HAMILTON RUSSELL VINEYARDS

Hamilton Russell Vineyards – one of the most southerly wine estates in Africa and one of the closest to the sea – pioneered viticulture and winemaking in the beautiful, cool, maritime Hemel-en-Aarde Valley appellation, just behind the old fishing village of Hermanus.

Tim Hamilton Russell purchased the undeveloped 425 acre property in 1975, after an exhaustive search for the most southerly site on which to make South Africa’s top cool climate wines from a selection of noble varieties. His son, Anthony Hamilton Russell, who took over in 1991 (finally buying the property in 1994), narrowed the range to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay only and registered Hamilton Russell Vineyards as an estate, committing to work only with grapes from their terroir. Extensive soil research initiated in 1994 identified 130 acres of stony, clay-rich, shale-derived soil as optimal for the individual, origin-expressive style to which they aim, and all plantings have now been limited to this soil type. Today, Anthony and his wife Olive, winemaker Emul Ross, and viticulturist Johan Montgomery are completely dedicated to expressing the personality of the Hamilton Russell Vineyards terroir in their wines. Tiny yields and intense worldwide demand keep the elegant, highly individual, estate-grown Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in very short supply.

ASHBOURNE

Ashbourne was founded in 1996 by Anthony Hamilton Russell and is located on a beautiful 160-acre property in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley on the eastern border of Hamilton Russell Vineyards. The first Ashbourne wine was released in 2001. It was grown on extremely clay-rich, stony soils, well-suited to nursing a high level of refinement and classic styling out of Pinotage. Five years later, the first Ashbourne Sandstone wine was released. This wine was grown on quartzitic sandstone soils, which emphasize the nervous energy and minerality of Sauvignon Blanc. By releasing the Ashbourne Sauvignon Blanc-Chardonnay in 2012, the estate drew from its Ashbourne quality research and two decades of experience working with blends of Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay to create a wine for people with fine wine palates at a price which enables them to drink it regularly. Very encouraging trials and the eventual 2017 release of an unwooded Ashbourne Pinotage-Cinsault blend from old vines saw Ashbourne take a step out of its home terroir into the warmer Swartland, where lower acids and higher pH levels combine with the lighter, ancient decomposed granite soils to afford an ease of structure and mouthfeel enabling a fresh, pure, early release wine with marked aromatic and flavor complexity without bigness.

SOUTHERN RIGHT

Founded by Anthony Hamilton Russell in 1994, Southern Right’s aim is to produce a serious, age-worthy Pinotage (South Africa’s unique red grape variety) combining a distinct South African fruit and flavor expression with classic styling and refinement. In 2005, a stunningly beautiful 1,125-acre property on the western border of Hamilton Russell Vineyards was purchased as a long-term home for Southern Right, and in 2009, a 350-ton “Overberg” style cellar, tailor-made for Southern Right Pinotage and Southern Right Sauvignon Blanc was completed on the property just in time for the 2009 harvest.

The wines are named after the rare Southern Right whales, which frequent the cool South Atlantic Walker Bay, two miles from the vineyards. With each bottle sold, Southern Right makes a contribution to their conservation or conservation in the area.
THE WINES

Hamilton Russell Vineyards Chardonnay
A tight, minerally wine with classic Hamilton Russell Vineyards length and complexity. Unusually prominent pear and lime fruit aromas and flavors are brought beautifully into focus by a tight line of bright, natural acidity and a long, dry minerality. An elegant, yet textured and intense, wine with a strong personality of both place and vintage.

Hamilton Russell Vineyards Pinot Noir
The low-vigor, stony, clay-rich soil and cool maritime mesoclimate naturally produces tiny yields of well under 3 tons per acre, and the winery’s philosophy of expressing the terroir gives rise to a certain tightness, tannin line, and elevated length to balance the richness and generosity of the Pinot Noir. It is not overtly fruity, soft, and “sweet”, and it generally shows hints of alluring savory “primal” character along with a dark, spicy, complex primary fruit perfume.

Ashbourne Sauvignon Blanc-Chardonnay
Fresh, vibrant, perfumed Sauvignon Blanc, filled-out and enriched with a carefully judged unwooded Chardonnay component, make this a beautifully balanced and highly versatile wine. More than two decades of family experience have gone into this unique blend.

Ashbourne Pinotage-Cinsault
This lower alcohol, unwooded blend of 80% Pinotage and 20% Cinsault is made from grapes sourced from old vineyards in the Swartland appellation, for open generosity of palate in the year of production. The richness and depth of the Pinotage is freshened by the lightness and brightness of the Cinsault.

Ashbourne Pinotage
From the maiden release in 2001, this benchmark wine has redefined South Africa’s own red grape variety, Pinotage, with its classic, refined styling and unique, complex character. This wine is unlike anything else, intense, rich, and savory with a beautiful underlying minerality.

Southern Right Sauvignon Blanc
Made reductively in order to maximize the fruit personality of the vintage, while maintaining the typical Southern Right balance of Old World minerality and length with hints of New World palate coverage and body, this is a wine that favors origin-expressive individuality, minerality, and palate complexity ahead of pure, pungent varietal aroma. A significant percentage of fruit from clay-rich soil has added an intense mid-palate structural component and additional overall complexity to this wine.

Southern Right Pinotage
Southern Right is redefining Pinotage with this intense classically-styled, clay-grown wine, packed with complex berry fruit, beautiful tannins, and subtle wood spice. Full ripeness and the longer hang-time afforded by cooler sites, combined with the complex, more classical fruit aromas and structure resulting from clay-rich soil, make this wine a highly individual expression of South Africa’s unique grape variety.