

Wine Harvest Commemorative Event set for February 2024

The South African wine industry has begun gearing up for its highlight celebration – the Wine Harvest Commemorative Event.



Image supplied

This annual event, which takes place on 1 February 2024, marks the momentous occasion of the birth of South African wine and pays tribute to the country's rich wine heritage, whilst calling for a blessing on the new harvest.

Hosted at Groot Constantia under the pediment of the historic Cloete Cellar, the Wine Harvest Commemorative Event, importantly, pays tribute to the individuals and organisations who have made stride towards the ongoing success of South African wine – and over the years, many greats have been recognised, including the likes of Nelson Mandela.

The categories under which the wine legends are recognised include Visionary Leadership (with the 1659 Visionary Leadership Award), Growing Inclusivity, Wine Advancement, and Viti- and Viniculture.

Made possible through the support of sponsors Groot Constantia, the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, Wesgro, South Africa Wine, Standard Bank, Checkers, Cape Town Tourism and Die Burger, the Wine Harvest Commemorative Event is held at a very significant time of the year: on the eve of the birth of the South African wine industry.

The day the industry was born

On 2 February 1659, a diary entry announced, "Today, praise be to God, wine was made for the first time from Cape grapes." 2024 will mark 365 years since the first wine was produced in South Africa, and it is an occasion that wine lovers the world over will agree warrants a celebration!

Harvest, biodiversity, and blessings

The blessing on the harvest, another important aspect of the Wine Harvest Commemorative Event, is a longstanding tradition that is observed all over the world and gives thanks for the harvests that have been, and calls for protection over the new harvest to come.

Whilst recognising the essential importance of the annual grape harvest, in South Africa, the wine industry also working hard to protect the biodiversity and natural environments of the land upon which they ply their trade, and part of the industry's annual harvest blessing gives thanks to, and calls for protection on, the natural ecosystems amongst which the wine farms exist - maintaining a balance between nature and farming is essential if both are to continue to thrive – over three centuries of existence is testimony hereof.



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“We are very pleased to be sponsors of the upcoming Wine Harvest Commemorative Event,” says Dr Iva Meyer, Western Cape MEC of Agriculture. “The Annual Wine Harvest Commemorative event not only acknowledges the achievements of the industry and honours individuals who have gone above and beyond to contribute, but it also gives hope to all the people involved in the wine value chain – from the farm worker to the cellar worker and marketer of our wines globally.”

“Some 269,096 people are employed both directly and indirectly in the wine industry, with a further 36,406 people employed in the wine tourism sector. As highlighted by WOSA, the South African wine industry has gone from strength to strength, with exports reaching 368.5 million litres in 2022. Currently, more than 2,48 farmers cultivate some 89 384 hectares of land under vines and I am thrilled that these farmers proactively support conservation and the biodiversity guidelines set out in the industry's handbook for sustainable farming.”

“The Western Cape is a world-class wine region and source market of choice. The province is known for diverse terroirs, twenty well-established wine routes, and an industry committed to quality and sustainability comments Wrenelle Stander, Wesgro CEO. “Small and large wine businesses in the Cape have received significant marketing support following the launch of Wesgro's “Made in the Cape” exports brand, which promotes local products internationally. Today, as we raise a glass to South Africa's rich wine heritage, I urge all certified exporters of wine and services to register on the CapeTradePortal.com to access key growth markets,” added Stander.

The genesis of South African wine

Rico Basson, CEO of South Africa Wine, adds, “As the South African wine industry prepares to raise its glasses to the upcoming Wine Harvest Commemorative Event on 1 February 2024, we embark on a celebration that transcends time and tradition. This annual event not only marks the genesis of South African wine but stands as a heartfelt homage to our nation's vinicultural legacy, invoking blessings upon the promise of a new harvest.”

“We call upon the entire wine industry, tourism sector, local and international partners, South African trade, and retailers to participate in the South African wine industry's birthday celebration, driving global awareness

of South African wine, while encouraging the essence of our remarkable industry – rich in diversity, innovation, and leadership.”

“Groot Constantia has been proudly associated with the Wine Harvest Commemorative Event for many years and we are very excited to be hosting this prestigious annual event on our historic estate once again says Jean Naudé, CEO of Groot Constantia.

“The festive season is fast approaching and South Africans are happily preparing for a time of celebration and revelry. In the wake of these calendar highlights, another celebration quickly follows with the start of harvest season throughout the Winelands – this is really something to look forward to and I encourage everyone to raise a glass of South African wine in celebration.”

The South African wine industry invites everyone to join in the celebration of South Africa’s lasting wine legacy and raise their glasses on 2 February 2024.

Visit www.sawineharvest.co.za for more.

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