

Waboomsrivier Winery's two huge decanters a must

GEA Westfalia recently installed not one, but two of the largest decanters in their range at the Waboomsrivier (Wabooms) Winery, situated between Worcester and Ceres. This is the first installation of its kind for GEA in South Africa. Speaking to CBN, Jaco Coetzee, Market Development Engineer at GEA Westfalia said "Wabooms is continuously looking to use the latest technology when it comes to winemaking." In fact the estates own website proudly mentions its "ultra modern red wine cellar" and "the white wine cellar which [is at the] forefront of technology."

Coetzee explains that Wabooms installed a GEA 150 Separator - "used for wine purification and with a capacity of up to 30,000 litres per hour and 15,000 litres of juice per hour" - in 2008. But in an industry where time is money, and can make or break a harvest, Wabooms approached GEA Westfalia for ideas on how to handle their grapes more efficiently. Enter the giant CF 7000 decanters that are used to de-juice the grapes.

"The process of the CF 7000 is fairly easy," Coetzee explains. "The

wine farmer will bring the grapes to be offloaded at the winery, these grapes go through a stemmer to pick out all the sticks and so forth. The grapes are then pumped into a holding tank; and the decanter is fed from this holding tank. By using the CF 7000 decanter, the wine farmer can continuously supply grapes to Wabooms, rather than the conventional process using a press, which is a chumster batch process."

"The CF 7000 decanters ensure optimum yield of 'must' [freshly pressed juice] and wine, and a continuous discharge of solids, ready for disposal."

But these decanters offer additional savings in the manufacturing process, "It's an automatic operation, thereby reducing the cost of labour. The decanter is also a versatile machine that means you can recover your lees, providing savings in filter aids." The CF 7000 has a dejuicing capacity for white grapes of 18 tons of grapes per hour, with a solids level of less than 2% in the must out.

Wabooms Manager and Winemaker, Benjie Wannenburg says that since installation, the decanters have been producing A-

grade juice with a must out of around 0.2%. "We are very impressed with these machines. We are getting a much higher quality yield, and the processing procedure is very simple." "When we were looking at the upgrades needed to accommodate the growth in our business, these decanters were the cheapest option for us. This machine saved us from having to install new drainers, a new press, vacuum drum and centrifuge. On top of that, we went from producing around 500 litres per ton of A-quality juice and 250 litres per ton of B-quality juice to a full 750 litres per ton of A-quality juice. This means we make more money from our crop."

"This is the first de-juicing decanter for GEA Westfalia in South Africa, and that will pave the way forward for future projects," says Coetzee.

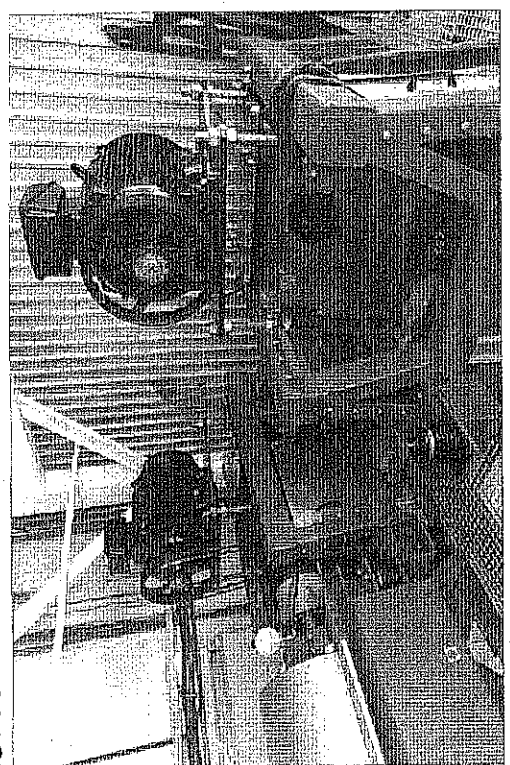
On after-sales service, Coetzee states "We have six service engineers based in Southern Africa - with two based in Cape Town - focusing on service and maintenance for all of our equipment. We also provide our clients with a service level agreement, which is a contract between

GEA Westfalia and the client, tailored to their needs. And using that, we can keep spares on the shelf as/when the client needs it."

This is a fact that Wannenburg also pointed to. "GEA Westfalia was the only company we spoke to that did not use an agent. We ordered directly from the company, it was installed by that company and our service agreement is held by the company. There is no middle-man, no unnecessary delays and no agent fees."

As such, Wannenburg says that they always felt that they were getting the best service. "You aren't just a number; our contact with the company in both South Africa and Germany was personal. We had to have the equipment installed no later than the end of January, and the company went out of its way to ensure this happened. A technician came through from Germany to oversee the installation and spent over a week onsite."

With a glowing reference from the Waboomsrivier Wine Estate, and two CF 7000 decanters installed on time, GEA Westfalia can call this a job well done.



Installation of the two giant CF 7000 decanters at Waboomsrivier Winery.

