

# New protégés for wine industry

Three new protégés have entered the Cape Winemakers Guild Protégé Programme, a mentorship initiative that gives aspirant winemakers the opportunity to work side by side with some of the country's finest winemakers.



L - R Philani Shongwe, Thornton Pillay, Elmarie Botes, Wade Sander, Chandré Petersen, Ricardo Cloete and Heinrich Kulsen.

The new protégés, all graduates in Cellar Technology at Elsenburg Agricultural College, are Wade Sander from Johannesburg, Thornton Pillay of Durban and Ricardo Cloete from Steinkopf in Namakwaland.

Sander, who completed his studies with assistance from the Cape Winemakers Guild Billy Hofmeyr SETA Bursary Programme last year, joins master craftsman Etienne Le Riche in the cellar. "I look forward to being able to bottle my first vintage and to influence the character and structure of the wine with my own creativity and expression."

Pillay, who will be at Ernie Els Wines under Louis Strydom, says, "I've always had an interest in agriculture and winemaking with a genuine passion to become a role model someday. Being a part of this programme is an honour for me and a kick start for my plans."

Cloete will be learning his craft under the mentorship of Abrie Beeslaar at Kanonkop. "Being selected as a protégé is the ideal foundation to become one of South Africa's most successful winemakers."

All will have the opportunity to make their own wine during their three-year internships because of sponsorships from various suppliers. Every year, Cape Cooperage provides wine barrels for the maturation, whilst Consol Glass and Amorim Cork donate the bottles and corks for the protégé wines.

"With the shifting of priorities towards sustainability in terms of communities and the environment, we, as the Cape Winemakers Guild, need to assist the local wine industry in achieving these objectives. We are therefore indebted to our suppliers for their support of our protégé programme," says Guild chairman Jeff Grier.

Launched in 2006, under the auspices of the Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Development Trust, the Cape Winemakers Guild Protégé Programme has the goal of bringing about transformation in the wine industry by cultivating, nurturing and empowering promising individuals to become winemakers of excellence.

The Cape Winemakers Guild Billy Hofmeyr SETA Bursary Programme pays tribute to the Guild's first founding chairman. The first Guild meeting took place, at the Hofmeyr home on the farm Welgemeend in Paarl, on 24 August 1982.

For more information, go to [www.capewinemakersguild.com](http://www.capewinemakersguild.com).

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