Hartenberg Wine Estate

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Summary

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Description

HISTORY

The first settlers to cultivate the virgin land of the estate now known as Hartenberg were friends Cunraad Boin and Christoffel Esterhuizzen who were granted permission to work 60 morgen (20 ha) of the land in 1692. Even then the wine-bearing potential of the soil was recognised and one of the first tasks that the two partners undertook was the clearing of the land to plant 2 000 vines. In 1704, Christoffel Esterhuizzen was granted the title deed to "*Het Hartenberg*" by Governer (Willem Adriaan van der Stel) and became the first official owner of the farm. By 1718, he had 10 000 vines on his property and produced four leggers of wine. The well-known elephant hunter, Paulus Keyser, bought Hartenberg in 1721 and continued the practice of vineyard cultivation and winemaking on the farm until he sold it to Jacob van Bochen in 1725. Van Bochen, a former accountant of the Dutch East India Company butchery and holder of the liquor retail monopoly, also bought Weltevrede adjoining Hartenberg. The two farms have remained a combined property, forming the Hartenberg estate as it is now. For about one hundred years after van Bochen, the farm passed through the hands of various owners. Some with colourful names like Arrie Lekkerwyn *(delicious wine)*, and Aaron van Ceylon (a freed slave) and in 1838 it became the property of the brothers Jacobus and Johannes Bosman. An important period in the farm's development was ushered in by the Hampf family when they bought Hartenberg in 1928. Mrs Hampf extended the vineyards and planted the many beautiful trees still to be seen around the farm and cellar, while her husband became the first officially recorded winemaker on the estate. In 1948, Hartenberg was bought by the late Dr Maurice Finlayson (a well-known Cape Town pathologist) and his wife, Eleanor. Discovering the true potential of the estate, they soon began marketing their wines under the label "Montagne". Besides good wine, the Finlaysons also produced two sons, Peter and Walter, who were to become renowned South African winemakers. Uncompromising and sophisticated, Eleanor Finlayson's presence is still felt on Hartenberg today. Gilbeys were the next owners of the estate, purchasing it from the Finlaysons in 1977. They eventually released the present Hartenberg range as their flagship brand in 1985. On 1 January 1987, Ken Mackenzie, purchased Hartenberg, having seen the potential that the perennial under-achiever offered. His daughters continue a program of investment in the farm, focusing on three key areas: the replanting to specific sites of premium varietals, the development of production facilities, and upliftment, through knowledge and skills for employees. The Mackenzie vision, though extremely ambitious, remains simple: to do whatever it takes to produce wines of outstanding quality.