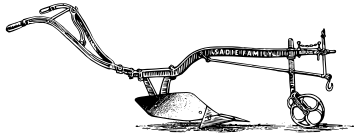




EBEN'S NOTES  
RELEASE 2024

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THE SADIE FAMILY WINES PTY LTD

## EBEN'S NOTES RELEASE 2024

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After having had one of the wettest winters in many decades, we have just lived through one of the driest summer patches in the Swartland ever recorded. It has practically not rained here for the past six months, but we hope these adverse and extreme climatic patterns will end.

Last year was arguably our busiest year ever, and the main agenda items were the energy crisis, the construction of the new cellar and a new water purification plant, and all of the roadworks and civils.

We will explore the various aspects and shed some light. Most importantly, we will give feedback on the viticultural agenda and where things stand.

### VITICULTURE

We are currently busy with soil sampling, classifications, and testing. Soil is a living form, and seasons and time bring about changes. We will audit our soils again this year and ensure all is in check. On the cover is Johan de Jager of Vinpro, leading this year's classifications and study. Over the years, we have opened up many different soil patches and parcels; year after year, we are building a more extensive database of the variables.

When we prepare soils and do the initial mapping of the terroir, we use electromagnetic scanners to screen the differences as they are more accurate. However, we dig soil testing holes within those variables to get exact measures and classifications. We keep populating ongoing data captured on the relevant sites. So, this year, we will see some significant soil calibrations.



This was the first year we did not participate in new plantings; we only continued the ongoing interplanting program in some of the older vineyards. Our renewed focus for this moment is the transformation of the Treinspoor vineyard, and we will give a more up-to-date version in a year or so.

We almost did not experience a Spring this year. The long, persistent winter gapped over into summer, forcing us in some of our drier sites to disc in our overcrops. This was not our ideal management style, but it was the only option as the soil profiles this past season dried out incredibly without follow-up rain from Spring to early Summer.

We also saw the first crop come off the Sonvang vineyard, and we hope to share this wine with you soon. It is a remarkable vineyard. Notwithstanding the magnitude of different varieties, the vineyard's growth has been very even and homogenous.

The new head pruning systems are incredible farming systems, and we hope they will help a lot. We are also very grateful for the broader spacings of our vines, as the added reserves per vine have proven to be critical. Our vineyards do present themselves as more vibrant and vital. The battle is ongoing to find fresher fruit and higher acidity parcels.

## CONSTRUCTION



The construction process is ongoing, and we hope to be close to completion at this year's release; much still needs to happen.

It has been a long emotional, financial and energy-stripping process, but in the end, it will be all for the good. We managed to get the tanks in and most of the basics to operate just before harvest, for it was a race to get the basics in play. We did not want to take this 2024 crop into the old cellar and then be forced to move all of the wines again, as every handling has some impact on the wines.

Thus, we worked profusely to get everything completed to a point in order to take the entire 2024 vintage into the new cellar and house most of the wines from day one in their final destination.

It was indeed a photo finish.

The entire construction is a high-spec build with a significant focus on energy efficiency, water conservation, water repurposing, and resource maximising. We anticipate that the general quality of the wines will also improve. We will be allowed to keep greater track of all of our vineyards, and more parcels will be able to be kept separate.

The old cellar has also been evacuated and refurbished, and the old buildings will be transformed to form future bottling facilities, labelling, logistics, and shipping bays.

Our offices will also move to the new cellar, and our old offices will become our future HR training centre and offices for our junior protégé program, so there is seriously much on the go. Last but not least, we will also have a new commercial high-spec kitchen, and eventually, we will cook for our entire staff daily.

## FUTURE ENERGY & WATER

Most South Africans can resonate with the frustrations of an unstable electricity grid. Our mission at this point was not so much to move immediately to the scale of investment, but we were left with a tiny choice and embarked on the first massive phase: setting up a solar plant, inverter, and battery system. In doing so, we take most of our consumption off-grid. We are still grid-tied at this point and plan to upscale to one megawatt with the next phase in battery storage, and at that point, we will be 100% self-sufficient.



Solar Development 2023

Off-the-grid systems are by no means cheap energy. Still, they mitigate the massive diesel burning and allow for uninterrupted power supply and business flow, which comes at a considerable premium.

Philosophically, we do not believe in singular grid systems, for they also have a high impact and input; at the same token, the technology is moving fast, and with our property being located on a slope, a potential water turbine system in future might mean greener energy and storage. At least an excellent base structure has been provided to build on in time.

In addition to this extension, we also upgraded our water purification plant and drastically improved the quality of our water for drinking, the processes required, and general usage. What we need to realise is that water is a living form. It lives in the earth(wells, boreholes & dams) and constantly evolves. The analysis of our Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall water is different, and the chemistry drastically varies.

The variants have a significant impact, and the new system we designed and commissioned calibrates our water quality every 15 seconds. Thus, we have a more regular and credible source of ultra-premium quality.

Water touches everything; it lives with us and within us, and we need to respect it, conserve it, and recycle it at all times. No matter how much or how little we have, it is the most valuable resource on the planet.



## THE CORK

The closure of any bottle of wine has been and will forever be a long-debated topic. It is complex but, at the same time, actually very simple. We still believe that natural cork is the most perfect closure in the world. It is a natural product, and it might contain a chemical compound called 2,4,6,-trichloroanisole(TCA), which is responsible for most of the cork taint aspects; there are others, but TCA is undoubtedly the most frequent.

The safest option is Stelvin (Screwcap) and, more recently, engineered technical corks. These corks consist of cork grains that are grounded up, placed through supercritical sterilising processes, and bound or glued together by polymers.

The latter two options are safe but have also led to many producers claiming that they have “sterilised” the ageing process of the wines in the bottle. For the massive list of producers that have moved to alternative closures, there is an extensive list of names at the high end of quality producers that subsequently moved back to natural cork again. So, the simplicity of the matter is based on what one believes wine ought to be, and safety rarely gives the most significant result in life.

That all being said, we have invested millions this year in our cork purchases; it is, as a fact, our most expensive purchase component in a year, only topped by our grape costs in farming. We have also been very involved with new processes of scanning the corks, like one will use sonar, and also have done much with the wax coatings of the cork to have more regular oxygen transmission rates(OTR) in terms of the corks living with the bottled wine to ensure that there are fewer bottle variations.

Much work is being done urgently to improve natural cork. The white elephant in the room is the negative effect global warming has had on cork quality and the properties of Suberin (Quercus Suber—Cork Oak).

The reality is that there are fewer and fewer great corks in the world, and in the open market, we have to buy corks in the same realm as producers like Chateau Lafite, Romaneé —Conti, and Biondi Santi. Thus, it comes down to money on the table. We spare no investment on this front. We also have a firm Cork Taint Replacement Policy.



Individual Cork Testing in Portugal

# THE SIGNATURES

2022 VINTAGE

## *Columella* 2022

The Columella has taken on many dimensions and interpretations over time, with quality being the central pillar. Varietal changes and viticultural improvements have most positively improved overall quality.

This 2022 Columella vintage displays floral aromas, and the bright, fresh fruit aromas carry over into oriental spicy aspects that then meet up with deepened earthy dynamics. Over time, the trademark violets and perfumes will develop further; the wine is very compact. The acidity at the end of the palate and the overall tannin are very well-placed, and the overall balance of the wine is terrific. The first thought that comes to mind is that it is a classic vintage, with most aspects being textbook. This 2022 vintage is also the lowest alcohol we ever achieved on the blend at 13,2 %. The wine needs time.



Columella 2022 racking to cask.

## PALLADIUS 2022

The 2022 starts by almost playing hide-and-seek; the wine is more reserved and holding back. And only after warming up and a couple of minutes in the glass does the conversation start. The aromas are that of green apple and citrus flint, and then some of the stone fruit aromas begin to shine through. The wine needs time.

The palate is already balanced, and the acidity is met by very firm tannins. The aftertaste is lingering.

This bottling is a great vintage to follow the 2021. It is a strong contender for the most restrained version, but we must taste 2021 and 2022 with some age to have a final verdict.

# DISTRICT SERIES

2023 VINTAGE

The South African wine industry, in a testament to its commitment to quality and authenticity, embraced the significance of origin in 1973. This commitment was further solidified by its enforcement through law, as the importance of demarcation and origin continued to grow. The districts, the most significant of these early demarcations, remain the cornerstone of the origin scheme.

We essentially work with the following districts: SWARTLAND (Skerpioen, Pofadder, Treinspoor, Voetpad & Rotsbank, Columella & Palladius), CITRUSDAL MOUNTAIN (Skurfberg, Kokerboom & Soldaat) and last but not least for good measure we work with STELLENBOSCH with the Mev. Kirsten vineyard.

As time passed, we realised that our focus had moved to the regionality of the districts and their characteristics. We now want to highlight the notion of the individual terroirs rather than the mere age of the vines. The site will always be more important than any other singular condition.

## SOLDAAT 2023

This 2023 Soldaat displays the usual red cherry and strawberry fruit aromas that carry through into deeper earthy flavours. This year, the colour is slightly darker but still bright red, and the tannins are more textured and compact. The fruit is overall quite expressive, and the mouthfeel of the more compact tannins suggests that this vintage will age well and the wine will gain massive complexity with time in the bottle. The underlying dormant secondary flavours are well knitted together with the acidity.

## POFADDER 2023

The 2023 Pofadder displays highly complex aromas and is one of the most stylish presentations of Cinsaut we have seen. The overall balance and depth of the wine are just sublime. The complex fruit aromas and earthy aspects carry through to the mouthfeel and taste, which is a more mature style of Cinsaut. The overall balance and crisp acidity make for a long, persisting aftertaste.

# DISTRICT SERIES

2023 VINTAGE

## TREINSPoor

2023

This 2023 Treinspoor comes straight out of the blocks with the most complex, spicy, and earthy aromas. The entire wine smells like beautiful soil that was just ploughed. The earthy aromas and the bright red fruit aromas are packed together, resting on substantial tannins and acidity that will carry this into the future. Please afford this wine time.

## SKERPION

2023

The 2023 Skerpioen displays the usual limey and citrus flavours associated with the vineyard. This wine's distinctive saline qualities, salty taste, and minerality are again prominent. The Chenin and Palomino field blend is very stable annually in its expression. The tannins and the acidity are slightly softer than in the last two vintages, and this vintage could be savoured earlier as the balance and mouthfeel are already very balanced.

## 'T VOETPAD

2023

This 2023 'T Voetpad displays limey, cordial, and citrus aspects with a racy entry point. The wine is firm and tightly coiled up, and it seems it is almost not ready to talk to us yet! It needs so much time. This vintage field blend is in perfect harmony, but we believe this will become one of the most age-worthy proponents.

The wine is incredibly balanced and compact. We are looking forward to trying it again in 4 to 20 years to see where its development takes it.

## KOKERBOOM

2023

2023 Kokerboom displays the typical waxy, lanolin characters often associated with Semillon. For the second year running, we had very little rain in the Citrusdal Mountains, and the vineyard was in a stressful environment throughout the growing season. We opted again to pick the vineyard slightly earlier than what we naturally would be inclined to, and the wine still yielded 13,8% alcohol; notwithstanding its fresh appearance, it is mammoth wine. The tannins, acidity, overall texture, and volume in the wine are incredible, and we are in awe of the power of this terroir.



# DISTRICT SERIES

2023 VINTAGE

## SKURFBERG

2023

For this 2023 Skurfberg vintage, we also opted to pick seemingly prematurely, as it is in the Citrusdal Mountains and shares the same seasonal dynamics. The physiology of the fruit seemed delayed, yet the wine also yielded 13.9% alcohol. The combination of the volume of the wine and the firm acidity makes for an incredible wine that is essentially built to last. The trademark granny smith apple, pear skin, and lanolin are very present in the aromas. The wine's viscosity and volume, combined with the cutting acidity, suggest that this vintage has the mechanics to age incredibly well, like Kokerboom.

## ROTSBANK

2023

This 2023 Rotsbank bottling displays match flint, almost crushed oyster shell aromas with grapefruit aspects. The wine is incredibly concentrated on the aromatics, and the tannins have massive tension. The wine's substantial acidity and dry finish suggest that it will only benefit much from the time in the bottle. It is one of the most linear expressions of the year. It is a blue steel Chenin.

## MEV. KIRSTEN

2023

The 2023 Mev. Kirsten displays limey, citrus and melba toast aromas being coated by a fresher aspect that spills over into pear skin and green apple pulp freshness that continues. The vintage's trademark across all the Chenin vineyards is that we yielded full wines with beaming acidity and linear finishes. As a result, this is one of the more restrained vintages in character with incredible complexity. As always, the wine has a substantial volume and viscosity.

Many thanks for all the continued support!

The Sadie Family Team