

JARDIN

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The wines of Jordan Winery in South Africa, traditionally marketed under the Jordan label, are at long last available in the United States under the Jardin label. Gary & Kathy Jordan created the Jardin label in deference to Jordan Winery of California, who has been selling their wine under the Jordan name in the U.S. for years.



From the Jordan hillside vineyards, one has a spectacular, panoramic view of Cape Town, Table Mountain, False Bay and Table Bay, Durbanville, and historic Stellenbosch. Having hillside vineyards ranging from 160 meters to 410 meters above sea-level has resulted in a wide range of specific microclimates suited for different varieties. The vineyard slopes are exposed to every direction under the sun: the white varieties thrive on south-facing slopes, and the reds on warmer north and west-facing slopes. Sea breezes from False Bay and Table Bay are moderating influences on an otherwise warm region.

The Jordans haven't always been making wine. Gary Jordan's great grandfather emigrated from England during the 19th century to start the shoe industry in South Africa. However, as Gary has always said, they came to realize that they spent a lot of time walking barefoot and paying too much for their wine, so something had to change!

When Ted Jordan retired from Jordan Shoes in 1982, he purchased the farm where he and his son, Gary, have formed a partnership. They have now planted only virus-free classic varieties on approximately 80 hectares of vineyards on the 146-hectare property, using innovative canopy management techniques to produce quality grapes with intense flavors. Rather than buying grapes from other growers or making wine from young vineyards, the Jordans decided to wait until their vineyards had reached maturity before harvesting the grapes for themselves. On tasting Jardin wines, it is evident that the patient wait has paid off.

To further their education, Gary and his wife, Kathy, spent two years studying at the University of California at Davis, and thereafter worked together at Iron Horse Winery, gaining knowledge and experience in the wine industry. This, as well as extensive travel throughout France, gave the young Jordans the direction they needed, enabling them to make some of the country's leading wines today. Gary's Geology degree combined with Kathy's Economics degree have given South Africa's first husband-and-wife winemaking team insight into winemaking from soil preparation through to the marketing of their wines.

Jordan Winery has grown from their start of 6,000 cases in 1993 to become the 8th largest winery on the Stellenbosch Wine Route today. Over 46,000 cases are produced, of which 80% is sold in South Africa, mostly to top restaurants, game lodges, and specialist stores. Currently, production is split 50% red varieties, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Shiraz; and 50% white varieties, including Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, and Chenin Blanc.



The Jordans believe that everything begins in the vineyards. Quality wines cannot be made in the cellar alone. The quality of the grapes being brought into the cellar will determine the difference between a good wine and an outstanding wine. To achieve this one must do the following in the vineyards throughout the year:

- ? Canopy Management: to ensure that at all times the canopy of the vine is in balance. This means that the ratio between the number of leaves and the number of bunches must be in harmony. Too many leaves per bunch translates into greener flavors, too few leaves per bunch means sunburn or badly ripened grapes. This balance must be controlled especially during the growth phase of the vines (September / October).
- ? Drip Irrigation: by installing drip irrigation to ensure that the vines do not suffer drought – stress by receiving a minimal amount of water directly to the root system. This produces grapes with intensity of flavor as they are not over-irrigated and will slowly ripen over a longer period .
- ? Slopes: the farm is situated at the end of the valley high up on slopes ranging from 160 -410m above sea level. The situation of the farm is unique as they have North-, South-, East- and West-facing aspects. Therefore they have not needed to specialise in either red or white wines, but have planted the varieties requiring cooler conditions high up on the south and east facing slopes and the varieties requiring warmer conditions on the north and west facing slopes.



These above factors all support their philosophy of *"Farming for Flavours"*: what is done in the vineyards ensure that quality grapes are harvested into the cellar at the correct ripeness, thereby making the winemaking job a much easier one. For example, the approach to their barrel fermented Chardonnay is one of minimal interference in that they add no sulphur dioxide to the wine until after the wine has gone through malolactic fermentation, just prior to blending and bottling. They refer to this as the *"James Bond 007"* approach to the lees (*"shaken not stirred"*) in that instead of doing battonage on the wines in the barrel they prefer to bung the barrels tightly and then roll them while shaking the barrels gently, to mix the lees into the wine. The Jordans also do not give the Chardonnay skin contact prior to pressing as they believe 8 months skin contact in the vineyards is sufficient for flavour!

Gary and Kathy have designed and built an innovative, gravity-flow, state-of-the-art cellar, featuring some of the best equipment available today. Their underground cellar is used exclusively for Chardonnay fermentation, as well as for storage of 180,000 bottles of wine. A separate cellar is used for barrel aging Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc.

Although not registered as an estate, Jordan operates in a far stricter way than most South African estates. All grapes are grown on the property – the Jordans have vowed never to buy in grapes. Only mature vineyards are used for their wines, and these are all crushed, fermented, barrel-aged, bottled and labeled on the property. It has often been said that wines are only as good as the vineyards they come from, which explains the Jordan's philosophy that quality wine is made in the vineyards. They concentrate great efforts on their vineyards, and upon tasting the wines, one can see why their range wins so many awards.