

Jou lekker ding

This glimpse into the private life of veteran winemaker Jan “Boland” Coetzee of Vriesenhof Vineyards is an excerpt from *Perfect Weekend*, a book which reveals how 52 high-profile South African newsmakers in politics, business, sport and art spend their leisure time. The portraits are by Durbanite Brett Florens and the interviews by former senior *Cape Times* journalist and occasional WINE contributor Dominique Herman.



Before the sun is up, I'll open my door on the *stoep*. I can get from my bed right onto the *stoep*. I'll walk out and have a look at the mountain. I think that's the thing I miss most when I'm away – not to feel almost the protection of the mountain. There's one stream in the Paradyskloof Valley with a huge pool and a big cave, so I normally slowly walk there. In springtime, all the proteas are flowering so I pick some flowers and carry them back home. There's a nice waterfall and if it's a warmer day, I'll have a nice shower. I grew up on the West Coast, so I just love cold water.

There's a lot of wildlife, especially birds of prey – black eagle, a lot of jackal buzzard – and they also breed around the area, so they're training their kids in this valley. The other day, one took a guinea fowl in front of me and then he tore it apart, and he took one part and he went and put it onto the top wires in one of the vineyards and the little one came to eat. There's a lot of buck, lynx and porcupines. So there's a lot of activity around. The fish eagles love to ride the currents that are in the air because we're so close to the mountain. Round about 11 in the morning, the valley has heated up enough so the airflow is coming in.

I love working, too. Everything underneath the house is cellar so if I'm on my own, I'll taste from the barrels or taste from the tanks. I love my friends and normally we'll have some wine and have maybe a late, light lunch or something and talk nonsense. Most Fridays they come out for lunch and on Saturdays I'll go into the village for lunch to Café Dijon, a bistro a friend of mine opened in Plein Street. We're six or seven that were together at university and we're still all alive luckily. We can't remember that far back anymore. Then we wait for the evening to do the same. I'll normally have something in the kitchen, have a small little braai or something.

There's always some guys around and the wine is close to the table.

Sunday normally early morning to church. Sunday is basically a family day, so you braai with the kids and now with the grandkids. I've got four kids: two daughters, two boys. And now obviously the grandkids will try to break the house down – there's three boys now. I'm an early sleeper and an early upper. I've got this song: “*Pampoen, pampoen, jou lekker ding. Ek eet jou op voor die son op kom.*” So I'm a *pampoen* eater. I'm always up before the sun is up.

Sometimes you get fed up of the winter in Stellenbosch. Winter on the West Coast is special because it's green and much warmer than down here in the shade of the mountain. We'll walk to Paternoster – it's about 25 kilometres. All the children think I'm a crayfish instructor. I show them where to dive and go with them and so on. Normally I'll take friends. We'll have mussels and crayfish and fish. My best friend from my childhood – he's a fisherman – he's living in Saldanha, so if the weather is not nice, he'll make sure that we have some fresh fish when we get there. In winter it will be snoek and in summer it will be either galjoen or hotnosvis. There's no stove, so you have to make fire each time. Reading, sleeping, fishing, crayfishing, diving, walking on the beach and then the same story over. It does something to your mind and your soul. I love the West Coast. I still get goose pimples when I feel that air. ■

Café Dijon, 35 Plein Street, Stellenbosch. Tel 021 886 7022.

NG Kerk Stellenbosch-West, 3 Alexander Street, Stellenbosch. Tel 021 886 5132.

Vriesenhof Vineyards, Paradyskloof Valley, Stellenbosch. Tel 021 880 0284.

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