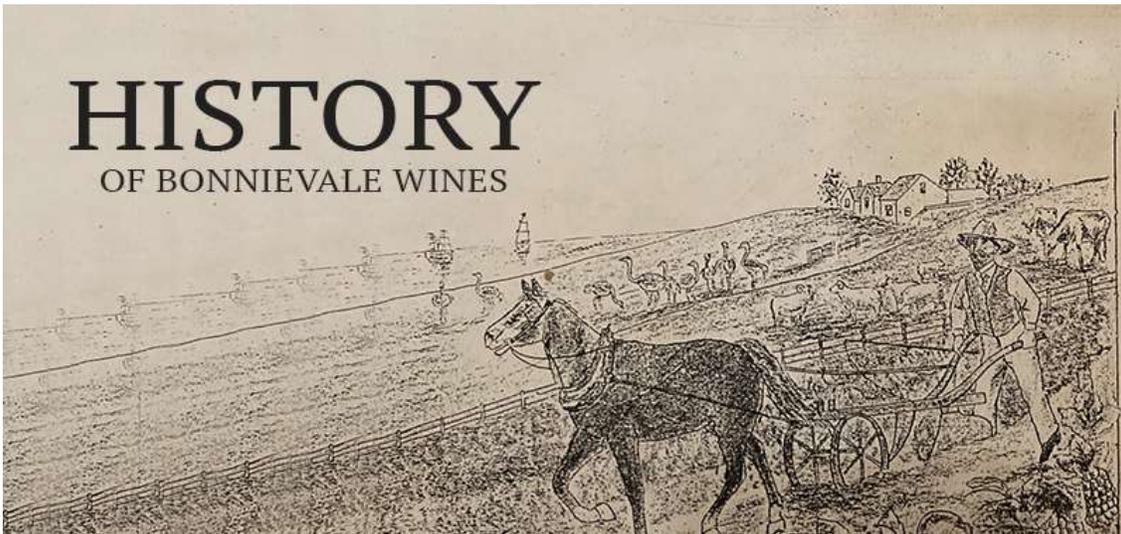




**BONNIEVALE**

# HISTORY

OF BONNIEVALE WINES



## **Dear Friend of Bonnievale**

The global pandemic that forever will define this year may also be remembered for a deep sense of reflection that it ushered in. It is a time when context has become important and in the case of Bonnievale Wines, this means taking a trip back in time.

It is also a time for us to express our own gratitude to our customers who have made so much possible and in ways that extend beyond wine.

The story of our wines is the story of our region; not only in the history of how agriculture came to the valley, but even further back – to the formation of its very geology and climate.

For the purposes of this newsletter however, we'll pause when the first formalised agriculturists recognised the fertility of our valley. That happened in the early 1900s, when immigrant Christopher Rigg obtained land on the Breede River and divided it into irrigation plots for private purchase.



Rigg compiled an elaborate recruitment brochure highlighting soil conditions, climatology and geographical features, agricultural possibilities, transport facilities

and even shipping fares to the attractive market of Britain.

It was Rigg who was responsible for the irrigation canal that allows many local farms to thrive to this day; and, who laid the foundations for our village, naming it Bonnievale. This Scottish colloquialism for a “happy valley”, was inspired by Rigg’s birthplace in Scotland.

Our own story began with establishment of the Bonnievale Wine Cellar Co-operative Ltd in November 2006 after a three-way merger of Bonnievale, Merwespont and Nordale wine co-operatives. Then, in 2019, it merged with Wandsbeck, which was established in 1965 as the Agterkliphoopte Co-operative Cellar.

This coming together of Bonnievale wineries created one of the Cape’s biggest wine producers and established an entity with a cellar capacity of some 40 000 tons. The former co-operatives merged into a single company that now flies the flag of the Bonnievale brand.

But Bonnievale Wines is far more than just a business. Like the vines from which fruit is carefully selected to produce our estate-quality wines, the roots run deep.

As a longtime employer and deeply committed contributor to regional stability, Bonnievale Wines is part of the vibrant and characteristic fibre that defines our rural community. It ensures a sustainable life for all involved – across social strata, now and for generations to come.

Most of our permanent staff of 61 live in the region. The number excludes local people hired on temporary basis to, for example, bring in the annual harvest.





Our cellars process grapes from 100 member farms, each with its own staff and corps of workers.

Standing side-by-side is an initiative that Bonnievale Wines has nurtured, launching a new generation of farmers. The Elethu Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment initiative completed its seventh harvest this year. The Workers Empowerment Trust that owns a 60ha farm took full control of operations at the end of May and is now well on its way having invested in barrels in preparation for establishing its own wine label, anticipated for release in 2022.

The Elethu farm is home to four families, while the trust provides work for between 10 and 30 seasonal workers during the year.



From an operational perspective, Bonnievale Wines spends 1.5% of its net profit after tax every year on social development, while it is certified as a Level 7 BBBEE enterprise. This means that it has 50% procurement recognition under the scheme.

In terms of the local community, Bonnievale Wines supports various local causes.

When production allows it, our facilities are often used for fundraising by organisations such as the market organised in aid of the local retirement home.

Bonnievale Wines is involved in registered learnership programmes with FoodBev. In this example, unemployed individuals from the local community were selected for a 13-month training programme. Some students have the opportunity to gain practical experience at Bonnievale Wines and the local retirement home and high school. Bonnievale Wines facilitate this learning process.

This is a mere glimpse of what your enjoyment of our wines has realised; the good that comes with a Bonnievale purchase.

Together, from our vineyard worker to the farmers, we're proud of what we've built; proudly South African; and, most of all grateful to you.

