

Q&A with #YoungGunsB2B Callan Williams of Garajeest



By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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This year, Wine Cellar Fine Wine Merchants and Cellarers once again identified SA's hottest young winemaking talent breaking the rules and pushing the limits at their annual 'Young Guns' event. We chat to one of this year's "Young Guns" and rising wine star, Callan Williams of Garajeest wines.

■ ***Congrats on being selected as a 2017 Young Gun! How do you see this recognition influencing your winemaking career?***

It's truly an honour to be a Young Gun. I'm so appreciative to the Wine Cellar team for allowing me this opportunity and creating this platform.

Young Guns is a platform for young winemakers that are against convention, making really interesting wines and looking to make a name for themselves amongst SA's elite. Young Guns is now a high point on the wine industry calendar. It helps us get our foot in the door if you will – and I feel we are taken more seriously in the industry as a result. The wines are in demand and it's not only a platform for sales, but it also helps us to gain respect as a winemaker.



■ ***Can you give us some background on how you got into winemaking?***

Zimbabwean-born, and once a ballet dancer – I hung up my pointe shoes in exchange for wellies - and journeyed on to Elsenburg to study. At the time, my calling was the life of a cattle farmer but the love for science, wine and food drew me in and the rest is history!

■ **What makes your wine/brand unique?**

The Garajeest is a premium, handcrafted wine. I tend to focus on the unconventional and see myself as a creative spirit. My dream of making wine that has edge, authenticity, character and convincingly translates the honest and down to earth character of the cultivar, is now being realised.

The Garajeest is a wine brand that walks to the beat of its own drum. It's the brain-child of a 20-something music enthusiast. This wine embodies my fascination with life, vines and verse and inspired the concept 'lyrics and legends'.

My wine is inspired by music – every cultivar and wine is inspired by a different musician. Bruce Cabernet franc & Jim Semillon – both produced in limited numbers – are inspired by icons that embody a time and movement that resonates with the unique taste profile of each vintage. My wish is that the music comes to life as the wine is enjoyed, swept up in an era of true talent and passion-filled freedoms.







■ ***What have been some of the highlights and challenges of winemaking in SA?***

Well, launching my own brand of course, making wine my way, running my business and the response I've had to my wines. It feels like I'm living my dream! Wine is of course a live product – the vineyard is dependent on uncontrollable elements and that is challenging.

The industry can also seem to be full of red tape, but with time we learn the in's and out's. The challenges just make the accomplishments that much sweeter.

Having my wines and work recognised and being able to sell the Garajeest wines through Wine Cellar is also a definite highlight.



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■ ***What excites you about the local wine industry?***

I love what Wine Cellar does with Young Guns, discovering 'new wave' producers and providing a platform for those who are not constrained by vineyards and capital costs. I love to follow these winemakers making interesting wines.

I'm really excited as well by the fact that more and more South Africans are drinking wine, talking wine, supporting events... it's an exciting time to be a part of the industry.



■ **What's next?**

I'm planning a new release in the next few months, watch this space! My drive lies in pushing the boundaries of fine wine in South Africa. I strive to produce dynamic, interesting and exciting wines.

The Garajeest by Callan Williams is available for sale via [Wine Cellar Fine Wine Merchants and Cellarers](#). For more information, click [here](#).

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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