

# the goose that laid the golden wine

The Goose wine was born out of a “journey to make world class wines in unknown wine territory” and started with all the right ingredients – passion, business sense, the perfect terroir and a great golfer. Lately, it sports a new winemaker too.

WORDS WINNIE YANIOGLOU



The venture started in 2007 when double US Open winner Retief Goosen joined entrepreneurs Werner Roux and Morne Jonker in marketing wine from a farm nestled in the picturesque Langkloof valley between Oudtshoorn and Uniondale. A century ago the farm was called “Ganzekraal”, named after the wild geese which flew down to rest in the cattle and sheep enclosures, and a nice fit for Goosen, who is popularly known as “Goose” on the world golf circuit.

The region was first identified as a potential wine producing area by Jonker and iconic wine figure Bruce Jack in 2002. They were joined by Charles Back from Fairview in 2003, and now – four years later – by exciting new winemaker Alwyn Liebenberg, giving rise to The Goose wines.



Well-known golfer Retief Goosen, also known as the “Goose” on the golf circuit, holding the fruits of the farm



## THE BRANDS

Two brands have been established. The Goose wines are made from the best grapes on the farm and The Gander wines come from reputedly sourced vineyards.



Retief Goosen and entrepreneurs Werner Roux and Morne Jonker joined forces four years ago to start off the business

Liebenberg has a reputation for being one of South Africa’s most innovative winemakers and meeting this unpretentious character, whose boundless enthusiasm for his beloved wine bubbles through his veins, was a treat for *South*.

Liebenberg is now CEO and winemaker at The Goose. He has been with the winery permanently since 2010 and has a BComm Honour’s in Transport Economics, which no doubt comes in handy when it came to administering the logistics involved in producing wine made in Stellenbosch from grapes grown in the Upper Langkloof.

Originally from the West Coast, Liebenberg worked at SA Breweries for four years after completing his degree in 1996. It was during this time that he was introduced to the magic of wine by his new friends in the industry, Paul Benade, Francois Naude and Beyers Truter. Liebenberg also developed a passion for port, which took him to Quinta de Pacheca in Portugal for a year, and when he returned he enrolled to study for his BSc Oenology at Elsenberg. He returned to Portugal for his cellar year and on his homecoming to South Africa in 2004 he joined Boplaas for three years. Uitvlug was next, and it was during his time with this winery that Liebenberg also started working with the team at The Goose wines.

The *terroir* driven attitude of the people at Goose supports the belief that “wines are made in the vineyard”. *Terroir* is originally a French term used to denote the special characteristics that the geography, geology and climate



## THE GOOSE

The grapes are hand-picked early in small amounts and their temperature immediately brought down to 4°C, which is maintained for 12 hours. Upon arrival at the cellar, the grapes are again sorted before the wine production process can commence. The Goose range consists of a Sauvignon Blanc and a Cabernet/Shiraz blend named “Expression”. The Goose Sauvignon Blanc is a classic and is elegantly structured with layers of fruit well supported by ageing in French oak barrels. “Expression” has typical Shiraz white pepper flavours which fuse with the soft, blackberry undertones of the Cabernet Sauvignon.

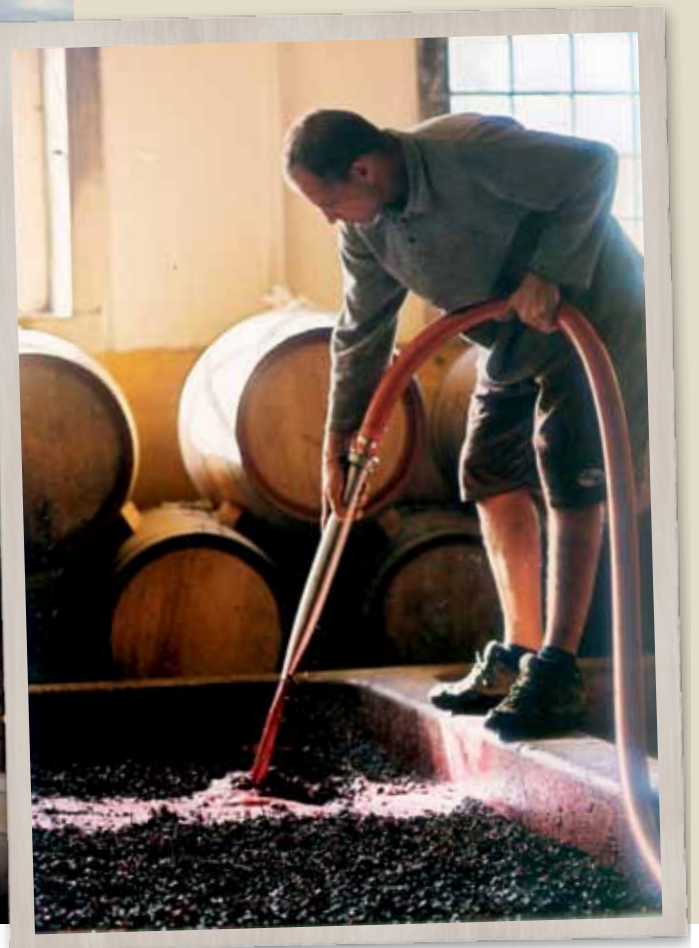
## THE GANDER

Langkloof and specially selected Western Cape wines are blended to create a new style of zesty, exciting and fruity wines. A Sauvignon Blanc and a Shiraz are produced under The Gander brand. The Sauvignon Blanc is an exhilarating, fresh and balanced wine while the Shiraz delivers the promise of a full-bodied wine with bold berry fruits and mixed spices.





Alwyn Liebenberg, innovative, well travelled and experienced winemaker is now CEO and winemaker at The Goose



of a certain place bestows upon particular varieties of wine, coffee and tea. It can be loosely translated as “a sense of place” and means the sum of the effects the environment has on the production of the product. The concept of *terroir* forms the basis of the French wine appellation *d'origine contrôlée* (“controlled designation of origin”) certification system, which grants certain geographical indications for wines, cheeses, butters and other agricultural products and has been the model for appellation and wine laws across the globe.

Liebenberg says research conducted over 10 years by the Nietvoorbij campus of the Cape Wine Academy found the Langkloof to have the most constant cool temperatures in South Africa. This is further confirmed by the fact that the area traditionally produces excellent apples, which grow best in constantly cool climates.

The valley has an average annual temperature of only 17°C – the result is clear in the elegance and complexity of The Goose wines.

By 1999 6ha of Cabernet Sauvignon were planted followed by 6ha of Shiraz in 2000. 2002 saw the planting of the popular Sauvignon Blanc. Currently, 5ha of Pinot Noir is taking root.

The towering 1500m high Outeniqua mountains which flank the valley naturally maintain an ideal temperature to support the

quality of grapes they aim to grow. The valley itself is 750m above sea level and known for its dry, cool climate. Extensive research on the soil types helped them to accurately determine the correct cultivar for planting. Drip irrigation is used, but the dryness of the area contributes to the concentrated flavours of the wines. The end result is a typical French style wine with a mineral elegance, a velvety feel and lasting complexity.

#### BIODIVERSITY

The Goose supports The Biodiversity and Wine Initiative, a pioneering partnership between the South African wine industry and the conservation sector. In 2004, faced with just four percent of the Cape Floral Kingdom’s unique Renosterveld remaining, the wine industry sealed a partnership with the Botanical Society of South Africa to protect the environment. The initiative is mandated to encourage wine farmers to farm sustainably and to express the advantages of the Cape’s abundant diversity in their wines. The initiative fits with the Goose winemakers’ philosophy of achieving a balance between the preservation of their natural resources and the creation of world class wines. ■



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