



Happy HOUR

Whether you're a casual oenophile, a Champagne enthusiast, an accidental wino or a regular hop-head, you'll love hearing the stories of these passionate young wine and beer makers. Cheers to them!

PHOTOGRAPHS **DANIELLE KLOPPER AND STEVE MARAIS**
PRODUCTION **HEIDI VAN BERGEN**

PHOTOGRAPH: DANIELLE KLOPPER

Ambeloui
ALEXIS CHRISTODOULOU



2013 MCC (PINOT NOIR CHARDONNAY)

'Classy and stylish Chardonnay-Pinot Noir sparkler, including grapes from other areas. Richly aromatic followed by complex brioche aromas' – Platter's Wine Guide



Awarded four stars in *Platter's*



Annual harvest festival in March



Sales open to public in the first week of November



PHOTOGRAPHS: DANIELLE KLOPPER

Tell us your story. The first grapes at Ambeloui were planted by my father in 1995. Together as a family we harvested the grapes, made the first few litres of juice, put the MCC in the bottles and waited patiently for two years. Over the next 20 years, my father passed his knowledge onto us as children, and five years ago I finally graduated from grape picker, cellar slave and assistant winemaker to winemaker, (and everything else in between) at Ambeloui. All my siblings still help in the cellar when they can, but also just show up to drink a bottle of bubbly. **What is your first memory of wine?** The Holy Communion at the Greek Orthodox Church in Pretoria when I was a small child – I secretly hated it. However, it did make me realise in later life that some of the most pious figures in history were also responsible for most of the alcohol we make today. After all, it was a Benedictine Monk by the name of Dom Pérignon who revolutionised Champagne. **What about Hout Bay makes your MCC so special?** We have excellent soil in Hout Bay for grapes, and the cool maritime air is what we believe makes our vineyards special. We also now have American rootstocks, so phylloxera isn't a problem. **Family plays an important role in many wine farms, what sort of winemaking techniques have you learned from your parents?** I was raised helping my father make wine in the cellar, so almost everything I know

about winemaking comes from him. However, my mother taught me to drink in moderation, which I adhere to (in moderation, of course). **What's the difference between producing wine and MCC?** There are many differences: you pick MCC grapes much earlier in the season for a lower alcohol base wine and, unlike still wine, you ferment it a second time inside the bottle – this is the process that gives MCC its magical bubbles. **How is climate change affecting you?** It's strange, but for the past two years our crops have actually been slightly better. It's been hot and dry and we've seen a decrease in the number of diseases we need to defend against. Excellent for grapes so far! **Some bottles keep well when left to age, while others get corked if they stand too long. How can you tell if you should wait or not?** MCC and Champagne have a different ageing method to still wines. The wine matures in the bottle with yeast contact (lees) in the cellar. Once it's got a cork in it, it doesn't technically mature any more. My advice is that you should drink it right away and make sure you get at least half of the bottle for yourself.



@ambeloui



ambeloui.co.za

4075 Valley Rd, Hout Bay, Cape Town



SMACK! Republic Brewery Company
ANDREW MARTIN



THE MABONENG MAVERICK (STOUT)
'This stout is particularly interesting, with full characteristic flavours of a stout, but with added vanilla pod bringing an extra dessert-like angle to an already great style' – Rob Heyns, League of Beers

-  SAB Craft Brewing Championship winner
-  Beer and food pairings at the Maboneng Precinct
-  Open for tastings on Sundays from 10am-3pm



PHOTOGRAPHS: STEVE MAPAIS

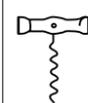
Tell us your story. Beer started out as a home brewing hobby, but quickly turned into an incredible passion. When my brother David and mutual friend Grant York noticed that the craft beer scene was dominated by breweries from Cape Town, we set out to smash down the door for Jozi craft beer, and we wanted SMACK! to become the quintessential inner-city Jozi brewery. **What is your beer brewing philosophy?** Beer anarchists? Hop-headed urban warriors? We were the kids who played with matches... the kids who crossed the road looking left and right, but not left again. Our beer and our brewery truly embody these qualities: bold, curious and paradoxical. **What's the difference between craft and commercial breweries?** Due to the sheer size of the operation, there are many obvious differences in terms of techniques, equipment, capabilities, buying power etc. But we all share the love of good beer and we all care about the same principles, such as hygiene and good brewing practice. Due to our smaller capacity, craft brewers have some freedom to take more risks, so we are constantly trying to push the boundaries and show our personality through our beers. **Are you finding any challenges related to our local climate?** Brewing in South Africa is certainly a challenge, as beer can be really volatile stuff at times. Beer is

sensitive to temperature, and our hot climate forced us to invest heavily in a fully temperature-controlled system which allows for fermentation at exact temperatures. **What has been the most rewarding part of your beer brewing journey so far?** When we started brewing, most of the beers on market were lagers and pale ales brewed in accordance with the *Reinheitsgebot* (a German purity law from 1487, wherein only three ingredients were allowed in the brewing of beer: hops, barley malt and water – yeast was unknown at the time). There was a mixed reaction when three young hop-heads started brewing beers with crazy ingredients such as naartjie, black pepper, honey and rooibos tea! Since then, it has been most rewarding to see how we have changed people's perceptions about what a beer can actually be. **What do you drink?** These days I probably drink less beer than before, but far more in terms of variety. Once you start drinking craft beer, you'll unlock an insatiable curiosity to see what's out there.

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Steenberg Farm
JD PRETORIOUS



MERLOT 2011 (RED BLEND)

Their signature fresh herbal character and spicy oak [is] a foil for ripe damson fruit, masking richness and providing elegance with incisive acidity and firm oak tannins' – Platter's Wine Guide



Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year award 2014



Enjoy a meal at Bistro Sixteen82 restaurant



Open for tastings Monday to Friday 10am-4pm



PHOTOGRAPHS: DANIELLE KLOPPER

Tell us your story? I grew up in the Free State and had no connection to the wine industry at all. I did, however, always have a keen interest in agriculture, as many members of my family are farmers. When I learned that you can farm with wine I was sold. I graduated from Stellenbosch University, did a stint with Graham Beck, spent time in California and then started at Steenberg. **What is your first memory of wine?** I grew up in a house that enjoyed wine – it's always been part of our lifestyle. My mother is a great cook, so we spend a lot of time discussing what wine will work best with the next meal. **What is it about South African soil that make our wines special?** South Africa has very young soils that are generally very well mixed. This can make it quite challenging to get uniformity over an entire vineyard block, but it does also add interesting character in the sense that vigour differs, as well as the water holding potential. We also have a relatively warm climate that means we get good ripeness and generally more fruit-driven wines. **What is your winemaking philosophy?** We strive to make wines with as little intervention as possible. We try to guide what our incredible growing site gives us straight into the bottle, without adulterating it too much. **Personal achievements as a young winemaker?** Being awarded

the Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year for the Steenberg Merlot 2012. **What are the pros and cons of being a winemaker?** There are mostly pros to be honest – it's a great environment to work in. The cons include long hours and hard manual work, but at the end of the day you get to have wine... so that's pretty sweet. **Some bottles keep well when left to age, while others get corked if they stand too long. How can you tell if you should wait or not?** If the producer has a good pedigree and the wines are rated well, it's worth it to cellar a few bottles. Unfortunately you can never be 100% sure, but you can stack your odds by making sure the wine is stored correctly at a low temperature, with no direct sunlight and with fairly high humidity. If you aren't certain you can create the ideal storage conditions, rather drink them. As the saying goes, rather a year too early than a day too late. **Any dreams in the cupboard?** As a winemaker you only get about 40 vintages to make wine, if you are lucky, so the dream is to make better wines than the year before.

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