



VINE & Dine

By Jennifer Blyth
Black Press

Saanich man produces South African wines – with award-winning results

A former Saanich man and Mt. Douglas Secondary grad is making waves in the international wine industry – from South Africa.

David Bate, owner of Leopard Frog Vineyards, is the only British Columbian making wine in South Africa, making only 32 barrels of wine each year which sell out in New York, London and Toronto.

However, "it is important for me to have my wines in British Columbia, particularly as it is my home province, and even more important for me to have my wines available in Victoria since it is my home town," Bate says. "We participated in the Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival this year and received great support – a once-off 12-litre bottle of our 'Tantra' 2005 vintage sold for \$6,000 to raise money for the Playhouse while in the United States, a 12-litre bottle of our Tantra 2004 vintage was part of a five-star safari and wine experience that sold for \$220,000 US at a charity auction to raise money for a children's foundation at the Naples Winter Wine Festival, the most exclu-

sive wine festival in the world."

While his "day job" as owner of an investment bank takes him to the world of international finance from Johannesburg, to indulge his other passion, Bate took several courses at the Cape Wine Academy in South Africa before earning a Master of Science from the Bordeaux International Wine Institute in France.

"Otherwise, it is all just by touch and feel – I make wines that I enjoy and hope that there are a few kindred souls out there who share the same enthusiasm for unusual wines. So far, it seems to be going well – every one of our Leopard Frog wines has won awards in international competitions."

Among the Victoria restaurants carrying Leopard Frog wines are Brasserie L'Ecole, Cafe Brio, The Aerie, Deep Cove Chalet, Sooke Harbour House, Union Club, Hotel Grand Pacific, Il Terrazzo and Rosemeade Restaurant.

The wines are also carried by Spinnakers Wine Merchants, Six Mile Liquor Store in Colwood and Smuggler's Cove Liquor Store in Cadboro Bay.



COMING SOON: "In addition to Leopard Frog Vineyards, which is our 'couture' wine cellar, I also have another 'pret a porter' wine cellar called the United Nations of Wine which makes wines for everyday drinking in environmentally friendly tetra paks", Bate says. "Our first offering is called 'Frisky Zebras' from South Africa and we currently offer a 'Seductive Shiraz' and 'Sensuous Sauvignon Blanc' in one-litre tetra pak cartons, and this brand has become the No. 1-selling South African tetra pak in Ontario – these wines are coming to British Columbia in July and will be available in private liquor stores, pubs and

restaurants."

FYI: "In appreciation of the stature of First Nations' culture as the Old World of the New World and acknowledgement of the winemaker's birthplace, Leopard Frog commissioned well-known Coast Salish artist Jody Wilson to create an emblem which interprets traditional First Nations' design in a contemporary style reflective of Leopard Frog's winemaking philosophy," says the winery's website of its logo. For more details, visit www.leopard-frog.com