

The best "green" wine farms in South Africa

The Nedbank Green Wine Awards event was recently held in Cape Town, *Wine Magazine* reports. During the ceremony, the Best Environmental Practices Award winners were announced.

Contenders are assessed on water management, conservation of natural areas and ecosystems, energy efficiency and reduction of carbon emissions, soil management, chemical control and other environmental initiatives such as education programmes, community involvement, eco-tourism and transport initiatives.

The winner of this year's Best Environmental Practices category is Paul Cluver Wines, Elgin. In the Cluver family since 1896, De Rust Estate was famous for its apples and pears until the 1980s when Dr Paul Cluver III pioneered commercial grape-growing in Elgin. Now regarded as one of the Cape's best wine producers, the family has set aside almost half of the estate (about 1013 hectares) for conservation. "We use the fruit of the land, but we are merely its guardians," Dr Paul Cluver IV told *Wine Magazine*.

The Cluvers invested in conservation away from their farm, as well - founding the Groenlandberg Conservancy, which today spans 34000 hectares and forms part of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, a World Heritage Site. The Cluvers were also instrumental in developing the Green Mountain Eco Route, the world's first biodiversity and wine route which incorporates Bot River, Elgin, Grabouw, Houw Hoek and Villiersdorp and offers eco-friendly activities such as hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and rock climbing.

Franschhoek's La Motte farm was runner-up and Tulbagh's Waverley Hills was third place.

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