



# Ashbourne

WINE OF ORIGIN HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY

Ashbourne is a small *Pinotage*, and *White blend* specialist, founded in 1996 by Anthony Hamilton Russell and located on a beautiful 64 hectare property in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley on the eastern border of Hamilton Russell Vineyards.

Ashbourne's primary aim is for its founding wine - the *Ashbourne Pinotage* (maiden vintage 2001) to belong firmly in the company of the world's great benchmarks, without in any way replicating them or seeking to taste like them. The wine is seen more as an expression of the character of its cool, maritime site and ancient, extremely clay-rich and iron-rich soils, than of the unique South African grape variety, Pinotage. Over the years this refined, complex, age-worthy wine has been confused in blind tastings with top wines from the Piedmont, Bordeaux, the Northern Rhone, Southern Rhone and even Northern Spain. It has become known for a high level of individuality and classic styling and has played a leading role in the Pinotage renaissance underway in South Africa.

With the 2006 vintage, after several years of experimentation and planning, the first *Ashbourne Sandstone* was made as a white wine partner to the Ashbourne Pinotage. This unwooded blend of Sauvignon blanc, Chardonnay and Semillon was designed as the most beautiful possible expression of the quartzitic sandstone soils on the cool, maritime, Hemel-en-Aarde Valley property. Ashbourne Sandstone became the first South African wine to be fermented and aged in amphorae and this practice continues as a means of enhancing texture and complexity without relying high levels of alcohol. The wine is particularly mineral and saline and extreme care is taken to avoid excessive varietal fruit dominating the expression of the site and soils. A unique endemic yeast discovered in 1993, is used along with long, slow, spontaneous ferments to add additional complexity and viscosity.

Ashbourne pioneered Pinotage plantings in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley and was identified as one of South Africa's 4 "producers on the cutting edge" in the Wine Spectator earning a place on their Top 100 wines of the year.

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