

South African producer takes giant solar power leap

By [Anna-Bet Stemmet](#)

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Last week was quite an eventful one in the world of wine and we are happy to bring you some good news from around the globe. We're so used to hearing stories of doom and gloom that it makes quite a nice change of pace to focus on the great things that are happening when nobody was paying attention.

Here goes, your weekly helping of wonderful wine news:

VinItaly toasts a booming Italian wine trade

The gist of it: When you think about wine-producing countries, Italy might not be at the top of your list, but the Italians are actually taking great strides when it comes to wine production. This week Verona hosted 55 000 industry professionals from 141 countries at an event that showcased the country's best wines. It is all a far cry from the days when Italian wine was synonymous internationally with straw-wrapped bottles of Chianti, these days the robust Italian wine industry employs a whopping 1.25 million people and produces more wine per capita than any other country.

Up an incredible 5% from 2014, exports of Italian wine climbed to a record 5.4 billion euros in 2015. The big boom in production can be ascribed to the steep increase in the demand for prosecco, which has managed to surpass Champagne as the bubbly of choice for oenophiles the world over. Complimenti Italia! Read more [here](#).

Bonus factoid: Choose prosecco over Champagne if you are watching your weight - it has less calories per standard pour. For a better understanding of the differences between these two kinds of bubbly, have a look [here](#).



Photo Credit: REUTERS

Douglas Green has commissioned a 1.25-million kWh rooftop solar plant

The gist of it: Don't you just love it when industry leaders make good choices and set a responsible environmental example? Let's all rise and give Douglas Green Bellingham a great big round of applause. This leading wine production company has commissioned a rooftop solar plant that will provide up to half the energy needed to make 3-million litres of wine a month.

Situated in Wellington in the Western Cape, the four roofs of the company's main bottling plant will eventually boast 2600 solar panels that will generate 1.25-million kWh in its first year (that's the rough equivalent of a small car driving from Cape Town to Johannesburg 5550 times). Douglas Green Bellingham was awarded the UK Drinks Business Green Award in 2011 and has since gone on to reduce their use of glass by 3.25-million kilograms, water consumption by 18% and energy use by 22%. Good job guys, you are making us proud! Read more [here](#).

Bonus factoid: Support South African wineries that take their impact on the environment seriously by purchasing wines with the [SWSA](#) sticker on the neck of the bottle. Together these organisations are driving the South African wine industry's commitment to sustainable, eco-friendly production.



The company won the 2011 UK Drinks Business Green Award for supply chain and logistics. File photo
Image by: TERRA FIRMA SOLUTIONS

The World Sommelier Competition is underway in Mendoza, Argentina



[Le Concours du Meilleur Sommelier du Monde](#) is currently taking place in Argentina. The competition was first held in 1969 and the program varies each year depending on the host country. This is the first time it has been held in Argentina and the Argentine Sommelier Association has been planning for this event for almost three years.

There are 61 sommeliers taking part and South Africa is represented by Gareth Ferreira, who took top honours as the Best Sommelier in South Africa in January. The Semi-finals results will be announced on Tuesday the 19th April, just before the Finale in Mendoza. The Top three sommeliers will compete to win the ultimate title that is only awarded every three years. Keep an eye on [Wine.co.za](#) if you want to follow Gareth's progress.

Bonus factoid: Would you like to know more about the etymology of the term 'sommelier' and how the occupation came to be? Have a read [here](#).

This week's Weekly Wine Wrap-Up was brought to you by [Juliet Cullinan Wines](#). The 26th annual Juliet Cullinan Standard Bank Wine Festival will be hosted on 12 & 13 July 2016 at Summer Place, Hyde Park. Tickets are available at [Webtickets](#) from April onwards.

ABOUT ANNA-BET STEMMET

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