

2

In your hood: **Robertson Valley**

Silverthorn Wines | 021 788 1706 | silverthornwines.co.za



Bubbles from the Breede

From The Green Man to the Jewel Box and The Genie, boutique producer Silverthorn is producing some of South Africa's finest bubbly

WORDS: RICHARD HOLMES • IMAGES: SUPPLIED

With many years spent working in cellars across the Western Cape, John Loubser is no stranger to the world of Méthode Cap Classique. A member of the esteemed Cape Winemakers Guild, in 2004 he began dabbling in producing his own MCC, using grapes sourced from the 10ha family farm in the heart of the Robertson Valley.

"Silverthorn started as a hobby, a dream, but now it's really gaining momentum," says John with a smile, adding that the name Silverthorn was an obvious choice thanks to the Karroo acacia trees that thrive on the farm. "We started small; our first vintage was just 3,500 bottles. This year, we bottled 40,000!"

Earlier this year that groundswell of demand prompted John to leave Steenberg Farm – where he had been cellar master and general manager for 15 years – to devote himself full-time to Silverthorn, working alongside his wife, Karen.

The three Silverthorn wines are certainly generating plenty of excitement. Along with a five-star rating in the *Platter's Wine Guide* for the 2010 vintage, The Green Man 2011 jointly won Wine of Show at the recent Six Nations Wine Challenge, beating out 600 wines from around the world.

On home soil, The Genie has bagged a Double Gold medal at the 2017 Rosé Rocks Competition, highlighting the ongoing demand for rosé-style wines and bubbly.

while the 2013 Jewel Box was a winner at the 2017 Sommeliers Selection.

If you're stocking up for summer bubbles, look no further!

The Green Man

Made from 100% Chardonnay and aged on the lees for 24 months, expect green apple, brioche and subtle minerality from a bubbly "inspired by the spirit of the forest", says John. "I believe Cap Classiques are completely underrated in terms of age-ability. This wine has that racy acidity that allows them to age so well."

The Genie

This is a rosé-style bubbly made from Shiraz, so expect heady Turkish

delight on the nose, and a palate packed with raspberries. What began as a fun experiment has been "a success from day one", says John. "Red fruit doesn't have the austerity of Chardonnay; it's more voluptuous." Perfect for summer sundowners.

Jewel Box

A blend of the classic Champagne cultivars – Chardonnay and Pinot Noir – this is perhaps the stand-out of the range, with a complex creaminess balanced by strawberry and marzipan notes on the nose. Matured for 47 months in the bottle, it's a bubbly brimming with "richness and fullness," says John. "Everything I strive for is finesse and elegance, so ageing must happen in the bottle."



3

In your hood: **Durbanville**

Coffee and Chocolate Festival | 082 563 3332 | coffeehoc.co.za



A feast for the senses

The Coffee and Chocolate Festival returns with a dash of horse-racing to excite and entertain

WORDS: KIT HEATHCOCK • IMAGES: SUPPLIED

What's not to love about a festival celebrating that match made in heaven: coffee and chocolate? The Coffee and Chocolate Festival comes to Cape Town from 6 – 8 October for its second year and promises a sensational experience and entertainment for the whole family.

"The show was started with the idea of teaching people about coffee – about the origins of coffee and why you like a certain roast or a certain blend," says Nadine Shone, who launched the festival five years ago in Johannesburg, introducing it to Durban three years ago and Cape Town last year. "Coffee is the second-most traded commodity in the world and has really taken off in South Africa. People are moving away from instant coffees and they're starting to have a palate and appreciate the different tastes you get from single origin roasts. So where wine was 20 years ago in South Africa, coffee and chocolate are now."

To make the learning experience all about fun, there are themed areas in the various marquees. You can wander from the Mardi Gras chocolate pairings to the Steampunk

Coffee Theatre where baristas reveal their art, the Daily News chocolate workshops with Beyers Chocolates, and the Cokka Mokka music lounge.

"Anyone who has a coffee and chocolate offering is allowed into the show," says Nadine. "Some of our food vendors are very creative. We have food trucks doing a burger smoked with coffee beans, and there's a chocolate-infused biltong."

An added bonus from the festival's new venue at Durbanville Racecourse (besides plenty of free parking) is a day of racing coinciding with the festival on Saturday. So take your binoculars and use that extra caffeine kick to cheer on a winner before continuing your research into cold-brew coffee and the best local chocolate artisans.

"The idea is to empower and acknowledge the regional industry, with each show focusing on artisans and micro-roasters from that area," says Nadine. You can look forward to sampling the best from CocoaFair, Potion Coffee, Turkspirit, The Coffee Company and Las Paletas ice cream, to name just a few of the Cape Town artisans taking part.



WINEMAKER JOHN LOUBSER AND HIS DOG THENA