works in the cellar on the Graham Beck Wines' Franschhoek farm and is married to Hans Johannes, the Graham Beck Wines cellar worker who was selected to participate in the Beaune Exchange Programme in 2006. Sylvia Booysen has been a Graham Beck Wines employee since 2000 and works in the vineyards at the Graham Beck Wines' Robertson farm.

The threesome attended lectures, visited cellars and received rigorous practical training. On completion of the course they were presented with the Beaune CFPPA (Centre de Formation Professionnelle et de Promotion Agricole) certificate.

All three ladies are putting their experience to excellent use and have already contributed their new skills and enthusiasm to their respective teams. Sanette has subsequently been promoted to vineyard block manager. Francois Samuels was the next Graham Beck Wines team member to take to the air at our Robertson farm.

Francois Samuels was the next Graham Beck Wines team member to take to the air and look at Barrel management at various cooperages in Beaune, France. He also looked at vineyard block manipulation to create different styles of wine. Francois was particularly blown away by the passion his fellow French workers approached their daily tasks with! He arrived back in Franschhoek bubbling over with new concepts and ideas.



Sanette Piedt, Johanna Johannes & Sylvia Booysen



Francois Samuels

Winning Blocks

Graham Beck Wines' Vredenhof farm, near Firgrove in the Helderberg, won the 2007 VinPro Winetech Vineyard Block Competition for the Stellenbosch region with a Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard and following on in 2008, Joseph Plaatjies, block manager at our Robertson Estate won the Block Competition for the Robertson Region with a Shiraz block on our Robertson farm.

The Cabernet Sauvignon block in Vredenhof, yielding its third vintage this year, this 2.8 hectare vineyard provides grapes for the Graham Beck Super Premium Tier as well as for Antony's Yard, a Bordeaux-style blend from our Ultra Premium Tier. A 4 hectare Pinot Noir vineyard, also planted in 2001, on the Graham Beck Wines' Robertson farm was runner up in the 2007 VinPro Winetech Vineyard Block Competition for the Robertson region.

This annual competition evaluates vineyard practices on a wide variety of criteria such as: soil preparation; choice of rootstock and clone; choice of vineyard site; trellising methods; general vineyard management, especially with regards to canopy management throughout the summer; soil maintenance; weed control; spraying programmes; and irrigation systems.

"These accolades are wonderful recognition for all the hard work our vineyard teams have invested over many years. At Graham Beck Wines we have the latest in technology and equipment to develop our vineyards but it's only when the vital ingredients of passion and attention to detail are added to the mix that we reach these heights. Dérick Hamman, who's been Vineyard Manager at our Vredenhof farm for nine years, must be commended on his excellent work with our winemakers in producing grapes for specific wine styles. This is a perfect expression of the Graham Beck Wines' philosophy, that of wine farming rather than grape growing," says Marco Ventrella, viticulturist on all four Graham Beck Wines' farms.



Cabernet Sauvignon from
Vredenhof Farm in Firgrove



Firgrove Vineyards

Two Bordeaux blends at their best

We're very excited about the recent release of **The Andrew 2003** and **The Andrew 2005**. The wine is named after the second grandson of Graham Beck - the third generation in this family business.



The Andrew

This simply beautiful Bordeaux blend was carefully crafted from the very best quality fruit, sourced from specially selected vineyard sites. The Merlot vineyard is located in Durbanville, while the Cabernet Franc is from Franschhoek and the Cabernet Sauvignon is sourced from Stellenbosch. The wine was vinified in our Franschhoek cellar where all the varieties were carefully monitored up to optimum phenolic ripeness before harvesting and handled as separate parcels. The berries were destalked and gently crushed prior to fermentation on the skins. It was fermented on the skins until dry. After fermentation the wines were pressed and taken to stainless steel tanks for malolactic fermentation. After malolactic fermentation the varieties were matured separately in French oak barrels for 12 months.

This elegant and refined wine has a rich intense hue with a delicious fruit cake character and hints of spices. The Cab and Merlot lend blackberry and plum tones. It's a full bodied wine with good fruit and oak integration. The rewarding aromatics and firm tannin structure ensure a generous wine with excellent ageing potential. Savour with grilled rack of lamb, hearty stews or ostrich fillet.

Helping hands

The soon to be unveiled Graham & Rhona Beck Skills Centre is set to be a tremendously exciting boost for the facilitation of skills development in the Breederiver Winelands Area.

Skills development has been identified as one of the most important focuses in developing people in order to alleviate poverty and contribute to economic growth in South Africa. A result of the Beck family's vision and drive for social upliftment of their community, combined with extensive planning and consultation with the relevant local representatives, the Skills Centre is an ambitious, innovative and intensive project.

It's full steam ahead...with everything on track for the centre to open its doors by June 2008. The Graham & Rhona Beck Skills Centre will focus on facilitating, amongst others, career guidance, leadership and management skills, self-development and life orientation and business skills. "It is envisaged that the Centre should be regarded as a place of learning for all citizens of the Breede River Winelands area," comments Centre Manager Myra Hoffman.



Celebrating the "Turning of the Sod"



Mnr Sonwabo John Ngonyama Breeriver Wineland Municipality and Gary Baumgarten, Graham Beck Wines' General Manager

Beefing up to respond to handsome demand

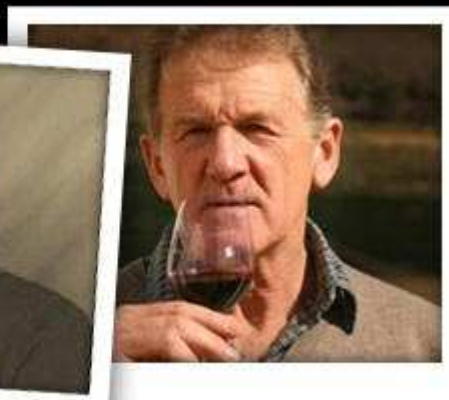
Very positive growth in Western USA prompted our North American team to appoint Ms Kelley Calhoon to their team. Kelley joined us from WJ Deutsch & Sons in the last quarter of 2007. Herman Hanekom, formerly from Steenberg Vineyards, now represents us as brand ambassador along the Garden Route. In Kwazulu Natal, Joyce Wilmans has joined us as a sub-agent. The latter two SA positions are also new and in response to fantastic demand for our products in these two markets.



Joyce Williams



Kelley Calhoon



Herman Hanekom

Ready, set, go! Harvest 2008 here we come...

"Using all our experience together with the new technology at our disposal and the winemaking team's ability to taste, I have no doubt our terroir will speak and we will produce beautiful wines in 2008," maintains Marco Ventrello, Viticulturist at Graham Beck Wines.

Harvest is well on its way in Robertson and most of the grapes for our Cap Classique's, from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, have been picked and are fermenting away, changing into beautiful base wines. "I am very excited about the quality of our Chardonnay for our super premium varietal Chardonnay this year. The new clones are really proving their worth. We have beautiful and unusual flavours lime and lemons, to roasted almonds to muesli fruit mix! And all at lower sugars - such gorgeous portions to work with," explains Irene in Robertson.

The season has also started in Franschhoek with the first of the Sauvignon Blanc grapes coming in this past week. "I am thrilled with the berry size on the Sauvignon this year - flavours are complex and even better tasting better than last year, this time," elates Erika, in Franschhoek. The harvest teams have been fantastic - coping with the extra demand to ensure that we manage the attention to detail.

Harvest 2008 will be 'grape'! ha, haha, watch this space.....



Harvest Parade:
Franschhoek



Harvest Team on Parade Day:
Robertson



Harvest Parade:
Robertson

Sheer bliss

The alluring and aptly named new bubbly release from Graham Beck, a Demi-Sec NV made from 54% Chardonnay and 46% Pinot Noir, is an unashamedly delicious and 'blissful' choice for those who prefer a less than bone dry bubbly.



Graham Beck Bliss Demi Sec

Pieter calls it "the bubbly with heart". The production process involved in the creation of a demi-sec is often mistakenly believed to simply be a case of manipulating the sugar content. Pieter challenges this assumption, commenting: "The creation of the Demi-Sec didn't happen overnight, and was approximately two years in the making. The complexity of the dosage in getting the residual sugars right is a painstaking and exhausting process, especially on the palate!" Specific blocks in the vineyard are now to be specially designated to Bliss.

Made in Graham Beck Wines' Méthode Cap Classique cellar in Robertson, "the bubbly capital of South Africa", hand-picked Chardonnay was selected from the Robertson farm's riverside vineyards, comprised of soils high in natural lime. Also hand picked, the Pinot Noir was sourced from the loamy clay soils of Graham Beck Wines' Firgrove vineyards, near Stellenbosch.

With light yeasty aromas, complemented with hints of butterscotch, honey and praline, this delectable bubbly makes the ideal partner to a wide variety of dishes, ranging from Lamb Tagine to sweet-and-sour flavour sensations and even warm desserts and fruit.

Clinching the Cap Classique Crown

Graham Beck Wines cemented their status as South Africa's leading Cap Classique producer by taking top honours at the 2007 Wine Magazine Amorim Cork Cap Classique Challenge.

The Graham Beck Brut Pinot Noir Chardonnay 1994 (in magnum) scored 4 and-a-half Stars, ahead of six 4-Star bubbliies, including two other sparkling wines from Graham Beck: the Blanc de Blancs 2003 and Graham Beck Brut NV (also in magnum).

Vintage-dated to commemorate Nelson Mandela's inauguration as President, the 1994 Graham Beck Brut Pinot Noir Chardonnay was only made available for special occasions and worthy causes. "We are constantly re-defining the bubble: it is a perpetual pursuit. We are overjoyed at the progress and success our bubbliies have enjoyed," comments a thrilled Pieter.

At the same Awards in 2006, five of Graham Beck Wines' bubbliies were rated 4-Stars, the first time ever that a wine producer had received five 4-Star wines in a category tasting at WINE magazine since its launch in 1993.



Brut 1.5L 1994



Pieter 'Bubbles' Ferreira

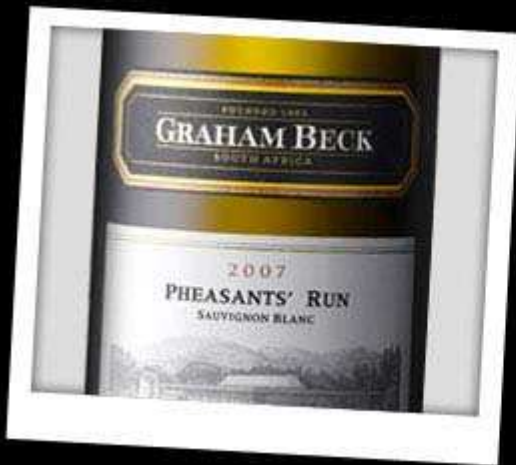
Sensational Sauvignon

The Graham Beck Wines' 2007 Pheasants' Run Sauvignon Blanc sizzled at the 2007 SA National Young Wine Show (SANYWS). It clinched the prestigious John McDonald Trophy for the Best Sauvignon Blanc on show.

Earlier vintages of this wine were made from grapes grown at a high-quality vineyard in Durbanville, from which the name Pheasants' Run is derived (the original farm's name is Fisantekraal, the Afrikaans phrase for 'The Gathering of the Pheasants'). The 2007 vintage, however, was made from grapes sourced at Graham Beck Wines' best coastal vineyard in Firgrove, near Stellenbosch as well as Durbanville and Darling vineyards.

Erika Obermeyer, Graham Beck Wines' Franschhoek cellar winemaker, is passionate about Sauvignon Blanc. The 2007 Pheasants' Run is a true expression of this expressive varietal, showing intense tropical fruit and ripe fig with asparagus and tinned peas, together with great complexity, fruit intensity and elegance with a crispy freshness.

"Because of the popularity of the Sauvignon Blanc category, it is a great privilege to walk away with this Trophy," concludes a delighted Erika.



Graham Beck Pheasants' Run



Erika Obermeyer with the John McDonald Trophy

Let's dress up - a packaging upgrade for our wines

Towards increasing the provenance of our wines - A more genuine, authentic and artisanal extrinsic expression.....

Well, there you have it! Our entire range of wine labels has undergone a review and will emerge in a brand new appearance with the various vintage changes. The objective has been quite simple - to better reflect our ultra premium positioning. We're very confident that the changes will enhance our brand value even more.



Bring on the bling

As always, we are immensely proud of the many accolades and achievements our wines receive throughout the course of the year - but these feathers in our caps are merely an indication that we're on the right track. Each award or commendation is the cherry on the top of an already fantastic track record, a highlight to be celebrated, but also motivation to spur us on to achieve even greater standards of excellence.

2007 ACCOLADES:

July 2007:

- ◆ Rated 90/100 points by Robert Parker - Graham Beck Shiraz 2003

August 2007:

- ◆ Silver medal at the International Expovina Awards, Zurich - Graham Beck Shiraz 2003
- ◆ Best Sauvignon Blanc at South African National Young Wine Show 2007 - Graham Beck Pheasants' Run Sauvignon Blanc 2007

September 2007:

Michelangelo Wine Awards:

- ◆ Gold medal - Graham Beck Shiraz 2005
- ◆ Gold medal - Graham Beck The Ridge Syrah 2003
- ◆ Winner of the WINE Magazine Amorim Cork Cap Classique Challenge 2007 - Graham Beck Brut 1994 1.5l (with 4 stars)
- ◆ Also...
 - Graham Beck Blanc de Blancs 2003 (with 4 stars)
 - Graham Beck Brut NV 1.5l (with 4 stars)

October 2007:

- ◆ Decanter Magazine's Sparkler of the Month - Graham Beck Brut Rose 2005
- ◆ Veritas Awards:
 - Gold medal - Graham Beck Brut Rose 2005
 - Gold medal - Graham Beck Pheasants' Run Sauvignon Blanc 2007
 - Gold medal - Graham Beck Blanc de Blancs 2003
- ◆ International Wine & Spirit Competition 2007: Best in Class - Graham Beck Blanc de Blancs 2002
- ◆ WINE magazine TOPS at SPAR Sauvignon Blanc Top 10: Graham Beck Pheasants' Run Sauvignon Blanc 2007

