



Above: Conrad Vlok, who makes the Adamastor and First Sighting wines at Strandveld, 'is conscious of acidity'

and Koegelenberg have left the scene and the three local farmers originally involved in Land's End are forging ahead with their own labels: The Berrio, belonging to Francis Pratt; Zoetendal (Johan de Kock); and Human's Black Oystercatcher.

Human, Pratt and De Kock practise mixed farming (sheep, dairy and beef cattle, cereals) on massive properties; their undertakings are increasingly under pressure to remain economically viable, hence the diversification into wine. This strategy has a real chance of succeeding if the calibre of winemakers who buy fruit from them for their own labels is anything to go by: Bruce Jack of Flagstone, David Nieuwoudt of Cederberg and Trizanne Pansegrouw, previously of Anwilka in Stellenbosch, and now making wines under her own label.

The attraction of Elim for Nieuwoudt? 'No extreme heat. Temperature [in the lead-up to harvest] is a big factor.' He makes a Sauvignon Blanc and a Semillon, which he bottles under the David Nieuwoudt Ghost Corner label, while a reserve Semillon has featured in the Cape Winemakers Guild auction a few times. 'So potent, so multi-dimensional,' he notes of these wines. 'I have to check myself talking it up too much at this stage, but Elim's got unbelievable potential.'

Pansegrouw, once again, appreciates that Elim is a cool-climate region. 'Climate change is something we can't ignore anymore and I believe that Elim is a safe choice for grape-growing now and for the future. We're not exposed to extreme temperature fluctuations like elsewhere in the country, allowing for long ripening periods.' She adds that the area's moderate and relatively reliable rainfall (about 500mm a year) is also in its favour.

Pure and precious

Last but not least is Strandveld, the winery owned by a consortium in which Nick Diemont is a leading figure. Diemont, previously involved in the running of such premier South African properties as Boschendal, Bouchard Finlayson and Vergelegen, wanted to find a property in an area with strong maritime influences and, after considering Darling and Durbanville, opted for Elim.

The first Strandveld vineyards were planted in 2002 and winemaker Vlok, previously of export group Baarsma and then Delheim in Stellenbosch,

10 cool-climate classics from Elim

Strandveld, Sauvignon Blanc 2010

★★★★ 18pts/20

£12 **Vinexus**

Complex nose of dusty gravel, citrus blossom and some herbaceous character. The palate shows juicy, pure fruit and fresh acidity before a pithy finish. **Drink:** 2011–2013. **Alcohol:** 14%



Black Oystercatcher,

White Pearl 2008 ★★★★★ 17

£12.79–£13.12 **SA Wines**

Online, WaverleyTBS

82% Semillon, 18%

Sauvignon Blanc. Sea

breeze and asparagus nose.

The palate is rich and complex with juicy fruit and an almost saline finish.

Drink: 2011–2014. **Alc:** 12.5%

David Nieuwoudt, Ghost Corner

Sauvignon Blanc 2010 ★★★★★ 17

£17.05 (2008) **Bancroft**

Green pepper, lime and granadilla aromas. The palate shows weight and richness balanced by bright acidity.

Focused and pure with a persistent finish. **Drink:** 2011–2013. **Alc:** 14%.

Strandveld, Adamastor 2009 ★★★★★ 17

£13–£14 **SA Wines Online, Vinexus**

55% Semillon, 45% Sauvignon Blanc.

Forward, herbal nose. Juicy fruit palate, well-judged oak and vibrant acidity.

Flavours of citrus, green apple and paprika. **Drink:** 2011–2014. **Alc:** 13.5%

The Berrio, Weathergirl 2009 ★★★★★ 17

N/A UK **www.theberrio.co.za**

67% Sauvignon Blanc, 33% Semillon.

Expressive, herbal nose. The palate is light-bodied and very elegant with clean, pure fruit and invigorating acidity. **Drink:** 2011–2014. **Alc:** 13.8%

Flagstone, Free Run Sauvignon Blanc

2010 ★★★★★ 16.5

£9.99 **Matthew Clark**

65% Elim, 35% Elgin. Lime and flint nose. Rich, full, flavoursome palate of fresh herbs through to citrus and tropical fruit. Relatively soft acidity. **Drink:** 2011–2013. **Alc:** 14%.

Zoetendal, Sauvignon Blanc 2009

★★★★ 16.5

N/A UK **www.zoetendalwines.co.za**

Herbal and flint aromas. The palate is rich and ripe with good texture and soft but sufficient acidity. Well balanced. **Drink:** 2011–2012. **Alc:** 13.5%

First Sighting, Shiraz

2009 ★★★★★ 17

£10 **Artisan Wine**

Includes 5% Viognier. Dark fruit and white pepper on the nose. The palate is medium bodied with pure fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins. Focused and precise. **Drink:** 2011–2014. **Alc:** 13.5%

Strandveld, Syrah 2008 ★★★★★ 17

£14 **Vinexus**

Includes 3% Viognier, 1.5% Grenache, 0.5% Mourvedre. Complex, pungent nose of red fruit, lilies, scrub and spice. The palate is medium bodied, the fruit ever so slightly dilute, fresh acidity, fine tannins. **Drink:** 2011–2013. **Alc:** 14%

Land's End, Shiraz 2008

★★★ 16

£16–£16.79 **Alliance Wine,**

Bottle Bank, Hanford,

Henderson, SA Wines Online

Open nose of dark fruit, black pepper and a hint of vanilla. The palate is full-bodied and smooth-textured with concentrated fruit and relatively soft acidity. **Drink:** 2011–2013. **Alc:** 14.5%

For full details of UK stockists, see p123

arrived in time for the 2005 harvest. As with his neighbours, it's his Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon-Semillon that have particularly impressed to date. Whereas quite a few of South Africa's best examples of Sauvignon Blanc are multi-regional blends, Vlok wouldn't countenance buying in grapes from elsewhere. 'The Elim designation is precious and I don't want to bastardise it.'

Far from that, this small, new corner of South Africa is destined to become a much-loved offspring. **D**

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