

Snip, snip, snip ...

With the winter solstice having taken place over the weekend, the days are gradually lengthening again. Although the vines at Creation are still enjoying the seasonal rest of their dormancy, the vineyards are abuzz with activity as pruning commences according to the strict maintenance schedule.

The simple task of removing parts of a plant to shape and control its architecture has far-reaching implications as one would imagine. The most obvious result is that by pruning there is greater control over fruit producing parts of vines, but it is also a significant tool for balancing vegetative growth with fruiting – a healthy canopy is essential for the development of the fruit and the pruning of young vineyards has a direct influence on the root mass that develops. Vineyards are also pruned to suit the training system that is deemed optimal for a specific cultivar on a specific site – the most economical way to establish and maintain a vineyard that is efficient and sustainable, optimising the use of available sunlight and promoting productivity.

CREATING A VIRUS-FREE LEGACY

Another important aspect of pruning, particularly at Creation, is the virus-free status of the grafting material that we supply to Vititec, to establish new vineyard sites across the country. Leaf roll virus in particular is spread through infected material, and is a huge problem in South Africa. The virus is more noticeable in red cultivars, and is characterised by green veined, bright red leaves that curl up at the edges while the fruit is still ripening. The affected canopy produces fruit which is noticeably less ripe, and while the virus can be managed, often vineyards will have to be replanted.

The advantages of having virus-free plants at Creation are visible not only in the healthy vineyards where there is

minimal intervention, but also in the quality of the perfectly ripe fruit that produce wines of rare elegance, balance, distinction and finesse.

CREATION MERLOT AND MUSHROOMS – A MAGNIFICENT MATCH!

In celebrating Merlot Month, Creation's talented chef Warwick Taylor suggests the ideal foil: [GRILLED FILLET OF BEEF, SHIITAKE GNOCCHI, CARAMELISED ROOT VEGETABLES AND PORCINI CREAM](#). An enthusiastic Warwick

explains: "With the 2012 Creation Merlot's soft, fleshy and juicy characteristics, it is the perfect wine to pair with a variety of mushrooms. For this recipe I have chosen the rich meaty-flavoured porcini and shiitake mushrooms. The wine's good acid levels make for a great balance to the rich porcini sauce and because of the wine's inherent sweetness it beautifully complements the caramelised root veggies. Last but not least the grilled beef with a bit of cracked fresh pepper is fantastic with the spicy bouquet of the wine."