

Nature's diversity in harmony with winemaking

Bouchard Finlayson achieved World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Conservation Champion status in 2011. We have earned a reputation as an environmental leader in the South African wine industry based on our commitment to conservation, responsible production practices, integrated environmental management systems, and the spearheading of innovative solutions in water, energy and climate adaptation.

To qualify for WWF Conservation Champion status, landowners need to maintain an independently-audited Integrated Production of Wine (IPW) score of 70% or more. Producers must commit to biodiversity-friendly farming practices, conservation of natural habitat and a consistent re-evaluation of water and energy efficiencies. We are compelled, for example, to calculate our carbon footprint annually in aiming to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and eliminate the use of harmful refrigerants.

Approximately 94 hectares, (or 75% of the Bouchard Finlayson property), is set aside for the conservation of indigenous fauna and flora. The main focus of environmental activity is the ongoing effort to eliminate invasive tree species, and the rehabilitation of historically eroded mountain slopes. Some 335 plant species have been identified on the Bouchard Finlayson property to date, which is particularly impressive when compared to the total of 1500 species inhabiting the entire British Isles. Bird census programmes were introduced at Bouchard Finlayson in 2011 and the South African national bird, the Blue Crane, enjoys many undisturbed nesting spots on the farm. Owls have also been encouraged to thrive, with the installation of owl-boxes.

We have an integrated approach to viticulture, as pesticide-use is virtually eliminated through the release of natural predators, while conventional, low-impact methods are implemented in preventing fungal outbreaks in our vineyards. The impact of foraging wildlife on young vineyards and new plantings has been countered by enclosing sections of the area under vine with bonox fencing; while swathes of undisturbed land border the adjacent vineyards. The abundant wildlife live in harmonious co-existence with our grape growing activities and are frequently spotted while going about their daily business across the estate. Manual and mechanical weed-control is practiced as far as is economically viable, and winery waste is composted for later agricultural use. Effluent water from the cellar is recycled via a dam just below the cellar-complex. The quality of this water is monitored on a monthly basis, to ensure it does conform to those standards set for irrigation-purposes.

As from the 2018-vintage, we've initiated spontaneous fermentation, with indigenous yeasts on select batches of our Pinot Noir ferments. Only GMO free, USDA and EU Organically certified yeasts will be introduced to these ferments, as and when needed. All other yeasts used to produce Bouchard Finlayson wines are GMO free. SO₂ (Sulphur Dioxide) levels are kept to a minimum in the production of our wines - and would typically be limited to only 80% of those 'best practise'- levels as defined within IPW-stipulated parameters, and to only 50% of the OIV legal limit.

Bouchard Finlayson is dedicated to removing as many unnecessary single use plastics (SUPs) from its supply chains. The initial effort has seen the elimination of plastic bottles, replaced with glass bottles, and plastic shopping bags replaced with re-usable cloth shopping bags for the weekly purchases.

With the on-going water shortage experienced in South Africa, Bouchard Finlayson endeavours to save and protect the earth's natural precious resource, water, by replacing normal water faucets with water saving 'spray' faucets.

Bouchard Finlayson has always been ahead of its time in environmental stewardship. We continue to explore nature-friendly methods of preserving our diverse biological environment, and in further honing sustainable production of our wines.

As a family-owned boutique vineyard and winery, we are people- focused and draw into our ranks like-minded individuals inspired by genuine passion and commitment to produce award-winning sought-after wines. We will always favour the preferential employment of local men and women; people who have grown up in the region and have a great love and understanding of this unique valley, its climate, fluctuations and natural rhythms. Social upliftment and community support are fundamental to our very point of departure; some relevant aspects include:

- Proud membership of the Hemel-en-Aarde Winegrowers' Association, upholding the ethical code of Labour Practices in the area;
- Workers whom are all provided with fully-equipped housing and educational support for their children;
- Monthly financial contributions to a very efficiently run Hemel-en-Aarde Valley Pre-school;

- Wage-earning staff, upon reaching the retirement-age of 60, and after having also worked at Bouchard Finlayson for a minimum period of 20 years, automatically qualify for a house built by the wine estate. The retired worker assumes full ownership of the new home – this gift from the Tollman family represents an expression of the owners’ gratitude for years of hard work and dedication;
- As a proud supporter of the Hermanus Rainbow Trust, we assist in providing essential health, social and education services in response to the dire needs of poor and marginalised communities within the region.