

A message of hope & testimony of survival from Groot Constantia



One of the oldest brands in the world, Groot Constantia recognized the need to protect visitors & staff and closed its doors to the public ten days before national lockdown

In addition to droughts and fires, Two World Wars, the Boer wars, the Great Depression, the Spanish Flu, the Bubonic Plague, the British invasion of Cape Town, the Rinderpest, the Great Storm of 1865 and the earthquake of 1809 are just a few of the historic challenges that Groot Constantia, as South Africa's oldest wine Estate, has witnessed and survived in its 335 years of existence. And now COVID-19 is sweeping the globe causing mass illness, death and economic turmoil. The latest crisis to reveal unprecedented social challenges and present itself for inclusion in the history books.

"South Africans are feeling the brunt of national lockdown, as we attempt to flatten the curve and protect our citizens from this virus. Wine farms have been hard hit, as we have not been able to welcome visitors to our doors, nor sell our produce.

However, as a witness to the testimony of how wine estates can adapt and survive - indeed thrive - after periods of crisis, my message to those in the wine industry is to have patience and faith that we

will overcome this current crisis and open our doors again to the public, resume wine sales, as well as retake our position in the world market as a leading wine producer,” explains Jean Naudé, CEO of Groot Constantia.

“A tangible example of how adversity can be successfully overcome is found in the Manor House at Groot Constantia, which was originally built in 1685 and is now an Iziko Museum and the starting point to the unique Visitors Route Experience. In 1925 the manor, which had been modified over the years, was severely damaged by fire but was then meticulously restored and refurbished – maintaining it for future generations to come and allowing visitors to the Estate to catch a glimpse back in time,” adds Naudé.

Groot Constantia is a Provincial heritage site and the Estate is a living, but working, museum that attests to how people and businesses can adapt and survive terrible adversity. 335 years later, Groot Constantia has an uninterrupted record of wine production and the hand-produced traditional wines continue to win many awards on the global stage.

Naudé explains that recognizing the need to protect visitors and staff, Groot Constantia closed its doors to the public ten days before the national lockdown. However, the Estate was able to complete its 2020 harvest using strict measures to maintain social distancing. The wine making team says that the harvest looks promising for this year’s vintage, particularly the Chardonnay, which is no stranger to accolades.

“As the custodians of a business that is one of the oldest brands in the world that has endured so much in its centuries of trade, we at Groot Constantia want to say that South Africa will overcome this latest crisis, we will survive and endure – together,” says Naudé.

Diverse Flavours has spent five years developing the Groot Constantia brand in duty free.

“[I think Jean Naudé’s comments are so well put, succinct and provide the whole of the wine industry, not only those in South Africa, but also around the world, with optimism, resilience and the drive to persevere. Groot Constantia Wines represent one of the world’s most historic and iconic wine brands. We have just started our journey in duty free and I expect this brand to become a staple brand portfolio in duty free shops around the world. Our latest listing is very exciting – we will be launching quite a few brands from the portfolio at Changi Airport with Lotte Duty Free in June,]” shares Anthony Budd, Managing Director, Diverse Flavours.