

Avondale Wine Estate diversifies offering to ensure sustainability

South Africa's wine industry has been one of the most heavily impacted by Covid-19 and the resultant restrictions, with an overall loss of more than R8bn in direct sales revenue, according to Vinpro. Avondale Wine Estate, a family-owned and run wine estate, situated just outside Paarl on the slopes of the Klein Drakenstein mountains, found itself at the mercy of unchartered territory early on in South Africa's Level 5 lockdown.



Image source: [Avondale Wine](#)

“If it had not been for the export component of our business, we may very well not have made it,” says Johnathan Grieve, proprietor of Avondale Wine Estate. “The resulting impact would have been dire – not just for us but, more importantly, for the community in which we operate. Established in 1996, Avondale Wine Estate employs no fewer than 70 full-time and seasonal workers, the majority of whom come from the surrounding areas. “We also operate a community centre that includes a well-resourced creche and aftercare facilities for the children who live on our farm,” continues Grieve.

Whilst grateful for its export business, Grieve was under no illusion that export alone would ensure their sustainability. “I think those first few weeks though were about survival. As we grappled to come to terms with what was going on around us, like many, we also knew we needed to support wherever possible.”

Positive local impact

Home to Faber Restaurant, Chef Dale and his team redeployed its existing resources, turning Faber into a community outreach programme that provided no fewer than 1,000 meals a day, five days a week for a period of three months to the Heart NPO. “It gave us the opportunity to support an immediate need in our community, whilst we formulated our thinking and plans moving forward.”

The last 12 months has seen Avondale diversify across several complementary areas. “We looked at the beauty Mother Nature has given us and felt it apt to transform a visit to Avondale into an entire experience, for everyone and anyone, by offering access to our home, our gardens and this natural beauty,” says Grieve.



Image source: [Avondale Wine](#)

In addition to wine tasting, wine sales and Faber Restaurant, now operating usual hours since the reintroduction of Level 1, visitors to Avondale will be able to choose from several outdoor and other activities – all in full compliance with current Covid-19 regulations. These include the Avondale Eco Wine Safari, Garden Bar, Ochra Deli, picnics, farm walks, and venue hire.

“It has been an extraordinary couple of months,” continues Grieve. “Unprecedented times call for determination and resilience, and an open mindedness to look at things differently. We are cautiously optimistic that the expansion of our offering will help us continue to navigate the challenges of these times – both for our own sustainability and the resulting continued delivery of a positive impact on the community and surrounding areas in which we operate.”

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