

# Cape Winemakers Guild sends protégés to France and USA

The Cape Winemakers Guild Protégé Programme is paying it forward and sending three protégés to gain international experience in some of the world's most renowned wine growing regions this year. Since 2013, the Protégé Programme, under the auspices of the Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Development Trust, has given nine protégés the opportunity to partake in this annual exchange programme.



From left to right: Sydney Mello, Maryna Huysamen, and Banele Vakele.

Second-year oenology protégés Banele Vakele of Khayelitsha and Sydney Mello of Mahwelereng in Limpopo will be travelling to Burgundy in France. During their time in France, Vakele who is being mentored by Boela Gerber at Groot Constantia this year, and Mello who has been working alongside Johan Malan of Simonsig, will be enrolled at the Centre of Vocational Training and Agricultural Promotion in Beaune, the wine capital of Burgundy. In addition to formal leadership training, they will obtain hands on experience at small family-owned wine estates and then travel throughout the famous wine growing regions of France including Champagne, Bordeaux and Côtes du Rhône.

“At Nedbank, applying our financial expertise to do good takes on many different shapes and forms, that is why we have contributed over R2.5m towards the Protégé Programme. This initiative enables us to empower individuals while contributing to the transformation of the wine industry,” explains Lindiwe Temba, executive head for corporate social investment at Nedbank.

Protégés are also encouraged to organise their own international harvesting endeavours during their three-year internship.

Maryna Huysamen of Vredendal, who has spent her second internship year with Charles Hopkins of De Grendel, has arranged a harvest season at Alexander Valley Vineyards in California, USA. Here she will see first-hand how things are done in the USA and gain valuable insight into the American winemaking culture.

Famous wine regions visited by young winemakers who have come through the ranks of the Protégé Programme include San Benito County and Sonoma in the USA and the Loire in France. The first graduate of the Viticulture Protégé Programme, Logan Jooste, also had the opportunity to rub shoulders with international giants in the industry when he attended a technical seminar in Australia in 2016 as part of a VinPro Viticulture trip.



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Cari Coetzee 5 Jun 2017



“We are humbled by the progress and milestones of the Protégé Programme and every year, we look forward to experiencing the remarkable work of these young talented individuals,” adds Temba.

## Special charity item goes under the hammer at the Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Auction

To help raise funds for the Protégé Programme a special charity item goes under the hammer each year at the Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Auction. This year auction goers can look forward to a one-of-a-kind Members’ Collection of 44 magnum 1.5-litre bottles – a wine from every Guild member with a wine on the 2017 auction. The collection, embodying the craftsmanship and camaraderie of the members of the guild, is packaged in beautifully crafted wooden boxes.

All proceeds of the charity auction are ploughed back into the Protégé Programme to continue developing aspiring young winemakers and viticulturists. Over the past eleven years, a total of 24 protégés have come through the ranks, honing their skills while enjoying the rare opportunity of working with masters in the industry. To date, no less than 14 former protégés are pursuing promising careers in the wine industry – from private wine estates to larger corporate wine companies or related businesses.

Funds are also raised in aid of the Protégé Programme through a silent auction of past auction wines and cellar gems from guild members. Some of the sought after items will be special presentation packs of wines by this year’s protégé graduates: Mahalia Kotjane Three Quarters Shiraz 2016, Kiara Scott Ernest Syrah 2016, and Clayton Christians The Pendulum Chardonnay 2016.

*The 33rd Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Auction is open to the public and will be held at the Spier Conference Centre in the Stellenbosch Winelands on Saturday, 30 September 2017.*

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