

KANONKOP'S NEW PREMIUM PINOTAGE PLANS TO KICK-START SECONDARY WINE MARKET IN SA

Kanonkop, the internationally renowned wine estate in Stellenbosch, has just released its first new wine label in forty years. The Kanonkop Black Label Pinotage 2006 is a limited release wine made from vines planted on the Kanonkop Estate in 1953 and is aimed at the premium, exclusive wine market, with only 1000 bottles made priced at R1000 per bottle.

Each wine is individually numbered and labelled with a hologram to ensure authenticity, with buyers limited to purchasing 36 bottles per person. The wines will be exclusively available from two negotiants: Wade Bales Wine Society and Fiona Phillips from cybercellar.com.

"This wine is a highlight in Kanonkop's history since the release of our first label in 1973," says Johann Krige, co-owner of Kanonkop. "The Kanonkop Black Label Pinotage wants to make an international statement through a uniquely South African wine. We would like to see this wine become a benchmark the South African wine industry can use to prove we are capable of making a wine that can compete with the best of any country in the world."

The wine is also a tribute to Kanonkop's formidable reputation for Pinotage.

"Pinotage has been an integral of the Kanonkop portfolio since our maiden vintage. Throughout the years our winemakers have been enthralled with the quality of the grapes from our oldest Pinotage vines, the wine of which is usually blended in the standard Kanonkop Pinotage," says Krige.

"Five years ago we decided to separate the select old-vine crop, vinifying and aging the wine separately. The results after 14 to 16 months of aging in new French oak has been phenomenal. On consultation from other wine makers and various retailers, we are convinced that this wine demands its own label and warrants marketing to select buyers of fine wine – locally and internationally.

With only 1 000 bottles available, Krige underscored the importance of the Kanonkop Black Label Pinotage in assisting in creating a secondary wine market in South Africa.

“The first allocation to our two negotiants will be 600 bottles, with the next tranche of 400 bottles released a few months later once the market has determined the value of the wines,” says Krige. “With two negotiants controlling the supply and demand they will be able to buy back stock from willing sellers to sell on to parties willing to pay a higher price.

“This secondary market, which the South African wine industry needs more of so as to establish itself as a producer of really premium wines, will open up a totally new set of dynamics in the wine industry, as well as creating an appreciation for and collectability of fine local wines.”

The second vintage of the Kanonkop Black Label Pinotage, the 2007, will be released towards the end of 2010. “Having created a secondary market for this wine, the objective is to have a genuine *en primeur* system in place by 2012 whereby followers and other interested consumers will be able to buy the wine after tasting it while still in barrel and before bottling – just as the system in Bordeaux,” says Krige.

Kanonkop winemaker Abrie Beeslaar, who was in 2008 named International Winemaker of the Year at the International Wine and Spirits Competition in London says that as Pinotage disciple he has not yet tasted a wine such as the Kanonkop Black Label.

“Working with the vineyard and the juice in the making of our standard Pinotage, I knew that something extraordinary was in those grapes,” he says. “But after giving this old block – one of the first blocks of Pinotage to be planted in South Africa – the full Kanonkop treatment, with manual punch-downs every two hours and over a year in new oak, something truly special awaits the wine lover fortunate enough to taste one of these bottles.

“Owning a bottle will be just as big an honour of making it – I just hope I can get onto the waiting list!”

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KANONKOP

ESTATE WINE

Pinotage

2006

Grown, produced and bottled in Kanonkop

WINE OF ORIGIN SIMONSBERG, STELLENBOSCH
PRODUCT OF SOUTH AFRICA

