



The Hands That Shaped Our Story

FIVE GENERATIONS



The Nieuwoudt family's hands have shaped the story behind Cederberg Wines and the land that we have stewarded for five generations.

David Nieuwoudt, the current custodian of the family farm, Dwarsrivier, takes up the story. "The first Nieuwoudts arrived in South Africa in the 1700s and their pioneering descendants moved to the remote Cederberg. The present family of Nieuwoudts relocated from nearby Kromrivier to Dwarsrivier, which was a cattle post, in 1893. Initially they farmed tobacco, which was largely exported to Namibia, and sheep.



Bringing the 'lifeblood'

In 1938, the year David's dad was born, they started building a water furrow, as without electricity they couldn't access water from the river. "The farm is higher than the river, so they built it along the contours. It is about 3.5 km long and remains the main artery of the farm up until today."

The furrow was nine years in the making. They hit an obstacle in the form of a koppie during World War II, when they couldn't get their hands on dynamite, so the project ground to a halt for three years. They resumed in 1947 and blasted it themselves. "It is an amazing piece of work, an engineering feat done by farmers!"

At the end of that year they were able to build a dam, leading to significant development. "The first fruit trees, apples and pears, were planted by my grandfather in 1954. They also grew vegetables and those went to the Cape market. They exported the fruit themselves – a logistical nightmare but they were hard-working men!"

David's grandfather, Oupa Pollie, was pivotal to the development of the farm. In 1961, the Uitkyk Pass and the low water bridge were built, affording easier access to the markets. "My grandfather also brought the first double-wheeled freight truck into the Cederberg in 1954. And this is where the name Nieuwoudt Pass comes from, because for nine days he drove from the N7 with 42 men to the farm to widen the road. And then they could really start farming!"

Winegrowing begins

They farmed with table grapes, mainly Barlinka, which was replanted in the mid-1960s. Then, in 1972, they planted the first wine grapes, a block of Chenin Blanc, a block of Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinotage the following year.

"In 1976, my grandfather built a cellar where the first Cabernet and Pinotage wines were made and certified in 1977. In 1978, that first Cabernet went on to win the Distillers Cabernet Sauvignon award and achieved superior status at the Young Wine Show, followed by a gold medal at the Cape Champion Show. "My father, Ernst, returned to the farm in 1956 and initially farmed table grapes. Later on, he had the foresight to start planting the vineyards. It was my grandfather and later my Uncle Flippie who were involved in winemaking and in whose footsteps I follow!" concludes David.





Greening The Future

Firmly rooted in their pristine corner of the Cederberg, the Nieuwoudt family is deeply invested in the sustainability of both their land and its people.



Championing the land

A WWF Conservation Champion since 2016, Cederberg Wines is committed to upholding the highest environmental standards and continuously improving their practices to ensure that sustainability is woven into every aspect of winemaking, from water-wise farming to soil health rejuvenation and low-impact agricultural practices.

Situated in the heart of the Cederberg Wilderness, which is part of the Cape Floral Region's protected areas, Dwarsrivier plays a crucial role in the Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor conservation initiative, with 98.8% of the farm set-aside for conservation, allowing these biodiversity hotspots to thrive alongside the vineyards. Most notable among the critically endangered species is the Clanwilliam cedar tree, which is supported through a nursery and replanting projects.

"Our goal is not to change but to preserve the landscape that creates the wines and to discover what this region unlocks in

them that makes them so special and unique. It is within this milieu of agriculture and conservation that winemaking becomes truly exciting and expressive," explains assistant winemaker Thinus Botha.

"In 2020, we invested in a state-of-the-art solar facility that has become the source of over 60% of the cellar and household energy demands, reducing our carbon footprint by 540 tons and providing a constant supply of energy during harvest. Appreciating the role of the sun from vineyard to glass is a step closer to a greener future!"

Viticulturist Dirk de Bruyn describes their sustainability drive as a learning process: "We are farming with nature within the Cederberg specifically, not fighting against it." This is evident in their use of biological pest management and the reintroduction of fynbos corridors to the vineyards. "We have used no herbicides or pesticides for the past five years," he proudly states.

A farm rooted in community

"The Dwarsrivier farming community encompasses the owners of the farm as well as the workers, who have been part of the farm as long as both parties can remember," according to Pieter du Toit, whose portfolio is customer relations. "Recently, some radical changes have taken place on the farm under the guidance of the Waitrose Foundation and the farm's management team."



Cederberg Wines supplies a Chenin Blanc and a Syrah to the foundation, the profits from which are shared with the farm workers. Just over a year ago, The Bergdweriges Daycare Centre opened its doors and today caters to 11 pre-school children. This isolated community's children attend two schools in Clanwilliam, and scheduled trips ferry the children to and from the hostels each week.



Other issues that have been addressed include health and social welfare. Assisted by Pebbles Project in Stellenbosch, a clinic took shape with a highly experienced nurse who visits fortnightly. Assisted by the ACT body in Citrusdal, a social worker also visits the farm. "Three years later and we cannot imagine our lives without Beryl Malgas," says Pieter.



Together these two women address personal and health issues, organise talks and visits for the elderly and the youth, and ensure that cancer awareness days and dental visits happen.

A soccer field was prepared and greened using recycled cellar water: "We now boast a soccer team complete with their own logo-branded kit and so full of bravado that they are ready to take on the world!" concludes Pieter.

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