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# WINE

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THE WEEKLY WEB LETTER OF WINE MAGAZINE (SA)

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13 JULY 2007

Dear Wine Lover,

At the launch of the new Shepherd's Cottage range from the Van Velden family of Stellenbosch farm Overgaaauw, it was inevitable that either shepherd's pie or cottage pie would be served for lunch. Supposedly, shepherd's pie is made with minced lamb while cottage pie involves minced beef, but what was served in this case saw the pie made from Springbok, shot by young David van Velden on a recent hunting trip.

Van Velden is now fully in charge of the cellar with long-time winemaker Chris Joubert having left earlier in the year to concentrate on producing his own Gilga wines.



Overgaaauw is very much a family affair with it having been founded as a wine estate in 1905 by Van Velden's great-grandfather, the farm originally part of a larger property which was settled by ancestors in 1783. In more recent times, Van Velden's father, Braam, proved himself an accomplished winemaker, for instance being one of the first to pioneer the Bordeaux-style red blend in the shape of Tria Corda at the beginning of the 1980s, and today is still a member of the Cape Winemakers Guild.

While Van Velden Senior describes the first-label Overgaaauw wines as "for special occasions" and "Cape European", the new entry-level Shepherd's Cottage wines are intended to "make every occasion special" and consequently come across as more accessible.

In a time of twee wine names, you'll be reassured to know that there really is a shepherd's cottage on the property, estimated to be over 250 years old. The Van Veldens stopped short of the Afrikaans "Skaapwagtershuis" but while that arguably might have been even more authentic, perhaps not practical given the struggle foreign consumers have with labels like "Buitenverwachting" and "Vergelegen". The English name of Shepherd's Cottage "opens a few more doors", as Van Velden Junior puts it.

There are three wines in the range, a 2007 white blend of 57% Chenin Blanc, 33% Semillon and 10% Chardonnay, and 2007 Pinotage Rosé both selling for around R26 a bottle as well as a 2005 red including 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot and going for R36 a bottle.

It's an immensely likeable line-up, not simply because of the sensible prices. The white offers great fruit expression and Van Velden Junior says he would like it to be compared to that ever-popular quaffer Buiten Blanc, to which it matches up well. The red is ably put together, despite having seen no new oak, and while providing good drinking now, should reward at least a few years in bottle. I remain indifferent to Rosé per se and this one has a rather hefty 14% alcohol by volume that might have unfortunate consequences if drunk too enthusiastically on a hot summer's afternoon. However, I suspect it will find favour irrespective of my misgivings...

Van Velden Junior says the motivation behind launching a second-label range was that he "wants people to open a bottle of Overgaaauw every day" and explains that he has priced the wines modestly as "not everybody can afford R100 a bottle". It seems to me that this winemaker, who has a B.Comm degree but largely learnt on the job when it comes to matters vinous, understands the market well.

Cheers  
Christian Eedes  
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**The postscript wine of the week**  
Nederburg Private Bin R163 Cabernet Sauvignon 2004. Further proof of the Razvan Macici-led renaissance that this label is undergoing.

**TASTE SOUTH AFRICA'S TOP RATED RED BLENDS**



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