

A SUPER SUCCESSFUL SECOND AUCTION FOR LE VIN DE FRANCOIS PINOTAGE

Well known wine maker, wine personality and self professed Pinotage patron, Francois Naudé and his family made wine history in 2008 with the introduction of their unique new label, Le Vin de Francois. What made the concept special is the fact that potential buyers had to be invited to the auction to get their hands on some of the exclusive wine. This year the guests were once again transported to a secret venue outside Stellenbosch for the second Annual auction.

Croydon Olive Estate Lifestyle Centre was transformed into a 1930's "Speakeasy Club" with entertainment provided by Jazz duo Micu Narunsky and Lainey Boonzaier

A saxophone player moved among the guests setting the tone while invitees were enjoying French Champagne & canapés. Catering was provided by celebrity chef Bruce Robertson, and some of the delicacies on the menu included: Avocado Ritz with grilled cajun prawn tails served with long bruchetta and mary rose velouté, Duck a l'orange with duck confit ballotine and fondant potatoes served with asparagus, watercress and orange salad. Dessert was an extravaganza of more than 1200 individual sweet treats, including peppermint iceberg puffs, cranberry and vodka jelly squares with gold dust, banana split dessert, marble cake, vanilla rice pudding with cream, lemon pie and twinkies.

The second annual auction took place on Friday 23 October, under the competent hammer of Henri Hablutzel.

Francois consults for various top wineries and is involved with all aspects from viticulture to grape selection and winemaking. He decided to ask his clients for carte blanche in their cellars, allowing him to select a barrel or two of the wines that he thought would benefit his unique Pinotage fusion.

For the 2008 blend, the following eight producers' Pinotage were selected as building blocks: Bellingham, Delheim, Hartenberg, Kanonkop, Lanzerac, L'avenir, Neil Ellis & Simonsig.

All 200 cases (12 x 750 ml) were sold on auction, as well as a couple of magnum bottles and unique art works, namely palm prints of the owners or winemakers of the wines selected for the blend. Sales accounted for R720, 000, a 7% increase from 2008. The highest price for a case, including the very first bottle of Le Vin de Francois' maiden vintage that came off the production line, was sold for R10 000.

The biggest buyers were from Belgium and France, and other foreign bidders snapping up 36% of sales included representatives from the Czech Republic, Holland, and the United Kingdom. This is a great result, taking into account the Euro being 15% weaker than last year, as well as the current economic downturn.

The total number of buyers also rose with 32%. This year, 37 bidders were successful at the auction, opposed to the previous years' 28.

"Every aspect of the product is unique with the greatest regard for quality and exclusivity. The bottle is an imported Saverglass creation, called Bordelaise 1855. It is a reproduction of the original Bordeaux bottle. The closures are hand selected Amorim corks, the twelve bottle wooden cases that the wine comes in are custom made, stackable and sturdy, and the label a unique work of art from well known designer Haumann Smal. "It is commonly known that I am a Pinotage fan, Pinotage is in my blood, and it gives me great pleasure to make a product that I consider a benchmark Pinotage." said Francois.

The icon that was used on the label is a wing nut, symbolizing the clasp together of family ideals, with the different wines from a variety of terroirs that created this unique wine. Francois also jokingly added that the wing nut looks a little bit like his ears!

Production of Le Vin de Francois will always be limited, and only 2600 bottles of the 2008 vintage was made.

Thirty six bottles or three twelve bottle wooden boxes will be available for a special on line auction, starting on Monday 2 November 2009. The money generated with this auction will go towards the Faith Fund, an organisation that targets Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, and of which Francois Naude Junior is a director. For more details on the auction, or to bid, please visit www.levindefrancois.com

A further thirty six bottles were kept aside for intimate press tastings that Francois will host at his home in Stellenbosch.

Crystal Direct sponsored all the stunning crystal glassware and decanters. The awesome bedouin tent that covered the outside 'smoking room' where cognac & cigars were enjoyed afterwards were supplied by Andrew from Mola Events Logistics and the beautiful venue at Croydon Olive Estate, all made the evening unforgettable.

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