

Building confidence in South African wines

By Cari Coetze

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We catch up with Lizelle Gerber, Méthode Cap Classique and white winemaker at Boschendal, to find out what will keep the wine flowing this year:



Lizelle Gerber

■ What are the top trends you are seeing in the wine industry?

Lizelle Gerber: The demand for rosé wines is definitely growing significantly, both for bubbly and still rosé wine. We are seeing a move away from sweet rosé to a drier more sophisticated style. The rise of rosé and elegant blush wines will definitely be an ongoing trend for 2017. The Boschendal Chardonnay/Pinot Noir is in high demand. This refined pale blush combines two classic varietals traditionally used in the making of Champagne and Méthode Cap Classique (MCC). This wine is perfect for those balmy afternoons with delicate red berry aromas, an elegant touch of spice, finessed stone fruit flavours and subtle hints of pear, creating a long, smooth, complex finish.

Speaking of Méthode Cap Classique, there is also a move towards enjoying bubbly during everyday summer festivities and shared moments and not only during times of celebration. The Boschendal Brut Rosé MCC is made in the traditional French method. Those elegant bubbles are formed during second bottle fermentation to create exceptional finesse and complexity. This bubbly's vibrant fruit detail and natural freshness are perfect with seafood, fresh summer salads and decadent berry desserts.

Chenin Blanc South Africa seems to be the wine on everyone's lips! I feel that 2016 was a year in which the versatility of Chenin Blanc was celebrated. South African Chenin Blanc is gaining momentum while raking in awards locally and abroad. Chenin Blanc is also instrumental in helping to drive the South African wine industry forward through broadening recognition and acknowledgement internationally. We are very proud that the Boschendal Sommelier Selection Chenin Blanc 2015 and the Rachelsfontein Chenin Blanc were acknowledged in various competitions as one of the finest South Africa has to offer.

The Boschendal Sommelier Selection 100% Chenin Blanc forms part of a sophisticated range of wines called the Sommelier Selection, created specifically to be enjoyed with food. Wines from this collection have also recently been acknowledged and selected by South Africa's top sommeliers for inclusion on the Sommelier Selection 2016 wine list used as a premium wine guide for top SA restaurants.



There is always time for a glass of #bubbles. Slow down, sit back and take a sip... #mcc #boschendal
#summer #franschhoek

A photo posted by Boschendal Wines (@boschendalwines) on Nov 23, 2016 at 4:42am PST

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■ ■ ■ **What role do you feel will play the biggest part in the industry this year?**

Gerber: For brand South Africa, I think it would be an incredible achievement to fly the Chenin Blanc banner high. The acknowledgement of South African Chenin Blancs worldwide will enable winemakers and viticulturists to save and nurture our precious old vines.

South African Chenin Blanc is still somewhat underrated. We need to educate and encourage our consumers to understand the quality in difference and heritage. The only way to protect our heritage is to protect our old vines.

■ ■ ■ **How will the lingering effects of the drought affect wine production and wine industry in general, if at all?**

Gerber: The drought this year I think is well managed naturally from the vineyard side. The entire growing season so far

has been dry, therefore the vineyards are used to and have adapted to the circumstances. We as winemakers and viticulturists will have to use the tools available to us to protect, nurture and guide nature's fruit to a work of art. The wines will not be a reflection of only the vineyards and terroir this year, winemakers and viticulturists will need to be strict on quality selection and preservation.

■ What are some of the biggest challenges facing the industry?

Gerber: Increasing the price point of our top quality wines is a very important step in terms of positioning South African wine and reaching the right market with these refined wines.

At Boschendal we are all about infusing modern innovation into the tried and tested ways of producing exceptional world-class wines and we feel that it is important to continue to improve and position South African wines in this way.

■ What would you like to see more of in 2017?

Gerber: I would love to see more confidence in brand South Africa worldwide. We make wines of exceptional quality and value for money should, therefore, not be our signature sales point.

■ Any advice for fellow wine makers and others in the wine industry for the year to come?

Gerber: Be the best you can on all levels of life. Balance and patience are the secret – difficult as it is to manage it all at times. Drink only fine wine, have fun, enjoy and treasure each moment, live in the moment.

ABOUT CARI COETZEE

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.
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