



August 2014

**KLEINE ZALZE ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF THEIR NEW CELLARMASTER –
ALASTAIR RIMMER**

THE multi-award-winning Kleine Zalze Wines in Stellenbosch is delighted to have secured the services of internationally experienced cellarmaster, **Alastair Rimmer** who takes up the reins in September 2014.



Johan Joubert, cellar master for the past twelve years, is moving onto new pastures with the warm thanks of the team for his contribution to the Kleine Zalze journey so far. Owner and MD Kobus Basson says “We are very grateful for Johan’s hard work and dedication to Kleine Zalze over the years. He has done a wonderful job for us and he remains a welcome friend and will always be an integral part of the history of Kleine Zalze. We wish him all the success in the world with his future ventures.”

Kobus goes on to say “We are excited about the next chapter in Kleine Zalze’s history and after careful consideration we are pleased to announce the addition of Alastair to the established Kleine Zalze team. Alastair has worked extensively in the international market and brings with him a wealth of experience having worked in both big commercial wineries as well as super premium boutique producers in South Africa and abroad.” New cellar master, Alastair, takes up his duties in September 2014 and is looking forward to bringing his international experience to complement the dynamic winemaking team, currently lead by RJ Botha.

Alastair’s wine journey began in Stellenbosch when he was inspired to change his studies from horticulture to viticulture by a chance meeting with the legendary Professor Eben Archer. Alastair describes chatting to an unknown stranger on the steps of the Neethling Building. “He spoke passionately about “growing” wine, a concept that really sparked an interest. It’s amazing to think that a random meeting on the steps outside the Viticulture and Oenology building was in fact the catalyst, not just for a career, but a passion for wine and the industry around it.”

Following his studies, Alastair worked at Overgaauw Wine Estate, Augusta Wines and Vergelegen Wines, before taking the decision in 2004 to expand his knowledge and experience by working overseas. He worked in Marlborough, New Zealand and then in Jumilla in Spain, where his time at Bodega Juan Gil gave him his first chance to develop and make wines specifically for the American markets, something which he achieved to much acclaim from critics such as Robert Parker. Following this success he was recruited as winemaker and vineyard manager for Diablo Grande Winery & Vineyards in the San Joaquin Valley, California where Alastair spent three years turning around this boutique operation and contributing substantially to their growth and improved brand recognition.

In 2008, Alastair met the man who was to become the second great influence on his career in wine. Chris Ringland from Belvidere Estate in South Australia is widely-regarded as one of the most dynamic figures and cutting-edge winemakers in the wine world today. Often described as 'a cult winemaker' he has achieved several perfect 100-scores from Robert Parker for his wines from the Barossa and Eden Valleys. Alastair was entrusted by Chris with management of all the US operations of The Grateful Palate, a high-end operation creating top-quality wines for exclusive local markets. He also worked alongside Chris on his Australian operations, producing much larger volumes of more accessible wines, enabling him to get a good understanding of both boutique and commercial ventures.

Further projects in Alicante, Spain ensued, allowing him to also work vintages at southern hemisphere estates such as Vergelegen alongside Andre van Rensburg, at the same time. Alastair finally returned to South Africa on a permanent basis when he was appointed head winemaker at Darling Cellars two years ago and now brings his wide knowledge and experience of small, medium-sized and large winemaking ventures to Kleine Zalze.

Alastair believes his time working in such varied conditions has helped him to focus on the 'important' elements, irrespective of the area or style of wines he was making. "In my opinion, balance is the single most important factor in winemaking. Popular wine styles in the modern wine world are for ever changing, but balance never goes out of fashion!!" He is also a big fan of diversity of terroir, and believes that it is crucial that winemakers take into account the conditions within which they are given to work. His commercial experience means he tempers this respect for regionality with a clear-sighted view of the varying needs of different sectors, citing his experiences in the US as teaching him the concept of successfully producing specific wines for specific markets.

Looking ahead, Alastair says he is very excited at the opportunities and challenges offered in his new role. "Moving to Kleine Zalze is personally very exciting for me as my career has now come full circle back to Stellenbosch, where my love for winemaking first began, I think Kleine Zalze has come a long way in a very short space of time and the future looks bright for this ambitious winery. I would like to consolidate on what has been achieved so far and will try to build on that, contribute to Kleine Zalze's identity both locally and internationally and hopefully have it recognized as one of South Africa's 'First Growths.'"

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