

# Nederburg spotlights its female winemakers, viticulturist this Women's Month

Celebrating Women's Month, Nederburg shares a bit about the journeys of the winery's female winemakers and viticulturist who are currently responsible for the making of Nederburg's wines.



## Wine-making veteran Lizelle Gerber

Nederburg's cellar is headed up by Lizelle Gerber, a veteran with more than 15 years' experience in the local wine industry. Driven by mentorship, Gerber is not one to shy away from getting her hands dirty and leads a team of talented winemakers and cellar workers. "It gives me immense pleasure to work hand-in-hand with these champions! I'm always grateful for the opportunity to share the knowledge and skills I've gained over the past 15 years."

She shares her journey: "I wanted a career that would bring me closer to nature, perhaps because I was not raised on a farm. Had I been, I surely would have been up to much mischief! So, during my first year after school, I felt extremely lucky to have been one of only a few women selected for a one-year stint with the South African National Defence Force (as part of the then SALVKOL, a military school for women situated in George). What an experience! Here I learned perseverance, persistence and precision, all elements that are serving me well in my current career in wine.

"But it was after my year in the military, when I visited various educational institutions to find a suitable career for myself, that I became aware of the Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute of Stellenbosch and its many fields of study. I had never before even considered becoming a winemaker, so that was it! Suddenly the idea gained momentum and not long after, I enrolled to study to become a winemaker. So, in all honesty, it was my total ignorance when it came to wine that actually triggered my curiosity in this sacred liquid. I've been hooked ever since."



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## Assistant white-winemaker Jamie Williams

Cape Flats-born Jamie Williams, assistant white-winemaker at Nederburg, who was recently featured as part of *Wineland* magazine's 30 Under 30 Club, says one of the biggest challenges she's had to face to date was "travelling internationally, on my own and having to rely on people I've never met".

The overseas trip Williams refers to was an opportunity to work in Napa, California, after her studies. Her journey into wine however, started some time before that. In her second year of a BSc with specialisation in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology at the University of Stellenbosch, she undertook a module on wine biotechnology. "I was captured!" she declares. "I've always loved science, but also have an artistic side. Most industries give you the opportunity to either be an artist, or a scientist. Both appeal to me, and I believe that wine is the perfect fusion of art and science, my two passions combined."



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## Assistant red-winemaker Zinaschke Steyn

Zinaschke Steyn, Nederburg's assistant red-winemaker, hails from Klerksdorp (North West Province) and moved to Worcester (Western Cape) after matriculating in 2005. Here she worked as a proof-reader at Pioneer Printers while familiarising herself with the winelands of the Cape, and setting out to become a brandy distiller. But life had other plans for her.

"To be honest, after investigating my options, I realised that winemaking seemed a lot more fun than brandy. I've always enjoyed getting my hands dirty and wanted a job where I could be physically involved in the process from start to finish. Winemaking is a challenging environment that is never the same, each year you get one chance to make a success of the vintage, and you never know what Mother Nature has up her sleeve! Also, it would make for a good story – a Valie that grew up on brandy and beer now making wine. In 2007 I went to see Oom Willie at Elsenburg, and the rest is history," she explains.



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## Viticulturist Isabel Teubes

Last, but not least, from Vredendal on the West Coast is viticulturist Isabel Teubes who was born and raised on a wine farm situated along the banks of the Olifants River.

She explains: "I've been actively involved in farm activities relating to winemaking and viticulture since the age of 10. I understood early on that the oldest and golden rule for keeping a healthy vine bearing succulent fruit is to maintain balance between the rooting system and the canopy. Modern viticultural practices and techniques allow us to determine wine styles in the vineyard already. This excites me!"

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