



Boschendal Timeline

A TIMELESS ICON OF
CAPE WINEMAKING

1652

The Dutch East India Company (VOC) finds a refreshment station at the Cape of Good Hope.

1659

The first wine is produced at the Cape with grapes grown from vine cuttings from France, the Rhineland provinces and Spain.

1685

A portion of “*Bossendal*” (meaning forest and vale) ceded to the Huguenot Jean Le Long in 1685. Boschendal was one of the first farms to be allocated in the Drakenstein Valley.

1688

The largest wave of Huguenots arrives at the Cape via Holland. The area Oliphantshoek, in the district of Drakenstein where many of the Huguenots settled, became known by 1713 as “*Fransche Hoek*” (or French corner).

1690

The other portion of what would become the farm Boschendal was granted to Huguenot Nicolas de Lanoy. De Lanoy married Suzanne de Vos in 1696.

1710

Another Huguenot Abraham de Villiers, purchases both portions of Boschendal and becomes the largest property owner in the Dwaars River Valley. The amalgamated estate would stay within the De Villiers family for 164 years.

1719

Abraham de Villiers expands his vineyards and plants 25 000 new vines in 1719.

1746

Sean de Villiers, the son of Abraham, is believed to have built the valley’s first Cape Dutch gable on Boschendal. Under his ownership the farm expanded, with many new buildings constructed such as the wine cellars and the wagon house.

Jean had 22 children, with 2 wives. Many properties in the Franschhoek Valley would be owned by Jean and his numerous children in a network of family relationships.

1813

Britain reduces duties on Cape wines exported to Britain during the Napoleonic war resulting in a wine boom in the Cape. With increased vineyards came the prolific building of gabled homesteads. **Wine represented almost 90% of exports.**

1812

Boschendal’s manor house adopts its present form with a new gable built by Jean’s son, Paul de Villiers.

1821

An oversupply resulted and drastic drop in wine price until the end of 1840s creates surplus offerings of wine at the Cape.

1834

Slavery is abolished in the Cape, although slaves had to serve a further four year apprenticeship period to their masters until 1050.

1843

Pniel Mission station is established by the Apostolic Uni or ex-slaves and Khoi servants of the farm in the valley. The station was situated on an amalgamation of land formerly belonging to the nearby farms Rhone, Lanquedoe and Goede Hoop.

1860

Paul’s son Jan Jacobus de Villiers inherits Boschendal. Despite the economic hardships of the time, the flamboyant Jan Jacobus was famed for his lavish parties of much feasting, that would last for days on the famous Pavillion lawns. He sold the farm in 1879, ending a long lineage of De Villiers ownership.

1886

On the 2nd January, the vine pest Phylloxera was discovered in a vineyard in Mowbray as part of the global epidemic. By the summer of 1890 almost all the vineyards in the Drakenstein were destroyed.

1892

The former Prime Minister of the Cape Colony Cecil John Rhodes in association with De Beers Diamond bought up a lot of the phylloxera infected farms and under the direction of expert nurseryman Harry Pickstone, they began the deciduous fruit industry at the Cape.

Through Rhodes’ acquaintance with the architect Herbert Baker, many of the derelict Groot Drakenstein houses were repaired and restored.

1896

Rhodes, in association with De Beers, purchases Boschendal and a number of other farms to create Rhodes Fruit Farms (RFF). Under the Pickstone management, an incredible **200 000 deciduous fruit trees** were planted on the Rhodes fruit farms.

1902

Lanquedeoc worker’s village is constructed by RFF and designed by Herbert Baker. One of the first worker’s housing schemes in the country with around 100 semi-detached houses and a stone church called St Giles.

1903

The railway line is brought into the Groot Drakenstein valley. It was a significant measure as the transport of deciduous fruit in refrigerated cars made it possible for Cape fruit to be transported to harbour, then onto refrigerated cargo holds on ships.

For the first time in the Cape’s history, fruit could be exported around the world successfully, with minimal spoilage.

1918

As WW1 ended, the worldwide influenza epidemic struck the Cape. When it reached Kimberley several thousands lemons were sent from Groot Drakenstein orchards by Rhodes Fruit Farms to help those effected.

1925

Cinsault (referred locally as Hermitage) and Pinot Noir grapes were grafted together by Prof. Abraham Izak Perold to create ‘Pinotage’. This grape is now a required component of 30% in “*Cape Blends*”.

1927

Alfred Appleyard takes over management of RFF for the next 22 years (now the property is solely in the hands of the De Beers). He consolidates the company’s holdings and greatly extends the orchards and vineyards, and builds roads, bridges and dams.

1930

Vine nursery is established on Rhone to plant **89 650 vines** of Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz, Riesling, Green Grape, Steen and other white French varieties.

1933

The wine produced in the 1933 vintage included wine referred to as the following: Dry White, Dry Red, Hermitage, Cabernet, Burgundy Mixed, Pinot Noir, Gamay, White Hermitage and distilling wine totalling 246 leaguers.

1969

RFF is purchased by Anglo–American Farms Subsidiary – a multi-national cooperation of Anglo-American mining. The winery was extended and the new wines were marketed under the Boschendal brand name as **an icon of Cape Dutch heritage, wine and culinary tradition in the Cape.**

1970

An intense period of restoration at Boschendal and Rhone begins. Under the guidance of Gawie and Gwen Fagan, Boschendal’s buildings were carefully restored and furnished with exquisite period pieces listed in its early inventories.

Oak avenues were replanted to pay tribute to those planted by the earliest settlers. Gwen laid out a heritage rose garden which the estate would become renowned for.

1976

Boschendal is declared a National Monument and is opened to the public. Its typical H-shaped manor house represents an icon of Cape architecture.

1978

Boschendal Blanc de Noir – a blush white wine made from red grapes was launched. Today it remains one of the Cape’s best known and most loved wines, exported around the world.

1979

Rhone Homestead is declared a National Monument.

1980

Boschendal pioneers wine tourism in the valley through its innovative offering of vineyard and cellar tours, famous moonlit picnics on the Pavillion lawns, as well as leading the gastronomic revolution in a grand Cape country restaurant that the valley is still famous for today. One of its culinary legends is Boschendal’s malva pudding, first served in a restaurant setting at Boschendal and now traditional to restaurants all around the Cape.

When Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State, was asked what his most pleasing memory of Africa was, he replied “*the malva pudding and brandy snaps at Boschendal*”.

1981

Boschendal introduces South Africa’s second Cap Classique, namely Boschendal Brut, into the market, made from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes.

1985

Boschendal celebrates the estate’s tercentenary with the release of Grande vin Blanc, a Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon blend.

1994

The first democratic non-racial election is held. Nelson Mandela is sworn in as the first president and forms the Government of National Unity. International sanctions are dropped and South African wine enters the world market as a ‘New World Wine’.

2003

AAM farm sells Boschendal to a consortium of international investors and launches the Sustainable Development Initiative and Boschendal Treasury Trust with long-term benefits for the community and the valley at large.

2004

Boschendal is awarded the coveted **Best South African Wine Producer of the Year** at the International Wine and Spirit Competition in London.

2005

DGB (PTY) LTD acquires the wine brand from the consortium and develops the tercentenary range as well as expands the availability of Boschendal **to more than 40 countries around the world.**

2013

The Boschendal Grande Cuvée Brut 2009 is named **South Africa’s Best Cap Classique** and the category winner for **Best Vintage Brut** at the Cap Classique Challenge 2013.

2015

The estate releases its limited edition Boschendal 330 Heritage Blend. This heritage wine’s specially designed bottle is based on the shape of the Claret bottles produced in 19th century Bordeaux.

2016

The Nicolas Premium tasting facility officially opened by Jacques Roux, a 13th generation descendant of Paul Roux, a Huguenot who arrived here in 1688.

2025

Boschendal celebrates 340 years of mastery.