

Q&A with #YoungGunsB2B Stephanie Wiid of Thistle & Weed

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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Wine Cellar: Fine Wine Merchants and Cellarers recently announced their top pick of SA's hottest young winemaking talent for the seventh edition of the Young Guns tasting event. We got in touch with one of the rising stars, Stephanie Wiid, one half of Thistle & Weed, to chat all things wine.



■ ***Congrats on being selected as a 2017 Young Gun! How do you see this recognition influencing your winemaking career?***

Wine Cellar is well-renowned in the local industry as well as abroad and being selected as part of the Young Guns lineup is all we could wish for as a "start-up" in the industry. As part of the Young Guns 2017 lineup we've been offered the opportunity to network, learn from our peers and the "old guns" from previous years. We've also had some interest from some export markets since the announcement of the Young Guns lineup which is evident of Wine Cellars reach and influence in the world of wine. And of course, our wines are available on the Wine Cellar website, which is great exposure for us Young Guns!



Niche grapes and innovative winemaking: The Young Guns of 2017

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■ ***Can you give us some background on how you got into winemaking?***

I studied Oenology and Viticulture at Stellenbosch University. The choice was strongly supported by my sisters who hoped this would lead to an endless supply of wine for them. Growing up in Johannesburg it seemed like a strange choice, but not many people know I'm the youngest grandchild of Niel Joubert, pioneer and founder of the Stellenbosch Wine Route, so there is some wine heritage in my blood!



▣ ***What have been some of the highlights and challenges of winemaking in SA?***

One of the major challenges in marketing brand South Africa in the international wine industry is that there is still so much work to be done as a whole! The way the industry has started to embrace technology from viticulture, winemaking and marketing is a highlight. In my short 10 years in the industry I've seen how change has started to be embraced slowly but surely.

▣ ***How would you describe the style of your wine?***

Elegant with finesse, fresh and full-flavoured.

▣ ***What makes your wine unique?***

I see our wine as an artwork. It's allowed to express itself in both packaging, design and flavour. It's allowed to evolve with no boundaries. One day I might look back and consider the 2016 vintage as our "early work" and the starting point of Thistle & Weed's story. We strive to over deliver on quality and offer you something beautiful to taste, drink and think about.



What's your favourite style of wine?

Such a tough question, on white I love a wine with layered complexity, subtle oaking and minerality. On red I love spice, fruit, freshness and lengthy, well-refined tannins.

What excites you about the local wine industry?

The opportunities to work together, to educate, to share, to explore and to sell. Wine Cellar really provides a platform for young winemakers to do just that.



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What's next?

We are about to release our maiden red wine, Nastergal 2016, a blend of unusual varieties Tempranillo and Alicante Bouschet. Alicante is a teinturier, meaning it has red flesh (most red grapes have white flesh).

For more information, visit the Thistle & Weed [website](#) or visit the Wine Cellar [website](#).

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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