



Dear Friends, October may signal that it's downhill to the end of 2007 but to me it also signals rejuvenation. I really love this time of year when the vines come out of their winter dormancy and once again new green growth can be seen breaking out in vineyards all around Stellenbosch. It's been a particularly good winter. We've had abundant rain and all the dams are full, almost to overflowing. It has also been cold - but then that's exactly what the vines needed to shut down physiologically, to rest and build up the reserves needed for the coming growing season. Pruning the vineyards went well, even if it was a bit soggy underfoot! Something we're excited about at Ernst & Co is that we planted our first 100 Hanepoot vines this year. I've always believed that every wine farm should have a few Hanepoot vines - not necessarily to make wine from, but just because the Hanepoot grapes are so delicious. We planted it for our family, friends and employees. Everyone loves the sweet honeyed fruit flavours of this particular grape. (*Ernst, Lukas and*

*Boetie and Jack Russel, Vonkie keeping a watchful eye).*



## New releases

Just entering the market are our new releases, the whites are the 2007 Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc and on the red side we are now offering the 2005 Merlot and 2006 Pinot Noir.

I find a slightly floral nose on both the **Sauvignon Blanc** and the Chenin Blanc, but the aromatics of the Sauvignon Blanc is somewhat reminiscent of a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. That must have been Ezzanne's input and the lessons she learned at Wither Hills winery in Blenheim last year! On the palate the wine makes a lovely zesty entry with crisp, fresh granadilla or passion fruit flavour that then becomes quite creamy. I also find that it has a nice length of flavour that will make it ideal as a food companion.

The **Chenin Blanc** has some perfume on the nose but on the palate is tangy with nectarine and peachy flavours. Again, a creamy mouthfeel and nice long finish.

**Merlot** can be such a tricky grape to work with, although wine drinkers love it regardless. This 2005 example has spent 18 months in barrel and it obviously needed time to show its true colours because this is delicious. The nose is full of



lovely cocoa and dark chocolate aromas with an herbaceous undertone. And on the palate it's a rich, succulent mouthful of chocolate and black berry fruit, ripe plums especially - with just a touch of liquorice at the end.

**Pinot Noir** is a favourite of our family - after all when the kids were babies, Gwenda and I spent a few months living and working in France. I'm really happy with the way the 2006 turned out. It shows the typically delicate floral aromatics of the grape with a slight earthy, forest floor note underlying it. Then in the mouth, it is abundant berries, cherry, spice, earth and some dark cherry flavours. It shows gentle mouthfeel but there is gutsy power too. Delicious! The production is limited and with this wine already on the winelists of many top five-star restaurants in the Cape e.g. Tokara, Grand Roche, Belthazar and 95 Keerom, we need to allocate stocks.

In June Ernst junior and I flew over to Europe not only to visit our import agents and taste great wines but also to visit our eldest daughter, Inke who was working at Moët & Chandon in Epernay. We were very lucky that Inke showed us around and provided some fantastic Champagne tastings. She arrived home last week and it looks like she might be bringing some great Champagne to South Africa in the near future. But more news about that as it develops. Ernst Junior (studying winemaking at the Stellenbosch University) stayed behind and gained his first practical experience in the winery of Henry Bourgeois in Sancerre during his winter holidays.

On the homefront Gwenda and Ezanne have had a busy time. The past few weeks has seen them attending the launch of the Womens World Cup of Golf at the historic Presidential residence of Groote Schuur. The patron of the organisation and hostess of this spectacular tea party is our Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka who also happened to favour the Ernst & Co Merlot in particular. *(Below left - Gwenda and Mrs Mlambo-Ngcuka).*

Then in September they had the privilege to personally introduce the Ernst & Co Wines to the Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World who were in Cape Town attending an international conference. They told me that the woman gathered had more than \$225 billion dollars in assets under their control. Judging by the contacts made and the fact that they danced to the live jazz band at Pigalle until late night , it seems like it was a most successful evening for Ernst & Co. *(Below right - Dr Anna Mokgokong, Chairman of Community Investment Holdings, Medscheme and LWEW and Ezanne amongst others).*

And we're also pleased to report back that our European distribution from the central warehouse in Brussels, Belgium, is working well. You are welcome to order from us direct if you cannot get hold of a local agent who distributes Ernst & Co.

Please visit our website to find more information about our wines and from whom to order in your country. In Germany we have several new regional agencies selling our wines and Ernst & Co is also available in Malaysia, Denmark, Belgium and Holland and in Switzerland at Moevenpick.

On the local market we would like to welcome Robert Gallo to Ernst & Co. Robert is our new sales representative and is based in Johannesburg. Ernst & Co Wines are now available at all leading Liquor City wine shops in Johannesburg.

I'd like to close off with a special word of thanks to all our loyal customers. We appreciate your continued support of our family venture. Without you we cannot live our dream.

Warmest greetings,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Ernst Gouws". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a period at the end.

*Ernst Gouws & Family*