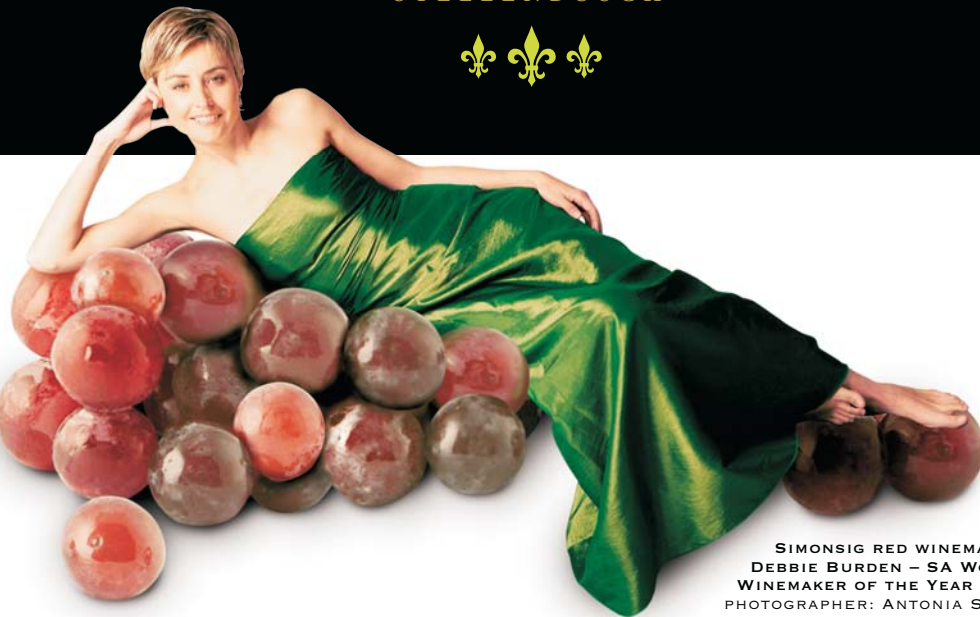




# THE SIMONSIG NEWSLETTER

STELLENBOSCH

WINTER 2006



SIMONSIG RED WINEMAKER,  
DEBBIE BURDEN – SA WOMAN  
WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR 2005  
PHOTOGRAPHER: ANTONIA STEYN

## HARVEST REPORT 2006

We toast to an exceptional 3-month marathon in the vineyards and cellar, witnessing and sharing in the sterling performance of both nature and human intervention during the 2006 harvest, with all the varietals exceeding our highest expectations.

The Stellenbosch area produced a marginally bigger crop than in 2005, with Simonsig exceeding its previous yield by 6%, which can be ascribed largely to new plantings of Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay coming into production.

The irregular seasonal rainfall patterns did, however, result in a 46% drop in summer rains, which once again highlighted the importance of primed scientific irrigation systems to avoid vines experiencing moisture stress and the subsequent loss of quality.

The cooler temperatures experienced during the final quarter of 2005 supported the early growth stage of the grapes, whilst a stiff rise in the mercury level and strong winds from December onwards lead to significantly smaller berries and bunches – beneficial to the fruit and colour intensity of our red wines.

Similar to any other harvest, the 2006 challenge entailed some interesting surprises for the Simonsig team. The unusually early ripeness of the Pinotage, the first red variety harvested this year, had everyone in the vineyards harvesting early one Saturday morning whilst the mid-season varieties such as Chenin Blanc, Merlot and Chardonnay were slow to ripen.

### WHITE WINES

It was our boldest harvest for **Kaapse Vonkel** yet and doing everything with whole bunch pressing was no mean feat. As Champagne is essentially a wine blended from diverse vineyards and terroir, we await with eager anticipation to see what the 2006 Kaapse Vonkel holds for us.

Word is out that 2006 is a good **Sauvignon Blanc** vintage. Earlier picking helped to retain more of the greener Sauvignon flavours and a new technique of co-inoculation with two different yeast strains enhanced the intensity of the fruit.

Our patience in the vineyards with the **Chenin Blanc** paid off with superior ripeness and fresh fruit appeal for our biggest selling wine.

**Chardonnay** devotees can look forward to a fresher fruit profile due to earlier picking – something that was started in 2005 with exciting results. Early indications are looking great with delicious intensity and complexity anticipated.

### RED WINES

After a decade of absence, our winemaking team has re-introduced **Rosé** back into the Simonsig portfolio. Made from Pinotage, this Rosé has been given a modern twist. Watch this space!

2006 is an excellent year for **Merlot**, perhaps the best ever whilst **Petit Verdot** shows succulent fruit and exceptional quality. Both are highly regarded as crucial blending components in our flagship, Simonsig Tiara.

**Cabernet Sauvignon** constitutes the largest area (40 hectares) on our estate and the intense dedication we have invested in this variety over the last four years, including improvement of the vineyards and vinification, is paying off. Overall the Cabernet is the stand-out red variety of the 2006 vintage.

The harvest team was lead by Francois Malan, Ludwig Uys and Martin Faraio in the vineyards with Van Zyl du Toit (9th vintage), Debbie Burden (7th) and myself (25th) in the cellar. Valuable contributions from outside our 'family' came from a young German stagière, Martin Hochdörffer, from Landau and Margaux Nel from the Port producers in Calitzdorp.

Our gratitude goes to all the people in the vineyards and in the cellar who put in enormous effort to keep on improving on our previous achievements. Simonsig is the winery with the most Double Gold and Gold medals at the annual Veritas Awards and it is clear that our great effort results in well deserved success.

JOHAN MALAN  
Simonsig Estate – Chief Winemaker

## FIELDS OF GOLD



REACH FOR GOLD THANKS PELLEGRINI & GRUNDMANN (SIMONSIG AGENTS FOR GERMANY) FOR A GENEROUS DONATION MADE TOWARDS ITS CAUSE. SHARING IN THE GRATITUDE IS (L.T.R) PIETER, FRANCOIS AND JOHAN MALAN (FAR RIGHT) WITH MARTIN FARAO AND MARIO GRUNDMANN (MIDDLE) FROM GERMANY.

There is just no stopping the growing success of Simonsig's most viable social upliftment initiative, Reach for Gold – a non-profit project headed by a group of permanent farm workers to generate funds for the upkeep of various community projects on the estate.

An additional 1.5ha (3.8 acres) of farmland has just been allocated for their innovative roll-on-lawn project (growing grass for landscaping). Profits earned from this self-sustaining agricultural venture are ploughed back into the workers' community with funds contributing towards the Simonsig Multipurpose Centre and daycare crèche at Simonsig.

Future goals of the Reach for Gold Association include the cultivation of olive trees.

## BIG ON BIO-DIVERSITY

The preservation of Fynbos has far greater significance to Simonsig than merely being one of the distinctive flavours in the award-winning Merindol Syrah. Meticulous adherence to environmentally sustainable wine production is reflected in the character of its world-class wines.

Fostering an exemplary track record of sound bio-diversity practices, Simonsig has become a member of the Bottelary Hills Bewarea (conservation ward). This community initiative sees to the natural resource management of the immediate environment, safeguarding 1 500 hectares of land, including several wine farms, surrounding the Bottelary hills, northwest of Stellenbosch.

Simonsig embarked on the conservation and rehabilitation of 5 hectares for the growing of endangered Renosterveld, indigenous to this area.



# STAR STATUS

Expanding the impressive lineage of award-winning Simonsig reds, the full-bodied Simonsig Merindol Syrah 2003 was named one of the top three wines out of 50 in the Shiraz Category by Wine500 Club for its Winter Selection 2006.

Since claiming the crown as South Africa's Top Shiraz in 2004, Simonsig Merindol Syrah remains at the pinnacle of its league, endorsing the estate's quest for quality excellence and intense dedication to this cultivar over the past decade.

Wine500 Club is a dynamic wine club, which aims to obtain and provide premium South African wines to a limited number of enthused members. Inclusion in its quarterly selections depends solely on the club's panel of experienced judges, assisted by specialist tasters.

Debbie Burden describes the Simonsig Merindol 2003 as exuding sheer elegance with seductive black cherry and wild spice flavours enriched with traces of dried fruit.

On the white side, without compromising consistency in wine excellence after 38 vintages, the popularity of Simonsig Chenin Blanc remains unsurpassed.

International judges are equally impressed with Simonsig's biggest selling wine, as recently confirmed by leading Wine & Spirits Magazine (US), who featured Simonsig Chenin Blanc 2005 as the Top South African Value Brand for 2006 – the only South African winery mentioned. This exquisite wine bursts with flamboyant fruit salad flavours, melting with a touch of honey on the palate.



## SAY CHEESE...

Simonsig added great sparkle to the 2006 South African Cheese Festival which attracted more than 22 500 enthusiasts. More than 370 bottles of **SIMONSIG KAAPSE VONKEL** were sold at this year's festival.

## CAPE WINE 2006 – THEME: DIVERSITY IS IN OUR NATURE

Cape Wine 2006 offered international wine delegates the rare opportunity to not only taste but also get up close and personal with a plethora of wines reflecting the region's natural environment, unique terroir and diversity in all its glory. Simonsig was included in this year's line-up of must-see landmarks when these enthusiasts from across the globe, including Germany, Belgium, Scotland, Holland and Kenya embarked on their Winelands voyage. A first-hand encounter with the Vineyards, an authentic tour of our working cellar and a memorable tasting of special vintages with renowned winemaker Johan Malan were included in the Simonsig Experience.



INTERNATIONAL GUESTS

SIMONSIG VINEYARD TEAM: MARTIN FARAO, FRANCOIS MALAN & LUDWIG UYS



## GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

In the vineyards... Winter 2006 sees the introduction of 15 hectares of new vines to the Simonsig Estate. The soil is ready to welcome new plantings of Chenin Blanc (the first since 1987), Chardonnay, Shiraz and Gewürztraminer. The latter is a sell out success in the Simonsig portfolio, which has seen a significant increase in demand over the last few years – Divine with winter curries and spicy foods.

In the cellar... New hi-tech degorging equipment will be installed later in the year to relieve the pressure on the production of Kaapse Vonkel. The new line will be fully automated and capable of degorging three times the number of bottles per day.

## HURRAY FOR CHARDONNAY



Upholding a legendary status in pioneering the first Chardonnay in South Africa, Simonsig affirmed its 30 years experience in expressing the nobility of this classic white wine at the Chardonnay du Monde 2006 - clinching medals for both Simonsig Reserve 2003 (silver) and Simonsig Chardonnay 2003 (bronze) at this year's challenge.

## NEDERBURG AUCTION 2006

The 32nd Nederburg Auction showcased two of the icons in the premium Simonsig red wine range. Simonsig Frans Malan Reserve 2000 and Simonsig Tiara 1998 both surpassed the stringent criteria of the selection panel comprising wine experts, judges and Cape Wine Masters and made it onto this year's list of prestigious finds. Twenty cases of each went under the hammer, with R1 900 as the highest bid attained for a case of Frans Malan and the flagship Bordeaux blend achieving R1 500.

Simonsig is one of only four wineries that have been part of this prestigious annual highlight on the SA wine calendar since the first auction in 1974.

