

Issued By: G Studio Branding Agency
Attention: News/Wine/Lifestyle Editors



Audacia
The Red Wine Boutique Winery

For Immediate Release:

‘NO SULPHITES OR PRESERVATIVES ADDED’ WINE MADE USING ROOIBOS WOOD.

Audacia Wines of Stellenbosch, South Africa’s viniferous capital, is set to launch a world first – a unique ‘No Sulphites or Preservatives Added’ red wine created using indigenous *Aspalathus linearis* (Rooibos) and *Cyclopia genistoides* (Honeybush) wood. The wine, a merlot from the farm’s 2013 harvest, is the first of an exciting range to be made according to this method – the technology of which is exclusive to Audacia, which also owns the patent.

The use of indigenous wood in the wine making process provides wine drinkers with a unique-tasting alternative, free of traditional amounts of allergy-inducing preservatives. The legal limit of sulphites allowed in South African table wines is 150mg/l, while the Audacia Merlot 2013 contains only 3 mg/l. The breakthrough has enabled Audacia to substantially raise the bar in local wine making. Audacia wine maker Michael van Niekerk, who has been instrumental in pioneering this new process, says: “We regard this as the launch of a totally new and unique category of wine. It allows people who are allergic to sulphur dioxide (SO₂), or other preservatives often used in wine making, to enjoy a glass of wine without the normal side effects associated therewith.”

The innovative process also grants Van Niekerk the freedom of expression to make highly distinctive, uniquely South African wine, unlike anything currently available on the global wine stage. He describes the Merlot 2013 as having “intense aromas with a bouquet of sweet cherries, roses, Turkish delight and *fynbos*. The palate is elegant with a balanced tannin structure. The wine’s predominant flavours are also reminiscent of *fynbos* and spices, and it exhibits a pleasant, sweet red berry finish.”

“Many discerning wine drinkers today are looking for a product like this – not only is it entirely unique in terms of its flavour profile, but the use of local indigenous wood instead of imported wood also makes it a more sustainable and environmentally friendly option,” Van Niekerk adds. “A limited amount of this unique wine has been made as a first ‘ever’ release. The wine will be sold online, via our website, as well as from our tasting room at R180 per bottle. We will most probably only sell one or two bottles per customer on an availability allocation basis, due to the limited quantities of this premium product being available.”

The Rooibos and Honeybush wood used in making the ‘No Sulphites or Preservatives Added’ Merlot 2013 is sourced from plants endemic to the Western Cape, meaning they only occur in this region. They are part of the world-renowned Cape Floral Kingdom – A Unesco World Heritage Site and the world’s smallest, but richest plant biome. Their wood is unique in that it contains high levels of antioxidants, no caffeine and low tannin levels, making it ideal for use in wine making - as both preservative and means of flavouring wine.

Trevor Strydom, partner in Audacia observes: 'Our Merlot 2013 is the ultimate South African wine since we're making use of indigenous wood to produce it. Down the line, this breakthrough technology may have a massive economic impact on both the local wine and Rooibos industries, something which excites us immensely. It's also a testimony to the merit and uniqueness of this product that our wine has been selected as one of the 450 officially recognised projects of the World Design Capital Cape Town 2014 initiative under Sustainability Solutions: Rooibos Wine #WDC596.'

Audacia Wines is currently working closely with a team headed by Professor Wessel Du Toit from Stellenbosch University's Department of Viticulture and Oenology, who is investigating oxidation in wine as part of his research portfolio. Du Toit was first approached by Audacia Wines in November 2011 and asked to extend his research to include an investigation on the effect of the *Fabaceae* plant family species, of which Rooibos and Honeybush are part, for use as a potential sulphur replacement (or to lower the levels of SO₂) in wine. He has also been investigating the use of these plants' wood material as an alternative to using oak wood derivatives (chips, staves, powder and liquid extracts) in the wine making process. The exact composition and amount of antioxidants in the wood are also being examined.

Professor Du Toit observes: "From our research thus far we have ascertained that Rooibos wood releases antioxidants into the wine which are exclusive to the species. It is also clear that the Rooibos and Honeybush wood imparts very distinctive and unique flavours to wine. Masters student Alet De Wet has focused her investigations on this aspect of the research and has made some interesting discoveries. It will be fascinating to see what else our ongoing research reveals about the effect of indigenous wood on wine."

To learn more about Audacia Wine's 'No Sulphites or Preservatives Added' Merlot, visit the website: www.audacia.co.za. Those interested in purchasing on line from Audacia will be allocated a quota according to availability.

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