

## WINEMAKER **André van Dyk of Rooiberg Winery**

**T**he long stretch of road between Worcester and Robertson reveals some of the grandest, quintessentially South African vistas. The distant mountains and the wide-open spaces leading to them fill me with an indescribable feeling of humility in the face of magnificent Mother Nature. As I approach Robertson I see the iconic Rooiberg on the right of the road which has given its name to one of the most prolific wineries in the country. Rooiberg has long been known for over-delivering on quality at very affordable prices, which has made it one of the most loved wines in the country. The range is large and has something for all tastes and pockets. Their bubbly, of which they have produced many thousands of bottles, was long a best-seller at one of the country's biggest food chains, but their prize-winning wines, like the superb Reserve Chenin and the Reserve Pinotage are much awarded both here and overseas. Rooiberg belongs to 29 shareholder farmers who operate 20 farms between them, but the day-to-day winemaking is under the sure hand of André van Dyk, a born and bred Robertson lad who has the soil of the area in his veins. He has that faraway look in his eyes that those who grow up on the land never lose, as if he always has those mountains in his mind's eye.

**Reserve Chardonnay 2016**  
A Michelangelo Gold Medal winner, delivers flavour in spades, butterscotch, marmalade and vanilla from nine months in oak. Unbelievable price **R85**

**Reserve Pinotage 2015**  
Matured in French oak for 18 months resulting in a superbly rich SA classic, packed with deep, dark berry flavours. **R110**

**Red Muscadel 2016**  
Redolent with typical Muscat flavours, silky, raisiny with a delicious underlying tang. **R59**



ROOIBERG WINERY, ROBERTSON 023 626 1663



*“Life is too short to drink bad wine, so produce something that you will enjoy yourself*

Of course an operation of this size – about 15 000 tons of fruit annually – doesn't just happen by itself. It all has to be tied together by someone who knows what he is doing, and winemaker André van Dyk is just the man for the job. He also knows he could never achieve the success without his talented team. André was born in Robertson and has not strayed far from the area, having worked at De Wet Cellar in Worcester and at Ashton, before joining Rooiberg in 2002. He is one of those people you cannot imagine doing anything else – his occupation fits him like a glove. André and his wife Charlotte and their children are lucky enough to live on the Rooiberg farm at Vinkrivier, where they enjoy entertaining at home with – you guessed it – a very South African braai. This will certainly be accompanied by some superb Pinotage – one of the top ten in the country. André says, “Life is too short to drink bad wine, so produce something that you will enjoy yourself.” When I ask him about his hobbies he says, “Too busy for hobbies. I prefer watching sport at the schools and on the TV.” He's clearly a no-nonsense type of man, but reveals a poetic side when he says he is driven by “the mystery every year of what quality product we will create and produce”. He knows where he is going, that's for sure. ■

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