



Tim's Wine Market

August 2021

By Tim Varan & JP Donnelly-Davis

Anwilka Ugaba 2017 - \$25

Last month, we brought you an exceptional Cabernet Sauvignon from the Stellenbosch region, produced by May de Lencquesaing, the owner of Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Laland in the Pauillac region of Bordeaux, France. This month, we bring you another great wine from Stellenbosch, also with Bordeaux roots, from a winery whose partners include Bruno Prats, the former owner of Chateau Cos d'Estournel in St. Estephe, and Hubert de Boüard, owner of Chateau L'Angelus in St. Emilion. It is no accident that these world-class winemakers are putting down roots in Stellenbosch as it is seen as an area with exceptional potential, but the land is still very affordable by global winemaking standards. However, in the case of this winery, the French input was solicited by one of South Africa's most forward-thinking winemakers, Lowell Jooste, who put this dream team together.

To understand the history of this wine, it helps to know how South Africa first became a winemaking hot bed almost 600 years ago. In 1685, Simon Van der Stel, 10th Commander of the colony of South Africa, was granted a sizable estate of his choosing. He wisely chose to set up shop where the land was most suited to the production of quality wines, which he dubbed Constantia. It is here, on the east side of Table Mountain that he established the country's first large-scale winery.

After Van der Stel's death in 1712, the estate was divided into three separate wineries, one of them being Klein Constantia. Immediately, the new owners began to make improvements in the vineyard and soon after made history as their wines became the first Cape wines exported back to mainland Europe. The winery's meteoric rise to fame was centered largely around their dessert wine, known as Vin de Constance, which eventually was the favorite drink of Napoleon. However, the arrival of powdery mildew, labor shortages, trade wars with England and finally shifting consumer tastes brought about the end of wine production at Klein Constantia in 1898.

Then, in 1980, the Klein Constantia farm was purchased by Duggie Jooste, who was seeking to reinvigorate the storied winemaking history. He improved the vineyards, rebuilt the winery into a modern masterpiece and began building a global reputation as the country was coming from under the shadow of apartheid. Eventually his son Lowell took the reins, and formed a partnership with Prats and Boüard to create Anwilka in the Stellenbosch region. Lowell sold his shares to a Czech investor, as well as his French partners, in 2011. The three then merged Anwilka into Klein Constantia, thus creating the current dynamic.

The vines used to produce this wine are located in the coastal sub-zone of Stellenbosch called Helderberg. This area is known for having a very long growing season, thanks to the cool coastal breezes, so it is perfect for late-ripening varieties like Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinotage. The flagship wine of Anwilka is Syrah-based and this, their second wine, is typically built on a foundation of Cabernet Sauvignon. In the case of the 2017, this wine is a blend of 59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Syrah, 12% Petit Verdot and 1% Malbec. All the grapes are hand-harvested, with vigorous sorting, before being brought to the winery for destemming. The wine is fermented in stainless steel tanks, with an extended amount of time on the skins. After fermentation is complete, the wine is raked to French oak barrels, 30% of which are new, where it spends roughly 14 months. When you open this wine, I strongly suggest decanting for at least half an hour. Once you do, be prepared for plenty of aromatic intensity with notes of hickory smoke, black cherry syrup, dark chocolate, spearmint and tobacco. On the palate it is quite rich, with nicely integrated tannins. Drink 2021-2026 with grilled lamb chops, pan seared steaks or other hearty fare.

Woodstock "Octogenarian" 2013 - \$29

I tasted this wine for the first time in 2017 with an Australian broker I work with occasionally. At the time, I loved the wine but the price, and firm structure, kept me from making a purchase. Fast forward four years, and the broker reached out to me in crisis, as he was losing his New Jersey warehouse and was being forced to ship several hundred cases to California. This is an expensive proposition he was hoping to avoid and wondered if we could we make a deal. A few sample bottles later, generous credit terms and a late night reroute of several pallet of wine from Cincinnati to Orlando *last Friday*, and here we are. This wine has benefited from time and is at the perfect place to consume now. It is also a staggering example of one of the world's least appreciated, great categories: Australian Grenache.

Woodstock was originally founded by the Townsend family, settlers who emigrated to Australia from an English village of the same name. Patriarch William Louis Townsend received a lease for the land in 1905 and planted vines and apple trees across the property. After World War II, the property was purchased by Doug Collett, a decorated fighter pilot in the RAF and Australian Air Force. During his tours through Europe, Doug had become interested in wine and wondered if it was possible to re-create the styles of wine he enjoyed in Europe back in his homeland. Returning to McLaren Vale, he and his wife Mary purchased Woodstock Farm and began producing dry table wines, both white and red; though an occasional Port-style dessert wine made its way into the cellar, a nod to Australia's winemaking past.

Since 1982, the estate has been run by Doug and Mary's son Scott, who has continued his parents' dream of producing dry, European-styled wines. Scott has expanded the winery's vineyard holdings since the '80s, purchasing Syrah and Grenache vines of exceptional age; much of his Grenache is now over 80 years old. In addition to these venerable old parcels, Scott has also experimented with several high-acid European varieties such as Montepulciano, Tempranillo, and Riesling.

Aptly named "The Octogenarian," this wine comes predominantly from the aforementioned 80-year-old Grenache vines, grown on sandy soils near the town of Blewitt Springs (fans of this category should know that this area is considered the epicenter for world-class Grenache in Australia). However, some Tempranillo finds its way in as well (15%), one of Scott's favorite varieties to work with because of its high acidity and distinct aromatics. To make this wine, both grape varieties are picked by hand and brought to the winery for destemming. The Grenache and Tempranillo are vinified separately, both spending six days on the skins in stainless steel before pressing. A portion of both wines is then racked into used French oak barrels, with the rest remaining in stainless steel to preserve acidity and primary fruit characteristics. The wine is then blended together and filtered before bottling.

When you open this wine, you will want to decant for at least half an hour. Once you do, both grapes show at their best, revealing notes of raspberry preserve, red plum, caraway seed, star anise and white pepper. Drink now through 2024 with pork belly tacos, Tandoori chicken or pork roast with mushroom gravy.

Pork Roast with Mushroom Gravy

This is a fantastic recipe, perfect for any full-bodied red wine. When I first made this, I was surprised by the number of mushrooms, but they cook down and contribute immense flavor to the sauce.

1 (4- to 5-pound) boneless pork shoulder roast, fat trimmed to 1/8 inch thick

2 large garlic cloves, peeled and sliced thin

1 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme

1 1/2 teaspoons dried sage

2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon pepper

1 onion, peeled and halved

24 ounces cremini or white mushrooms, quartered

1 cup low-sodium chicken broth

Water

1 bay leaf

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Pat pork dry with paper towels. Make 10-12 slits into the meat with a pairing knife and insert one slice of garlic in each. Then rub all over with 1 teaspoon thyme, 1 teaspoon sage, salt and pepper. Tie roast at 1-inch intervals with kitchen twine.

Arrange roast, fat side up, in roasting pan and cook until beginning to brown, about 3 hours. Add onion, mushrooms, broth, 1 cup water, bay leaf, remaining thyme and remaining sage to pan and continue to roast until meat is well browned and skewer inserted in center meets no resistance, about 3 hours. Transfer roast to cutting board, tent with foil, and let rest 30 minutes.

Discard onion and bay leaf. Strain contents of roasting pan through fine-mesh strainer into fat separator; reserve mushrooms. Let liquid settle, then pour defatted pan juices (you should have about 1 cup) into measuring cup and add water to yield 1 1/2 cups.

Transfer 2 tablespoons of fat from separator to large saucepan and heat over medium-high heat until shimmering. Stir in flour and cook until golden, stirring constantly, 1 to 2 minutes. Slowly whisk in pan juices and bring to boil. Add reserved mushrooms and simmer over medium-low heat until gravy is slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove twine from pork. Cut pork into 1-inch slices. Serve with gravy.