

September wine column

From Xavier Le-Bellégo Forbury's Restaurant

No country in the wine world has changed as much over the last decade as South-Africa.

Famous regions, like Stellenbosch, Paarl, Wellington, Franschhoek and Robertson are being joined by Malmesbury, Elim, Walker Bay, Elgin and Worcester.

So, with perfect growing conditions, almost too good in some places, what has it got on offer?

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz and the indigenous Pinotage, for the white, Chenin blanc (known locally as Steen), Sauvignon blanc and Chardonnay are all working well. I suspect that Bordeaux blends and classic Syrah/Shiraz styles will be regarded as the way forward for reds, while Chenin, Sauvignon and Chardonnay will all hold their own style.

South-Africa makes earthy, muscular reds and this suits Syrah more than it does erudite Cabernet, but some very smart "cope blends" are emerging, where Pinotage is blend into the mix.

Watch this space with regards to these styles, they will provide us with something uniquely South-African, as Pinotage isn't planted anywhere else, and love a good reason to add something to my wine diet.

South-African Sauvignon blanc, are also very interesting, situated not only geographically, between the Loire and Marlborough in New Zealand, the classic cape style is racy, lean and mildly exotic, somewhere between the two existing classics' own versions.

New wineries are springing up all over the place, even in areas not previously designated for vine growing. Genuinely exciting is the openers of the current generation to exchange ideas, whilst, I am sure, retaining a healthy rivalry.

MY WINE RECOMMENDATION:

- Old vine Chenin blanc 2006, Stellenbosch £8,29
- Nelson Creek Sauvignon blanc , Paarl 2005 £7,99
e: wine@corneyandbarrow.com

- Hamilton Russel Pinot noir, Walker Bay, £19,50
e: sales@hallgarten.co.uk

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Cheers

Xavier LE-BELLEGO

FORBURY'S RESTAURANT