HARVEST REPORT 2007

Cool growing season produces exciting white and red wines

As provided by Sawis, in collaboration with VinPro Consultation Service – compiled by ROMI BOOM.

I. General overview

- Exceptional wines were made from the 2007 vintage and winemakers keenly anticipate top quality red as well as white wines.
- The cold winter and favourable climatic conditions of 2006 set the scene for the 06/07 season.
- It was a very healthy season. The crop ripened practically disease free.
- The harvest was long and drawn out with early cultivars ripening up to 10 days earlier.

For quotations by winemakers in various regions, see below.

Crop size: The estimated 2007 wine harvest of 1 049,4 million litres (1 355 876 tons) at an average recovery of 774 litres per ton of grapes, represents an increase of 4.2% compared to the 2006 crop. This includes grape juice concentrate and grape juice, wine for brandy and distilling wine.

Good winter rains ensured that most cultivars performed better than the previous two seasons. The crop is bigger in all the regions except Stellenbosch (where the 2006 harvest was above average), Malmesbury/Swartland (production varied within the region) and Orange River (drying conditions and prices for raisins were excellent, causing less grapes to be delivered to the cellars).

Autumn 2006: The vines' cold demand was thoroughly satisfied. During the post-harvest period in May good rainfall occurred, with leaf drop at the usual time, as well as proper accumulation of reserves. Worcester/Breedekloof had exceptionally high rainfall in May (90 mm more than the long term average) and cold night temperatures, which were very beneficial to soil water levels. In the Orange River substantial rainfall during the previous pressing season caused downy mildew in some parts of the region.

Winter 2006: It was a normal cold, wet Cape winter, causing the vines to go into proper dormancy. Stellenbosch experienced more winter and spring rainfall than the long term average and temperatures were mild. In Robertson the winter was one of the best with very good cold units for dormancy breaking and regular showers to supplement the soil water sufficiently. In Paarl too the water level of dams was very high. The Klein Karoo had copious amounts of rain towards the end of winter and large dams filled within a matter of days. The Brandvlei dam in Worcester and the Clanwilliam dam in the Olifants River were also at capacity.

In the Olifants River region rainfall was average and even below average, but nicely dispersed so that after some years producers were once again able to establish cover

crops successfully. In the Orange River winter temperatures were low throughout and very cold nights were experienced towards the end of July and beginning of August. Later in the season cold damage was visible in numerous vineyards, especially in the higher-lying areas.

The 2006 growing season: Growth was generally vigorous, mainly due to good soil moisture and the mild climate. Canopy management was of the utmost importance to ensure good, effective foliage. The strong vigour was most welcome in high production cultivars.

In Paarl, Stellenbosch and Worcester strong, cold winds during the flowering period (mid October to mid November) caused looser bunches, resulting in uneven flower and bunch development. Apart from looser bunches, there was also unevenness between bunches as well as berries on the same bunch. To improve quality producers had to remove green bunches and even berries at various stages. Chardonnay was also affected by uneven budding and did not set very well in Stellenbosch, Constantia and the Cederberg. Apart from these regions good set occurred in most blocks.

Even though disease pressure conditions were occasioned by regular spring showers, the rest of the season proved exceptionally healthy due to the dry, mild climatic conditions. Robertson experienced sporadic outbreaks of downy mildew, but it had no significant effect on the size of the crop. In the Orange River oidium occurred in November and December and also downy mildew in vines with dense canopies after the January showers, but both were controlled by corrective spraying as well as the warm February weather and dry sunshine. Stellenbosch was troubled by snout beetles.

The harvest: Despite the heatwave at the start of the harvest, the nights remained relatively cool and most vineyards were properly buffered by sufficient available water and optimal canopies. Early cultivars such as Pinotage and Pinot noir suffered most. As a result of the heat most cultivars ripened much earlier than last year, with excellent colour and concentrated fruit.

February rain showers were beneficial to the late cultivars such as Shiraz and Cabernet. Moderate temperatures with a few warm days and hardly any rain during the latter part of ripening ensured excellent, slow ripening conditions and phenolic ripeness. Full ripeness in late cultivars was achieved at lower sugars than usual. The cool spring and summer temperatures were very conducive to the production of top quality grapes.

The wines: Winemakers are confident that white as well as red wines are exceptional, in particular Sauvignon blanc, Chenin blanc, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. The colours and aromas of the reds are intense and consumers can look forward to big wines with complex structures. White wines have lovely flavours, texture and lower sugars than previous years. Rosé wines, made in all the regions from different red cultivars, should prove to be interesting.

Little Karoo: An exceptionally healthy year. All cultivars performed better than the previous two seasons.

Olifants River: Probably the biggest crop ever. The quality of the wine looks very promising.

Orange River: Due to good prices for raisins, large volumes of Sultanas were not pressed. The crop is also 16% smaller. The quality of grapes and wines was excellent on the whole, with higher sugars and acid levels and lower pHs.

Paarl: An excellent vintage. Good quality Chardonnay, Pinotage and Cabernet Sauvignon. Exceptional Chenin blanc and Shiraz. Interesting rosé wines from various red cultivars.

Robertson: One of the best vintages ever with most favourable weather conditions. Excellent wines, especially Chardonnay, Shiraz and Chenin blanc.

Stellenbosch: The season was cool and particularly disease free. A drawn out harvest. Good quality Chardonnay, Chenin blanc, Shiraz, Pinotage, Cabernet and Merlot.

Malmesbury/Swartland: An early season where four weeks' work was done in one week. The grapes were very healthy and wines across the spectrum look promising.

Worcester/Breedekloof: Excellent quality wines, especially Chardonnay and Cabernet. Viognier has great potential. Large volumes of red grapes were once again delivered for wine for brandy.

II. MOST IMPORTANT WINE REGIONS

LITTLE KAROO

Production trends

The 2007 production amounts to 47 092 tons which is 27% bigger than the 2006 production. Good winter rainfall ensured that all cultivars performed better than the previous two seasons.

Climate

There was abundant rainfall towards the end of winter and large dams filled to capacity within the span of a few days. All sources of irrigation water were supplemented. Spring started with very wet soil and producers who had suffered from the previous year's drought were optimistic. Although there was little rainfall during spring and summer, the soil had sufficient water reserves and resources remained strong until after the harvest.

Winter cold was sufficient for dormancy to be broken entirely. In most cultivars budding was normal and even. Spring and summer temperatures were cool and very conducive to the production of top quality grapes. The first heatwave occurred towards the end of January.

Vigour was generally strong, mainly due to the good soil moisture content, not only on the berm, but across the entire surface. The water table in valleys and along river courses was high and provided moisture to vineyards until late spring. In high production cultivars the strong vigour was most welcome. Good set occurred in most blocks. The only exception was a few blocks in the vicinity of Oudtshoorn that formed very few flower clusters as a result of last year's drought.

With the exceptionally wet conditions at the end of winter boll-worm occurred early in spring, but did not cause economic losses. Regular oidium infection periods occurred throughout the season, but thanks to regular control losses were prevented.

Even during the heatwave the nights remained relatively cool. Full ripeness in late cultivars was achieved at much lower sugar than usual. At the time of the harvest the bunches were much heavier and the berries larger than the previous season.

Grape and wine quality

Due to low red wine prices and the red wine surplus, more red grapes were used to make alternative products.

OLIFANTS RIVER

Production trends

The Olifants River probably experienced its biggest crop ever. Colombar production was exceptionally good, and there was a constant increase in red grapes with plantings coming into full production. Pinotage made up for the very low production of the previous season. Production of Chenin blanc decreased from Trawal to Lutzville, with a decrease of up to 40% in the Lutzville area.

Climate

Although rainfall was average and even below average during the previous winter, it was nicely spread out and after several years producers were once again able to establish cover crops successfully. The Clanwilliam Dam was also full until the end of winter with the result that irrigation water was and remains sufficient to irrigate vines optimally, another factor which contributed to what was probably a record crop. Growth conditions throughout the growing season were optimal with mild temperatures and normal westerly winds in the afternoon.

The average February temperature was as much as 2°C lower than previous years, but temperatures were very high in the period from 20 to 25 January. At that stage a large portion of the heat sensitive Sauvignon blanc had already been pressed.

Grape and wine quality

Under these favourable climatic conditions the harvest ripened practically disease free. Snails, in particular the dune snail, and snout beetles caused some damage, while oidium and coccids are increasingly prevalent.

Red grapes were pressed at lower degrees of ripeness to make rosé and white wine, which brought some relief with regard to the peaks of Shiraz intake; the rest of the grapes could therefore be taken in at optimal ripeness.

The quality of the wine is very promising and producers are looking forward to a year in which the wine industry will pay better dividends.

ORANGE RIVER

Production trends

The total crop for the Orange River was 161 975 tons – 16% smaller than the 2006 crop – with lower yields from most cultivars, especially Sultana and Merbein. The delivery of Sultana and Merbein to the cellars, mainly for juice and wine for brandy purposes, was influenced by the weather conditions that favoured the production of raisins, as well as dramatic increases in the price of raisins as from the middle of January 2007.

In the higher-lying areas of the Orange River the yield of Sultana and Merbein was up to 60% lower. The yield of wine grapes in the eastern parts was between 10-20% lower than last year, but in the western parts yields were similar to last year.

Climate

Copious amounts of rain in parts of the region during the previous pressing season caused serious downy mildew, resulting in some regrowth during the post-harvest period.

Winter temperatures were low throughout. The first frost occurred towards the end of May 2006. The end of July and beginning of August had very cold nights. Later in the season cold damage was visible in many vineyards, especially in the higher-lying regions. Growth arrest was also a widespread occurrence. Budding started in the second half of August. Low night temperatures in September resulted in frost damage in several areas. Large differences between day and night temperatures occurred in October.

Temperatures in November and December were normal, with hardly any rainfall, but it was very hot in January – regularly above 40°C in the second half of the month, when high humidity was prevalent, in conjunction with high temperatures. Regular rain showers occurred during this period, especially in the eastern parts. During the last two weeks of February temperatures exceeded 40°C, with hardly any rainfall from February to mid-March. As many producers could not irrigate sufficiently, many vineyards, especially on the lighter soils outside the irrigation scheme, experienced drought conditions and showed symptoms of leaf loss.

Grape and wine quality

In general it was an exceptionally healthy year with little disease. Oidium occurred in November and December and downy mildew in very dense vines after the January showers, but were controlled through corrective spraying combined with the warm weather and dry sunshine in February. Oidium was also prevalent in the post-harvest period.

All cultivars ripened much earlier than last year. Most of the Chenin blanc was harvested by mid-Feburary. The quality of the grapes and wine was generally excellent, with high sugars and acid levels and lower pHs.

PAARL

Production trends

The 2007 crop may be more than 7% bigger than the 2006 crop of 155 423 tons, mainly because producers aimed for higher productions to compensate for lower prices, and because many young vines, especially red wine cultivars, are still coming into full production.

Chardonnay, Sauvignon blanc and to a lesser extent Colombar showed an increase in production. Chenin blanc showed the biggest decrease due to a large percentage of old vines, the production of which is continuously decreasing.

In contrast with the previous season all red cultivars, except Cinsaut, showed an increase in production ranging from 5% to more than 20%; the most important reasons being that more buds had been left during winter pruning, together with lighter/fewer sucker actions in order to limit input costs.

Climate

For the first time in four years Paarl experienced a good winter dormancy period, followed by one of the best growing seasons ever. The total amount of winter rain (May

to Aug.) in 2006 measured ± 550mm, which was almost exactly the same as the previous year. The water level of dams was very high, which created great expectations for quality and comforted producers who were keen to increase their productions.

Budding was good and even, especially Chardonnay, Merlot, Pinotage, Sauvignon blanc and Chenin blanc; however, in some instances the yield of the latter two was light. The climate was very mild throughout the entire growing season, except for strong wind during the flowering period (mid-Oct. to mid-Nov.).

Approximately 200mm of rain fell from budding to véraison – about 30% more than the previous season. Conditions were favourable for the development of fungal diseases and early in the season snails and snout beetles damaged leaves and shoots. There were a few outbreaks of oidium.

A heatwave during the last week of January caused a fair amount of sunburn damage to canopies and grapes. The flavour intensity of the grapes was nevertheless excellent. Approximately 30mm of rain was measured early in February, consequently optimal ripening was achieved in all the mid- to late-season cultivars (dryland vineyards in particular), although it was slightly delayed.

Grape and wine quality

Grape analyses were good. Cellar space was under considerable pressure, especially from the mid- and late season cultivars, as a result of large stock levels.

Good quality white wines may be expected from Chardonnay and especially Chenin blanc. Shiraz once again promises to produce exceptional wines, while the quality of Pinotage and Cabernet Sauvignon will also be good. Several rosé wines were made from various red cultivars and promise to produce interesting wines.

ROBERTSON

Production trends

From a producer point of view the 2007 vintage will be remembered as one of the best ever. The crop size of 197 470 tons is 18% bigger than the 2006 crop, which was below average. In recent years more vines were planted than uprooted in Robertson. The total surface of vines increased from 12 403 ha in 2002 to 13 603 ha in 2006; combined with young vines coming into full production and older vines which had more grapes, this contributed to a bigger crop.

Climate

The good winter of 2006 set the scene for the 06/07 season. Winter was one of the best with very good cold units for dormancy breaking and regular rain that supplemented the soil water sufficiently. Budding was not only very good, but also slightly earlier than usual.

Although regular spring showers caused high disease pressure conditions, the season was particularly healthy. Downy mildew occurred sporadically, but did not have a significant effect on the size of the crop.

The mild climate and practical absence of rain during the harvest contributed furthermore to a bigger crop. Heatwave conditions occurred towards the end of January, but due to the fact that Robertson irrigates intensively and the stronger vigour that was prevalent throughout the season, the vines handled the conditions very well. Consequently the

dense canopies functioned more effectively despite the heat, enabling the grapes to ripen optimally, and shaded them against the heat.

Grape and wine quality

The Robertson region could not have asked for a better season. Not only was the climate conducive to growing conditions, it also resulted in healthier grapes. Producers are looking forward to excellent 2007 wines, especially Chardonnay, Shiraz and Chenin blanc.

STELLENBOSCH

Production trends

Estimates show that the 2007 crop will be 2% lighter than the 2006 crop, which was above average. It was a cool season and a particularly disease-free vintage, in which climatic conditions, especially during the ripening period, played a decisive role.

Climate

Winter and spring rainfall exceeded the long term average and was better than in 2005. Winter temperatures were mild. Temperatures were cool during the early part of the growing season, with good rainfall in October, November and December.

The January climate influenced the size and quality of the crop. There was hardly any rain, with cool conditions at the beginning of the month. Unusually hot conditions prevailed at the end of January. February and March were cool to normal with above-average rainfall.

Good and even budding occurred in all cultivars. Shoot growth was uneven due to the cooler climatic conditions. Rain showers in November, as well as windy conditions, influenced flowering and looser bunches were obtained, causing uneven flower and cluster development.

Disease pressure was low, but snout beetles were problematic. Vigorous growth occurred and canopy management was of the utmost importance to ensure good, effective canopies.

Grape and wine quality

The harvesting season was long and drawn out with early cultivars ripening up to 10 days earlier. The late cultivars ripened on time or slightly later. Early cultivars, especially Sauvignon blanc, benefited from the cooler conditions, while the heatwave at the end of January affected red cultivars negatively.

Berry shrinking and sunburn, which affected Pinotage, Merlot and Shiraz, influenced bunch weight and delayed ripening. Showers in February and March caused botrytis in Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon especially.

Good grape analyses were obtained from the early cultivars. Although the heatwave caused lower acids in later cultivars, pH measurements were acceptable. In general it was a promising year with good yields and quality, especially in Chardonnay, Shiraz, Chenin blanc and Pinotage, even though the latter two had variable productions. Sauvignon blanc, with smaller bunches, also had variable productions, mostly less than the previous season; so did Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, although the quality is good.

MALMESBURY/SWARTLAND

Production trends

Estimates show that the crop will probably be 5% smaller than last year, although it appeared to be much bigger. It ranges within the region, Darling cellar being 4% bigger and Malmesbury/Swartland cellar 11% smaller, while Riebeek Cellar had the same tonnage as last year.

Generally speaking the volume of the whites is slightly less and that of the reds slightly more. Cultivars such as Pinotage and Shiraz are more than 10% up on the 2006 crop, while Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are the same or less than in 2006. Due to availability of improved material, the cultivars Grenache and Carignan are looking good, with approximately the same production than Cinsaut. Chenin Blanc on poor/marginal soils, Chardonnay, Sauvignon blanc and Colombar had a slightly smaller yield.

Climate

The season kicked off on a very promising note with a good winter and cool summer. Far less irrigation took place, which caused the concentration of minerals and elements in the soil solution to increase. Less vigorous vines were able to handle the drought stress well. Both Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot were too vigorous and displayed green flavours.

Due to the early season the intake of grapes at the cellars was initially early (four weeks' work was done in one week!), then again blocks that were late due to late rain delayed intake by weeks.

Grape and wine quality

Quality across the spectrum looks very promising and the grapes were very healthy. Showers from February onwards were beneficial to the late cultivars. Sauvignon blanc from the cooler southerly and westerly slopes have good analyses and lovely flavours.

The cold weather after the harvest, with a definitive transition from autumn to winter, bodes well for budding. If a good rainy season is in store, prospects for the 2008 production year are most favourable.

WORCESTER/BREEDEKLOOF

Production trends

The crop is much bigger than last year and according to April estimates more than 357 124 tons can be expected, which is 11% more than in 2006. This increase may be ascribed to favourable climatic conditions, as well as 2004 plantings that are now coming into full production. The pressing season lasted from week 4 to 14. The crop size was average and the quality above average.

Climate

The post-harvest period in 2006 started with very hot and dry conditions in February and March. In some instances this period coincided with the end of the harvest, causing water to be limited and ripening to occur earlier. April and May were characterised by cold night temperatures and after a few dry years, this region received good rain in the post-harvest period. May in particular had exceptionally high rainfall (90 mm higher than the long term average) and cold night temperatures were very beneficial to soil water

levels. The Brandvlei Dam was full and so too most farm dams. The majority of the producers started irrigating late in the season.

Leaf drop was nevertheless relatively late. Good reserves were accumulated and most blocks were able to ripen their shoots properly. In instances where cover crops were established early, the early rain resulted in good cover crop coverage. Winter was cold and wet with snow, resulting in good dormancy breaking of the buds.

The climate during budding was beneficial to balanced growth and fruit set. Growth was more vigorous, resulting in dense canopies. Summer was cool and very dry, with cold winds during the flowering period. It was a healthy growing season and the disease pressure during ripening was low, except for snails. On the whole there were more bunches per vine.

November and December were characterised by moderate day temperatures and cool nights especially. At the beginning of January there was a short warm period, but the nights, except from 20 to 29 January, remained cool. Mild temperatures with a few warm days and hardly any rain occurred during the latter part of ripening.

Grape and wine quality

The overall quality of the wines is good. Correct canopy management and crop control, especially in red cultivars, resulted in the production of excellent quality wines. Chardonnay, which produces several champions annually from this region, is above average this year, full-bodied with concentrated fruit, thanks to even ripening, smaller bunches and berries and a lower juice recovery per ton.

Despite the heatwave at the start of the pressing season, most vines were properly buffered due to sufficient available water and optimal canopies. The flavour spectrum of Sauvignon blanc tends towards fuller, tropical wines with better lasting ability.

Viognier is probably the next emerging cultivar from the Worcester/Breedekloof region. Several new plantings are now coming into production and the cultivar shows great potential. The wines are full-bodied with a good acid balance, outspoken yellow fruit and dried fruit flavours.

The longer ripening period of Cabernet Sauvignon resulted in wines with a deep, dark colour with characteristic blackberry flavours, good structure and acid-pH balance and soft tannins. In Shiraz different flavour profiles and styles are observed, due to the variety in vineyard blocks and different ripening times. Many red grapes were pressed for wine for brandy.

III. ELSEWHERE IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Australia

At 1,34 million tons, the 2007 wine grape harvest is the smallest since 2000. Compared to the previous year, the harvest volume is down by around 30 per cent. According to the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation, the country's wineries will have around 400 million litres less wine available for sale than they did in 2006. (Source: www.wineaustralia.com).

Calculated in terms of yield per hectare, the 2007 vintage was the smallest since 1976. Drought, frost and other factors affected red varieties more severely than white varieties. As a result of poorly developed shoots and insufficient water reserves, wine producers are not expecting any improvement for the 2008 harvest.

New Zealand

After a colder than usual summer, winemakers were concerned about the quantity rather than the quality of their wine. The cold and miserable weather experienced in December resulted in smaller grapes than usual. The quality of wines should not be affected, but the quantity of some varieties will not be as plentiful as usual.

IV. VINTAGE GUIDE

The number of wine regions, their geographic distance and climatological diversity defy generalisation, but the overall characteristics of the previous eight vintages may be summarised as follows:

2006: Quality across the spectrum. Intense character and exceptional flavour concentration. Top quality Chardonnay, Sauvignon blanc and Chenin. Full-bodied Shiraz with excellent maturation potential. Pinotage and Cabernet Sauvignon boast lovely colours and flavours.

2005: A difficult vintage with a very dry winter, excessive rainfall during the crush and a scorching heatwave towards the middle of February. Smaller crops meant concentrated flavours and lovely colours. Magnificent red wines, but careful selection is mandatory.

2004: The harvest seemed to drag on forever, but it was well worth the wait. Elegant wines with greater maturation potential due to a cooler season. Lower alcohol and soft tannins characterise this vintage.

2003: An excellent vintage, one of the very best in recent years. White as well as red wines impress with full-bodied structure and complexity.

2002: Pay attention to individual cellars, rather than general trends. Downy mildew caused widespread havoc. Good Sauvignon blanc, Chardonnay, Shiraz, Merlot, Pinotage and new clone Cabernet Sauvignon wines.

2001: The summer was very hot and dry with few diseases. Wines were high in alcohol, with very concentrated flavours.

2000: The crop was small. Some excellent red wines that will keep well. Big, alcoholic white wines.

1999: Large crop, warm summer. Excellent ripening conditions. Reds high in alcohol, will develop in time. Fruity whites.

V. QUOTATIONS FROM THE REGIONS

Helderberg, Elim, Swartland, Worcester

Bruce Jack, Flagstone The 2007 harvest required patience in the vineyard, old-hand experience in the cellar and quite a bit of luck. Colour on reds always indicates overall potential quality and 2007 had loads of colour, so I think reds will be long-lived and concentrated. Older vineyards showed their worth by handling the January heatwave and we reached phenolic ripeness at lower sugar levels across all regions. It's too early to tell if it will be a brilliant vintage, but I believe even now it will be much better than average across all varieties. Real stars are the Cabernet Sauvignon from Elim and the

old-vine Chenin blanc from Riebeek. The best wine in the cellar is our Writer's Block single vineyard Pinotage from Anton Roos's Silkbush Farm in Worcester.

Little Karoo

Carel Nel, Boplaas We had a dry summer with a week's hot spell. Vines recovered after that and the rest of season was cooler with afternoon breezes and cold nights. The quality of our port wines, Touriga Nacional dry red wines and Shiraz is excellent. The colours are intense and dark, the acidity is good and the flavours lovely.

Olifants River

Dudley Wilson, Stellar Winery We had a lot of rain mid-June 2006 and that filled the Clanwilliam Dam in one weekend. From there on we had regular soaking rains and low temperatures. This allowed the vines to achieve dormancy and led to an even bud break. This influence was especially noted on Chardonnay which, for a change, had even flowering and good fruit set. Harvest started with this cultivar on 8 January 2007. At the end of January beginning of February we had a week long heatwave with maximum daily temperatures around 42ºC. This proved problematic for some Pinotage blocks. Those on the more drought tolerant 101-14 rootstocks recovered from a mid-heat wave balling of 28 back to 22ºBalling, whilst those on Richter99 never really recovered. Areas closer to the coast (parts of Lutzville and Koekenaap) escaped the effects of this heat and we were able to allow the Sauvignon blanc to ripen without losing cultivar character. At first it looked as if the heat would make everything ripen at once, but when the cooler weather returned, the grapes returned to their usual ripening pattern. Chenins were healthy, but at lower yields. Colombar ripened some way past the heat wave and this resulted in some well-balanced wines. Merlot performed well, as usual, with ripe tannins and good colours. The later ripening Cabernet also fared better than usual, with nice soft juicy tannins. Shiraz came in ripe but at lower B (23ºBalling). Skins seemed thin and lacking in tannins, but this cultivar manages to look like one thing in the vineyards and turns out to be something different in the cellar. Wines fermented to dryness with lower alcohols and good colour. The ripening at lower balling also led to more noticeable character differences between vineyards. Over all cultivars, yields were down by around 20%.

Robertson

Bussell Retief, Van Loveren The harvest was very tricky because of the heatwave with high pH levels and low acidity, but very healthy grapes.

Stellenbosch

Etienne le Riche Even though we had welcome mid-seasonal rain, the pH and acid levels of the Cabernet were not of the standard that would describe the vintage as exceptional.

Malmesbury/Swartland

Eben Sadie, Sadie Family Due to the climatic patterns 2007 was a year of great challenge. The heat wave of January will bear its signature on the vintage for ever and the difficult task at hand is to get the equilibrium restored. The great wines of 2007 will come from the vineyards that retained their acidity and had no water stress due to low yields. The ageability of the vintage is also a question and only time will tell.

Elgin / Walker Bay

Bartho Eksteen, Hermanuspietersfontein At the beginning of the harvest there were a few red lights, what with the longest heatwave in many years. Secondly we also had a few heavy showers. Our advantage was a well-equipped cellar and an excellent cellar team, which enabled me to spend a lot of time in the vineyards during the pressing season. To my mind that is where a winemaker should spend most of his time during the harvest.

Worcester

Shawn Thomson, Du Toitskloof Cellar We had a wonderful 2007 harvest at Du Toitskloof. The quality of the Sauvignon blanc is really very good, something that will be remembered. We are a big team, like a family, making wine at Du Toitskloof, and everyone agrees: the red wines are looking very good, with exceptional colours and wonderful flavours.