

the hands that work the soil feed the soul



fairvalley

Cellar facilities at Fairview have been provided for Fairvalley's winemaker, Awie Adolf, to make wine. His first vintage, a 1998 Chenin Blanc, was enthusiastically snapped up by one of the UK's high profile wine retailers. Their first vintage of red wine was a 2001 Pinotage. In 2003, the range was extended to include Sauvignon Blanc, with the subsequent addition of Pinotage and Cabernet Sauvignon. They intend to develop the range over the next few years, using the cellar and bottling facilities at Fairview.

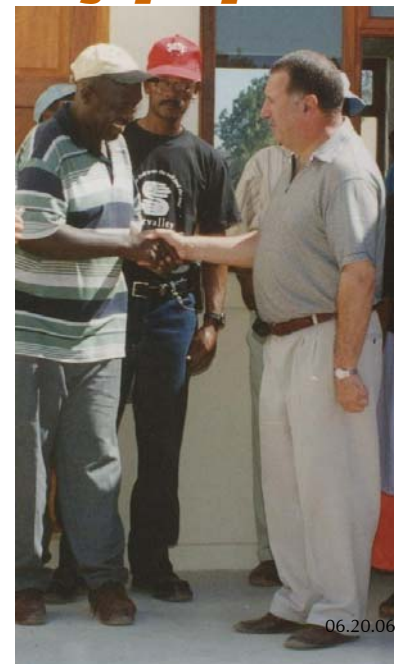
The Fairvalley Workers Association, founded in 1997, was set up by the employees of Fairview Wine and Cheese Estate in order to develop and manage their own property. Initial funding, which went to purchase a 38 acre farm adjacent to Fairview, was provided equally by Charles Back, owner of Fairview, and the South African government. Subsequent funding for the development of homes and eventual construction of a wine cellar is being arranged through commercial activities.



Empowerment is not just giving people a piece of land and saying 'go make some wine.' It is about growing, allowing people to

In addition to developing their community financially, Fairvalley support training and other forms of activities that will uplift members of their community, particularly their youth.

In March 2002 the first phase of the development of their farm was completed with great excitement as a number of member families took possession of their own homes. The association plans to establish vineyards on the property, build more homes, a cellar and a tasting room. In addition the association is looking at other entrepreneurial endeavors to generate profit from which to fund their dreams.



vinnovative
IMPORTS
tel 704-489-9463
www.capevine.com

The New York Times

excerpts from

10 Years Past Apartheid, Wine Industry Thrives

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2004

By **FRANK J. PRIAL**

Recently, I made the same journey here [to South Africa] that I made a decade ago, from Cape Town to Stellenbosch, to Paarl and Helderberg, to Franschoek and Somerset West. I tasted, I questioned and I listened. And I discovered that South Africa has begun to make world-class wines.

The Cape wine community, once a closed-in and paranoid group except for a handful of frustrated and innovative troublemakers, today has an international flair.

Twenty years ago, the Cape vineyards produced a sea of dull chenin blanc and the controversial pinotage (a cross between pinot noir and cinsault, then known in South Africa as hermitage, that was developed in the 1920's). There is still plenty of both, but cabernet sauvignon, merlot, chardonnay and sauvignon blanc are everyone's favorites now and other newcomers like malbec, mourvedre, nebbiolo, petit verdot, gamay, grenache, semillon and viognier thrive in the sun of the Southern Hemisphere.

Young South African winemakers are making all kinds of wines from this new abundance. And they are doing so in different soils. The concept of terroir — that elusive combination of the best soil and best location for grapes grown in it — was ignored by most winemakers here for more than a generation. But now Cape vintners have adopted it with a vengeance. Everywhere, vineyards are planted, pulled and replanted. And once the vines find a happy home, their yields are limited severely to increase the intensity of the wine. Older vineyards here have 2,500 vines an acre, on average. New ones have 6,000. The result: a whole new generation of wines with power, depth, rich flavors and finesse.

Sauvignon blanc may have been the first hint to the rest of the world that South African wines had something new and exciting to offer. . . . Even chenin blanc and pinotage have taken on new life. Chenin blanc, known here as steen, and still the Cape's most heavily planted grape, traditionally produced a heavy, flabby wine, better suited for distilling than drinking. No more. A 2002 old-vine chenin from Cedarberg, in distant Olifants River, had the depth and intense bouquet of a fine, dry Vouvray. At the same time, a newfound, almost chauvinistic interest in pinotage has produced some smooth, full-bodied wines that might be mistaken for shiraz. Anthony Hamilton Russell offers a good example of the new pinotage, with richness and a touch of finesse under his second label, Southern Right.

For Americans, the best-known South African wine at the moment is probably Goats Do Roam, made by Charles Back at his Fairview Estate in Paarl. About 80,000 cases of Goats Do Roam, a serious wine with a tongue-in-cheek name that plays on France's Côte du Rhône, are sold annually in the United States.

Adjoining Fairview is **FAIRVALLEY**, a winemaking community of 63 black families started in 1997 with a government grant and land donated by Mr. Back. He has mentored the project and lent them space in his winery. Their wines — a sauvignon blanc and a pinotage — are sold in supermarkets here in South Africa and will go on sale in several markets in the United States later this year. Fair Valley profits help build houses for the workers' families.

In spite of remarkable achievements in the last decade, the modern South African wine business is in its infancy. "Strange, isn't it?" said John Platter, the country's best-known wine journalist and founder of the Platter guide to South African wines. "We are the oldest and the youngest."

It's true: the Western Cape has had 340 vintages since the Dutch arrived here in the 17th century, but the wine business changed immensely in the last half of the 20th century. Now its winemakers are racing to catch up.

"When you see what we've done in 10 years," Charles Back said, "and we manage to continue at the same pace, imagine where we will be 10 years from now."

*I discovered that
South Africa has
begun to make
world-class wines.*

excerpts from

Sips

by Jerry Shriver

Friday, April 16, 2004



PAARL, South Africa - To stay abreast of progress being made by this country's steadily evolving wine industry, keep an eye on Charles Back . . . "we have to over-deliver to be successful. We have to make up for lost time."

By "lost time," he's referring to the racist apartheid era, now a decade gone, which, among other things caused the country to be shunned by much of the world and stunted its economic growth. But today that legacy of shame is giving birth to "black empowerment" projects in a variety of industries, which are designed to move the black majority population into positions of ownership and management. A project sponsored by Back has, predictably, become a model for the wine industry.

In 1997 a group of black Fairview farm workers formed an association, and with a government grant formed their own farming community, **FAIRVALLEY**, on land donated by Back, adjacent to Fairview. The group has been making wines for seven years with help from Back, who sometimes offers advice and donates space in the winery. Back also helps them gain access to grape growers and subsidizes some of the workers' housing. Most of the wine has been sold through supermarkets, and profits have allowed the workers to build eight houses so far.

*We're a role
model
for the
world.
South Africa
recognizes
the need to*

This month, Vinnovative Imports, a Charlotte, N.C.-based company (capewine.com), agreed to import the Fairvalley wines. The wines will be the first from an empowerment project to receive widespread distribution here.

Back sees his involvement as "my moral obligation as a South African who has benefited from a skewed system," though he emphasizes that his role with Fairvalley is mostly hands-off and not done for public relations.

"I don't interfere. The whole process is about allowing people to make mistakes - as long as they are manageable mistakes. Empowerment is not just giving people a piece of land and saying 'go make some wine.' It is about growing, allowing people to work upward."

Try them in the USA

. . . among the standouts in the 4,000-plus wines on display last month at Cape Wine 2004 in Cape Town, the country's largest trade show. Check out some of these wines from the show, which are currently available in America:

Sauvignon Blanc

2003 Fairvalley (out in June)

2003 Jardin

Syrah/Shiraz and Rhone-style blends

2002 The Observatory Carignan/Syrah

Back is "cautiously optimistic" about the chances for success of the more than a dozen empowerment projects underway in the wine industry. He concedes that the growing pains will be severe.

"But if you take what has happened in South Africa in the last 10 years, the bad laws are gone, and people interact, and there is a latent pool of goodwill," he says. "We're a role model for the world. South Africa recognizes the need to change itself."