



A VINE TIME

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Heard it on the grapevine

Diemersfontein's pinotage talk of the wine industry

FOR a rugger bugger like me a drive around the Wellington winelands would not be complete without a stop-off at Welbedacht. It is here that Schalk Burger and Sons combine to make fine vintages under the Proprietors Reserve, Welbedacht and Meerkat labels.

I looked forward to a few words of wisdom on who would win the Super 14 and a tip or two for when the grandkids reach rugby age. But, sadly, Schalk Jnr was away sticking it to the Brumbies/Highlanders/Whoever and the equally illustrious Schalk Snr was not in immediate evidence, so we drove on down the road to

WINNING WINES

DUTY dictates that we record the trophy winners at the recent Old Mutual Trophy Wine Show: Most successful producer – Tokara; Best Shiraz and best red overall – Eagles Nest Shiraz 2008; Best Viognier and best white overall – Flagstone Word of Mouth 2008; Discovery of the Show Best Value – Pulpit Rock Reserve Chardonnay 2008; Best Dessert wine museum class – Nuy White Muscadet 1988; Best Chardonnay wooded – Paul Cluver 2009; Best Chardonnay Museum Class wooded – Chamonix Reserve 2005; Best White

Blend wooded – Tokara Director's Reserve 2008; Best White Blend Museum Class Wooded – Cape Point Isliedh 2006; Best Riesling – Klein Constantia white riesling 2009; Best semillon – KWV The Mentors 2009; Best Cabernet Sauvignon museum class – Tokara 2001; Best Pinotage – Tokara 2007; Best Sauvignon Blanc unwooded – Cederberg 2009; Best Chenin Blanc – Rijk's 2009; Best sparkling wine – Anura Brut 2008; Best Pinot Noir – Chamonix Reserve 2008; Best Malbec – Vrede en Lust Mocholate 2009.

Diemersfontein. This estate has earned a growing reputation in the industry for its quality

labels, most of which range between four and a half and four stars. Right now it is the talk of the

industry for its pinotage.

South Africa's Mr Pinotage title has long belonged to Beyers Truter of Beyerskloof in the Stellenbosch district, but Diemersfontein is putting in a strong challenge. So much so that it has ripped out its merlot vines and substituted pinotage – and this is our home-grown cultivar which overseas (and many local) critics loved so much to hate.

But that was when pinotage was "steel nails" not "coffee and chocolate" as the better ones are now described, and Diemersfontein gives all the coffee and chocolate my palate could manage. Their pinno comes in both the Carpe Diem and Diemersfontein ranges which rate four

and a half and four stars respectively. While quality difference is marginal, the price is not, so we settled for a six-pack of the four-star at R414 for the pack or R69 a bottle at which price it sells in several outlets in PE.

