Getting fit for the World Cup

19 Oct 2009 by Richard Hemming

Look out for our forthcoming report on some of South Africa's exciting new wines.

At last, the opportunity to combine football, fine wine and charity, all in one glass! In South Africa, members of the upmarket Cape Winemakers Guild have come together to create a range of wines called Fundi, which boast excellent principles as well as provenance: all profits from the sales of these wines go towards training more than 2000 disadvantaged South Africans as wine stewards in time for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, according to www.fundiwine.co.za, where you can read all about the project. [Lack of skilled wine service is an endemic problem in South Africa, and one of my many hobby horses, so I heartily endorse this project - JR]

The wines themselves were selected through blind tasting by a panel from the Cape Winemaker's Guild and are sourced from wineries as reputable as Anwilka, Waterkloof, Hartenberg, Stellekaya and The Company of Wine People. Confusingly, there are several different cuvées all available under the same label, but the tasting notes below describe the only two available in the UK, via Virgin Wines. I commend them to you, not only as supporting a worthy cause, but as well-made, complex, good-quality wines in their own right. The links below take you straight to each wine on the Virgin website.

The wines are also available from Alko stores in Finland.

Fundi 2006 Coastal Region 16.5+ Drink 2009-13
80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot. Dense blackcurrant and blackberry, soft vanilla, heady though, very spirity. Posh oak, a little dusty. Decent length, high alcohol is better integrated on the palate; fruit-cake character, dark choc and spice on the finish adds some complexity, complemented by nice grip from the tannin. 15% (RH)
£14.99 Virgin Wines

Fundi 2007 Stellenbosch 17 Drink 2009-11
51% Merlot, 29% Pinotage, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. Ripe black fruit with a spray of green, leafy freshness. Dry, medium body, rather soft tannins considering the weight of the fruit, but fresh acidity and decent length. Smoke flavours are strong throughout, as are blackcurrants, black cherry and spice. 14% (RH)
£14.99 Virgin Wines