

Imvini Wethu:

Friends of South Africa in Germany champion project to save our vines and our future

Every wine tells a story or so the saying goes. For Imvini Wethu, a new wine from South Africa that was launched in February in Europe, it's a tale of adversity but also of unity and resilience – and the ability to facilitate change through tangible action.

The idea for creating Imvini Wethu was sparked when a group of German business owners, importers, and trade and wine industry professionals got together to support South Africa's wine industry which has been hard hit by the country's Covid-19 lockdown regulations, including a blanket ban on alcohol sales.

The wine is exceptional both in its story and in its make-up: it is a quintessential Cape blend, made from Pinotage and Cinsault. The Cinsault was harvested from the country's second oldest registered red-wine vineyard. Imvini Wethu carries the Certified Heritage Vineyards seal, the world's first official certification for old vines, thereby making it a premium ambassador for the entire South African wine category. The wine is made in association with the Cape Winemakers Guild (CWG) Protégé Programme under the supervision of one of South Africa's most admired winemakers, Andrea Mullineux, and the Old Vine Project, under the mandate of André Morgenthal.

Imvini Wethu is made available to international consumers through German-based wine retailers Capreo, Linke and Pellegrini, and their distribution network across Europe. The recommended retail price is € 16.95 a bottle and all proceeds will be donated to empowerment and heritage programmes in the Cape winelands.

A cross-continental friendship sparks Imvini Wethu

In recognition of valuable, longstanding relationships in the industry, German wine label specialist Vollherbst Labels, wine importers Capreo, Linke and Pellegrini, and Petra Mayer Communications came up with a plan for German consumers to support the South African wine industry in its hour of

need. The Imvini Wethu project is also supported by Bravo Design, Feed That Bird Communication Consultants and freight forwarder Hillebrand as well as Riehm Intermedia.

“We wanted to create awareness of the situation in South Africa, while proactively providing support,” says Matthias Vollherbst, CEO Vollherbst Labels. “Germany has had a longstanding love affair with South Africa and its winelands in particular, and with tourism and visits severely affected since last year, German nationals are missing South Africa.”

Major online wine merchant Capreo has joined the effort. “We wanted to make a difference in the lives of our partners by providing them with as much support as we can in their fight against the financial impact of Covid-19,” Capreo general manager Stephan Nühlen says. “We want to ensure a sustainable future for the Cape winelands.”

The idea to create a premium wine that would capture the spirit of South Africa’s Cape winelands soon took shape. Petra Mayer says: “Everyone in the group has successfully worked with the South African wine industry for many years and forged friendships from business relationships. When we realised the extent of the problems our partners in the Cape winelands were facing, we all agreed to support them substantially.”

“What’s extraordinary about the Imvini Wethu project is how a completely new wine brand in new packaging was developed by a cross-continental, interdisciplinary team in such a short space of time.” adds Vollherbst. “People from different backgrounds, different companies and different perspectives invested unpaid days of their working lives in brainstorming sessions, phone calls and online meetings to achieve a goal that’s so much bigger than sales figures or profit to help a country and its people they have taken to their hearts and bring their story to the world. Imvini Wethu’s slogan so aptly reminds us: “Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much.”

A taste of South Africa

The group approached South Africa’s prestigious CWG to create a quintessentially South African wine that could be sold under the attractive Imvini Wethu label to an exclusive international audience. The resulting wine is a collaborative effort between the CWG Protégé Programme and Old Vine Project which respectively represent the future and heritage of the South African wine industry. The group felt it was important to invest in a cause that both empowers future winemakers and protects the heritage of South African wines. Proceeds from the sales of Imvini Wethu will be donated to the CWG Protégé Programme and South Africa’s Old Vine Project.

Jörg Linke of Linke Weinhandelsgesellschaft, who works closely with sommeliers, is extremely happy with the wine’s quality and potential. “Imvini Wethu as a blend is unique so far. But foremost it is an

elegant, balanced wine,” he says. “It’s charming aromatic complexity reflects both the classic and modern identity of South African wine.” Fine wine merchant specialist retailer Stephan Pellegrini refers to the old vines: “Imvini Wethu truly unfolds the very special character of old vines – complexity but finesse, an explosion of fruit but gentle and long lasting, a dimension which you only find if the vines have grown to a certain age.”

Petra Mayer adds: “This wine is a fantastic Ambassador incorporating so many stories which makes South African wine industry so unique – heritage in winemaking, unique varieties, old vines, transformation and camaraderie (or collaboration).”

With forecasters predicting another remarkable quality vintage from South Africa this year, it’s worth supporting South Africa’s wine country that continues to impress with its exceptional wines.

Contact: Cape winemakers Guild

Thank you to all partners involved!

