

BOUCHARD FINLAYSON  
A BOUTIQUE VINEYARD

## HARVEST REPORT

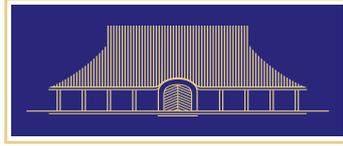
### HARVEST 2018

The 2018 vintage will long be remembered at Bouchard Finlayson for the benevolent weather conditions that provided a near-perfect foundation to the team's endeavours in the vineyards and the winery. Bouchard Finlayson Estate & Vineyard Manager Mortimer Lee says that substantial late-winter rain, an early spring, a temperate summer without excessive bouts of summer-rainfall, which in other years often threaten to disrupt best efforts, and favourable ripening-conditions represented a rare synergy of variables, 'as if the weather-gods had, from the very outset, decreed the 2018-vintage to be of supreme quality.'

'This was hugely instrumental in promoting a balanced micro-climate within vine-canopies and ensuring that downy mildew, the traditional vineyard-foe, did not spawn its ugly spores at any stage of the 2018 growing-season.'

Picking commenced at a later date than the established norm – another sign of the comparatively mild ripening-phase that had preceded harvesting operations. Each cultivar was harvested at optimum ripeness, (necessitating the extension of harvesting-operations to week-end shifts), with healthy volumes of quality-fruit delivered to the winery. Sugar accumulation and phenolic ripeness had converged timeously - an early, encouraging, indicator of the slightly lower alcohol levels and ideal natural acidity now displayed in the estate's 2018 range of wines.

Winemaker Chris Albrecht says that ferments progressed smoothly, while whole-bunch fermentation was deliberately utilized to a lesser degree than had been the case in recent years. 'We further diversified the range of yeasts used in our ferments - ever-striving for even greater complexity - and fermented in amphora for the very first time! The results - at this early stage – look most promising', Albrecht concluded.



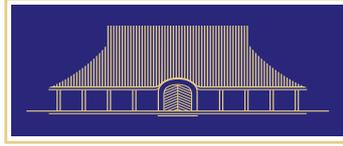
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### HARVEST 2017

We celebrated a good harvest after five weeks of hard work, having spent seven days a week in the cellar. This year 24 permanent staff members rolled up their sleeves to harvest on the Estate in the Hemel-en-Aarde valley, while jobs were created for another 24 temporary staff from the greater Hermanus area.

Winemaker Chris Albrecht celebrated his 7th harvest since he started at Bouchard Finlayson in 2011, assisted in the cellar by Nigel Hansen, as well as Nkosinamandla Maku who has been helping during harvest since 2013, when he is not working elsewhere on the estate. Hansen has been with Bouchard Finlayson for more than 18 years. This year three student interns, William Goldschmidt and Luigi Pagoni from Tuscany in Italy, and Jean Nel from Stellenbosch, joined the Bouchard Finlayson team to gain experience during the harvest. Apart from the severe downpour received at the end of January, prior to harvest, ripening conditions had been very good, with dry and cool weather prevailing. Un-even budding on the Pinot noir vineyards, necessitated strict discipline during green harvest. Cool conditions, especially at night, continued into February, with no excessive heat experienced. Harvest commenced a few days early, compared to the long term average, with all vineyards yielding a lighter crop. As a result, the fruit from all 10 grape varieties grown on the Estate, including the late-ripening Kaaimansgat chardonnay grapes, were picked within 32 days. A very compact harvest indeed. Healthy fruit, phenolic and sugar ripeness coinciding well, together with good flavour development, all create much expectation for what is expected to be a memorable vintage.



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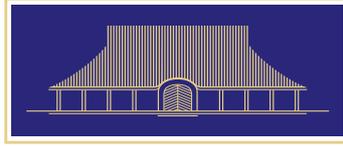
## HARVEST REPORT

### HARVEST 2016

There is no escaping the fact that 2016 has been a warm year. Conditions may have been extreme in the western territories north of Cape Town but our positioning in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley close to the cold southern oceans has worked well for us. In fact we could not have planned it better, even if Bacchus had sent us pre-booking weather schedule order forms! When it did rain it rained on the weekends and these occurrences brought just the right amount of water. Everything worked in our favour with the net result that all the responsibility now rests with us. Winter was notably cold and this set the tone for successful bud-break. These conditions followed by an uninterrupted imperfect flowering program where berry-set evolved with relatively open bunches. (Imperfect is better than perfect as too tight bunches encourages the chances of grey rot). There was no rot and all bunches arrived in super condition which resulted in a big crop but not lacking in quality. With continuous sunshine and hot days through December and early January the scene was set for an early start to this vintage which was also cause for an early completion of harvest. Two good years in a row have followed on two tough years, lest we not forget the skills and challenges awaiting for the next tough years? But useful to note the contradiction of our award winning 2013 Galpin Peak Pinot noir which is arguably one of our finest vintages!

### HARVEST 2015

Walker Bay offers no weather guarantee from one vintage to another and no comparison can be made between vintages 2014 and 2015. Each presented totally different conditions but fortuitously both these seasons have not disappointed. The 2015 vintage gave winemaker Peter Finlayson one of the most accommodating wine-making experiences of his thirty five years in this beautiful valley. The harvest commenced very early with perfectly healthy fruits arriving out of a relatively dry summer. Potentially it was the cold wet winter from the previous year that set the stage for such excellent conditions. Generally winter conditions are too mild to initiate generous crops in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley but winter 2014 presented longer-than-usual cold spells that aided the offering of the following vintage. Early impressions of the wines are excellent. The Sauvignon Blanc will be the first to be bottled which is presenting wonderful aromas and even the Pinot Noir ferments appear to be offering great potential. We look forward to living with some stunning wines from this vintage.



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### HARVEST 2014

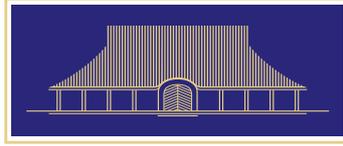
The 2014 vintage was arguably the wettest and most testing to date. The harvest commenced much later than normal, mid-February, after a protracted and wet summer. Experience and attention to detail overcame these challenges to ensure a successful harvest. Despite the wet conditions, a stock of excellent wines were secured and, fortunately, the end of February brought fine, hot, sunny weather for the end of the harvest. This vintage is reminiscent of the wonderful wines from vintages 1997 and 2003, which also endured wet and adverse weather. While alcohol levels will be lower, some exciting offerings from 2014 are eagerly anticipated. A total of 610mm of rain was recorded between October and March 2014, which nonetheless produced super white wines and very promising reds.

### HARVEST 2013

Vines need water to grow but grapes need little water to ripen, which is an enigma that must be deftly balanced in a coastal valley. At times in 2013, the summer weather threatened to topple the crop but finally advanced to a most welcome "cool" season with late ripening and excellent fruit. The most significant feature of 2013 was the unusually long winter of 2012 with the added challenge of a very wet October that makes for vigorous growth that triggers problem pathology threats, which paradoxically was in fact the "appropriate" scenario the team were looking for. Patience prevailed as the first fruit reached optimal representation. The result is some very exciting wines from a happy cool vintage.

### HARVEST 2012

2012 is one of those extraordinary harvests where the crop was substantial while the quality was correspondingly, enviably good. Never has the estate enjoyed such low VA levels or seen such clean and unblemished fruit. The weather was perfectly dry throughout the six weeks of harvest and the crop was 30% above the norm. The Chardonnay wines and all the whites are right on the button. Being close to the ocean, the farm is much more susceptible to light rain resulting from localised coastal low pressure occurrences and consequently needs to capitalise on the meso-climate, which is different to the obvious Stellenbosch and Paarl situation.



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### HARVEST 2011

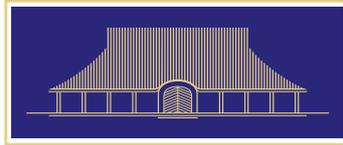
Timing was of the essence in 2011 with Pinot Noir being the first grapes to the cellar. All manner of tricky weather and opportunistic bugs waited in the wings to upstage this years' harvest. A relatively dry winter followed by late rain created conditions for opportunistic mildews, however a well-organised preventative spray programme reduced potential damage. When nature deals the cards, the winemaker aims to make the best of the deck – in the end it is about technique, timing and success in the cellar; but most important is to develop the feeling for the vintage and then craft where necessary. The grapes were not in pristine condition, but proved to make great wines nonetheless. A later ripening compared to previous years led to good mouth feel and expressive aromatics. As an aside, a significant yield reduction was experienced for the Crocodile's Lair/ "Kaaimgat" Chardonnay grapes – the berry size for this vineyard was small and thus resultant wines are concentrated and rich aromatically.

### HARVEST 2010

Essentially this vintage was plagued by "joker" weather conditions: strong winds, a warm winter and very dry summer. A warm July month set the Chardonnay off to premature bud break. Spring 2009 was wet and cold, prompting the careful control of downy mildew. In early summer, very heavy SE winds impacted on flowering. The crop was overall reduced by 25%. The resulting wines are very good but polyphenols were high so astringency levels in whites were closely examined and reduced where necessary. Pinot Noir offered poor juice recovery rates with wines having relatively high alcohol levels – all an indication of small and concentrated berries. Excellent intensity in youthful Pinot wines bodes well for the future. Sauvignon Blanc performed well. There are some classics from this vintage – bringing home the point that there is no predicting how rewarding any vintage is going to be, nature still has the final say.

### HARVEST 2009

Perhaps best described as a "non-nervous" vintage. There have been few years which have offered such kind weather conditions. Essentially dry throughout the growing season with almost zero grape spoilage. This, after a very wet early growing season where vineyard management forced key attention to pest control. These wines delivered on promise to be every bit as good as the highly rated vintages from 2007 and 2008. 2009 offered success in both the white and red wines.



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### HARVEST 2008

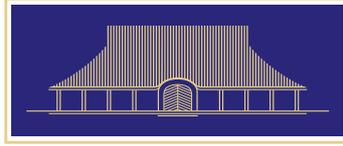
2008 presented challenges but resulted in some outstanding wines – particularly Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. It was a testing vintage, unusual in that weekly rains fell throughout the growing season. Strong growth in the vines with abundant soil moisture crafted a generous vintage with surprisingly pleasing fruit. Grapes did display some symptoms of the weather but early mildew control was applied successfully. The domain Chardonnay crop improved markedly – reflecting against poor tonnages from 2007. Thus a better supply of Missionvale 2008. Pinot Noir also presented an improved yield with new vines coming into production. Sauvignon Blanc is much the same as 2007 but quality very pleasing. The other varieties have managed to present rewarding wines. An overall characteristic in the 2008 wines is lower alcohol levels.

### HARVEST 2007

A rushed harvest placed pressure on all concerned as rapidly rising grape sugars posed a potential winemaking pressure point, but fortunately all wines fermented to dryness. Sauvignon blanc harvest was interrupted by two inches of rain which stalled the advent of a near perfect pick, generally in great condition plus a fairly generous crop. Chardonnay from the Domain was in excellent form, a very miserly crop which offered notable quality. Rain on numerous occasions did not cause rotten grapes. The Sangiovese harvest was well balanced and showed excellent promise in the young wine. Nebbiolo, although modest at 1.8 tons has also offered a superb wine. The Chardonnay from Kaaimansgat maintained its reputation. From a general perspective vintage, 2007 must be considered well-accomplished with excellent promise.

### HARVEST 2006

A cold and wet 2005 winter gave the vines a good start. While the season remained cool, little notable rain was recorded after mid October. The heat of February and March ensured that ripening was brought to a happy conclusion. The grape varieties which fell short on decent cropping levels were mainly Chardonnay and Sangiovese. Pinot Noir and Sauvignon blanc also fell short of their intended tonnages. Perhaps it was some days of particular strong South East winds in October which caused the crop reduction – impact on flowering and also damage to shoots. The highlight of 2006 was the Chardonnay grape. Grape sugar levels were excellent, particularly with the Pinot Noir pickings which also reflect good pH levels and fine natural acid support.



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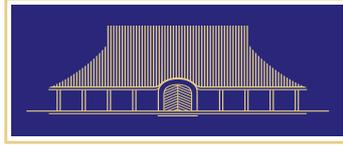
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### HARVEST 2005

The 2005 vintage was early. For many growers in the Cape this will be remembered as one of the driest seasons in history and there was a resulting shortage of white wines for this year. Fortunately in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, climate is a little different to the rest of the Western Cape. The early part of the growing season involved one of the driest winters ever. Conditions were saved by timely rains in October 2004. Additional rains in November in fact created problems with mildew which had no serious effect on the crop. The summer season was generally moderate in temperature, which ensured that the fruit arrived at the cellar in excellent condition. Another feature of the vintage was the fact that the grape acidities were higher than for the previous two years; which is a positive quality indicator. The different varieties all performed well.

### HARVEST 2004

The lead up to 2004 harvest was characterised by a rather warm winter, followed by the heaviest ever snowfalls in the Cape in August, and an unusually cold snap in September. The dry winter conditions ensured that there was very little root stress while the cold snap delayed what appeared to be early bud break. The location protected the farm from the drought conditions experienced in the winelands beyond Walker Bay. Harvest 2004 was lining up to be one of the best prospects in years when two really hot days hit the Cape. The water demand in the Bouchard Finlayson vineyard was relatively low regardless. Sauvignon Blanc vines needed a bit of irrigation, while the Pinot Noir was fine. Rain interspersed the harvesting activities – more of an irritation than a serious downpour. Generally the crop was healthy, with no disease suffered during the growing season. Green bunch cropping was done on the Pinot Noir, and they were perfectly on the mark – producing a very exciting wine.



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## HARVEST 2003

Right from the onset the vintage looked promising. Weather conditions had been relatively cool. The excessive early crop, characteristic of this vintage, was managed by implementing a crop reduction action known as green harvesting from mid December. Remaining grapes were healthy and early analysis of the fruit pointed to good sugar versus acid ratios. The last weeks of harvest were very dry – not too many extreme heat days, but simply long periods with little rain. Water reserves were tested but vitis vinifera is designed to function best in Mediterranean climates – climates where it does not rain in summer months. Total rainfall for 2002 was 30% below normal expectations. Everything came together and in the end 2003 was an excellent vintage.

## HARVEST 2002

Vintage 2002 produced one of the most complex Pinot Noirs to date. Potentially the result of a high rainfall in January prior to harvest, one effect of the wet weather was a reduction in crop; which also questionably ameliorates the flavour profile of the wine. For the Chardonnay, it was a difficult vintage: after experiencing one of the wettest January months on record, resulting in an uncomfortable and challenging harvest, selection was essential and frustrated by the problem of having to wait for greater fruit maturity. Grape sugars of less than 23°B illustrate the winemaking philosophy of not producing overripe Chardonnays, but rather capturing the style of wines which will age well, as practised in the classic Burgundian white wine preparations.