



**WARWICK**  
— ESTATE —

**ABOUT WARWICK WINE ESTATE**



Warwick Estate is a family-owned and run winery. Managing Director Michael Ratcliffe is the third-generation family member to oversee this high-quality boutique operation, which has been lauded globally for excellence and consistency. Mike is passionately involved in many aspects of the South African and global wine industry and has held senior leadership positions in industry bodies.

From 1771 until 1902, Warwick Estate was known as *De Goede Sukses*. After the Anglo-Boer War in 1902, Colonel William Alexander Gordon, Commanding Officer of the Warwickshire regiment, decided against returning to England and bought the farm; he renamed it 'Warwick' as a tribute to his regiment and the rest, as they say, is history. On 1 April 1964, Warwick was purchased by Stan Ratcliffe after an extensive search for the best *terroir* in the Cape. Together with his young bride, Norma, they realised the potential of the extraordinary property and began planting Cabernet Sauvignon. These vines produced high-quality grapes, which were soon in demand from neighbouring wineries. Norma became more and more interested in the making of wine and began to study the subject. By 1984, a cellar was in place and the first legal Warwick vintage – a Cabernet Sauvignon – was released.

It seemed as if Norma had talent for making great wines and production increased. In 1986, the Warwick Trilogy – a Bordeaux-style blend, which has since become one of the flagships of the South African wine industry – was also released.

## THE LEGEND OF THE WARWICK WEDDING CUP

Centuries ago, in old Nuernberg, the noble mistress Kunigunde fell in love with a young and ambitious goldsmith. Although Kunigunde's wealthy father (a powerful nobleman) did not approve of the pair, it was clear that Kunigunde wanted only the goldsmith to be her husband, as she refused many titled and rich suitors who asked for her hand in marriage. Her father became so enraged that he had the young goldsmith thrown into the darkest dungeon. Not even his daughter's bitter tears could change his mind. To her father's dismay, however, imprisoning the young man did not end his daughter's love for him. Instead, he could only watch as his daughter grew



paler and paler as a result of the separation from her true love. The wealthy nobleman therefore reluctantly made the following proposal: He told his daughter, 'If your goldsmith can make a chalice from which two people can drink at the same time without spilling one single drop, I shall free him and you shall become his bride.' Of course he was certain that nobody could perform such a task. Inspired by love and with skilful hands, however, the young goldsmith created a masterpiece: he sculpted a girl with a smile as beautiful as that of his own true love's; her skirt was hollowed to serve as the cup; her raised arms held a bucket that swivelled so that it could be filled and then swung towards a second drinker. The challenge was met. The goldsmith and the nobleman's daughter joined hands in marriage and, with the bridal cup, created a romantic and memorable tradition still as charming today as it was originally hundreds of years ago.

To this day and to many couples, the chalice remains a symbol: love, faithfulness and good luck await the couple who drink from this cup.

## THE RATCLIFFE FAMILY



### NORMA RATCLIFFE

Canadian-born Norma is special not only because she is one of very few female winemakers in the Cape but also because she is a member of the Cape Independent Winemakers' Guild – the first female member – and has served as its chairperson. When she first taught herself to make wine, she gave her wine away to appreciative friends. She later went to Bordeaux to gain some experience working in a cellar; when the winemaker there broke his leg, she was the one to carry out his instructions in making the wine. A sparkling and energetic soul, Norma brought her new winemaking skills back to Warwick, where she was able to develop them further.

### MICHAEL RATCLIFFE

Mike qualified with a business major before attending the University of Adelaide, being in the first graduating class for the Graduate Diploma in Wine Marketing. He is now Managing Director of Warwick, which is recognised as one of South Africa's foremost wine estates. Mike is a leader in the Cape wine industry: he is a board member of Wines of South Africa, the generic export promotion board for the South African wine industry; he is also active in international relations through fundraising as President of the Washington-based United States/South Africa Foundation, a 301c not-for-profit foundation.

### JENNY RATCLIFFE

Jenny studied at the Cordon Bleu in Paris and then completed a BA at Stellenbosch University before starting her own catering business. She worked as a wine buyer for Woolworths as well as an export manager for a large wine exporter before joining the family business. Jenny, who is a Cape Wine Master and published author of the wine book *Spit or swallow*, is taking a leave of absence to raise her little girl, Georgia Rosemary, now eight months, who will hopefully one day follow in the wine footsteps of the family. She lives in Johannesburg with her husband Darryl.

## WARWICK AND THE CONSERVATION



Warwick Wine Estate has become an accredited member of the Biodiversity & Wine Initiative (BWI), a partnership between the South African wine industry and the conservation sector aiming to restrict, as far as possible, the further loss of any natural habitat in the Cape Floral Kingdom (CFK), one of the natural wonders not only of South Africa but of the world. The management of Warwick Wine Estate has realized the importance of "biodiversity" and over the past decade they've strived to maintain a balance between nature and wine making. Their conservation area consists of some 4 hectares of pristine renosterveld and forms part of the Klatmutskop Conservancy.

Ronald Spies, the viticulturist at Warwick for the past seven years, can be seen as the driver of all the conservation initiatives on the farm. It has always been his passion that the vineyards should be developed in harmony with the natural environment.

Although Warwick is not farmed 100% organically, one of our strategies is "minimum intervention" This includes limited use of pesticides and herbicides, use of indigenous cover crops, as well as natural methods of curbing disease in the vineyards.

Warwick has been very involved in all of these initiatives and will continue to do so in order to restore the unique biodiversity of the farm.