

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT:

An elegant and amusing romantic comedy about the President of America, played with relaxed ease by Michael Douglas, falling in love with an environmental lobbyist (Annette Bening) during his term in office. Though politics play a role, the main thrust is the White House courtship rituals. **PF** ★★

CARRINGTON: Emma Thompson soars in this remarkable account of the unorthodox love affair between artists Dora Carrington and writer Lytton Strachey. With the screen's best ever evocation of the Bloomsbury set, the film is serene and deeply moving. Oscars all round, please. **BR** ★★

CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY:

A careful, reverent adaptation of Alan Paton's great novel that is given credibility and force by fine performances from James Earl Jones and Richard Harris. It is an unashamed tear-jerker, but it has enough style to pull it off. **BR** ★★

DANGEROUS MINDS: Michelle Pfeiffer is commanding as the ex-Madame attempting to teach a pack of wild and aggressive teenagers how to become useful members of society. But the film explores few new ideas and the hard-bitten character types are pretty much stereotypical. **PF** ★★

THE ENGLISHMAN WHO WENT UP A HILL BUT CAME DOWN A MOUNTAIN: Hugh Grant sparkles in this enchanting little English comedy about a Welsh village determined to place itself on the map. A gentle, elegant comedy. **BR** ★★

FAIR GAME: Cindy Crawford makes a reasonable movie debut in this formulaic thriller about rotten ex-KGB operatives. The terrible screenplay inhibits her though, and none of the spectacular - but insanely dangerous - stunts and special effects can disguise the hollowness of the exercise. **DFA** ★

FUNNY BONES: A strikingly original comedy and one of the most inventively funny productions seen in a long time. It explores the link between comedy and tragedy when a young American comedian arrives in Blackpool in search of new material - and discovers his past. Jerry Lewis and Oliver Platt



CINEMA

RATINGS

- ★★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★ Very Good
- ★★★ Good
- ★★ Fair
- ★ A dud

The views expressed in these columns are those of individual critics who may disagree among themselves. **DFA** - Darryl Accone; **PF** - Peter Feldman; **RG** - Robert Greg; **VL** - Val Leveson; **GM** - Garalt MacLiam; **BR** - Barry Ronge; **AS** - Adrienne Sichel; **JS** - Janet Smith; **JW** - Janine Walker.

head an impressive cast.

PF ★★ **GOLDENEYE:** James Bond is back in a lively revitalisation of a familiar formula. Brosnan is a witty, somewhat light-weight Bond, but the girls are gorgeous, the explosions are stupendous, the special effects are eye-popping and even though it isn't exactly new it certainly is fun. **BR** ★★

HOTEL SORRENTO: An excellent Australian film about three sisters who are forced to confront long-buried family secrets when one of them writes a "tell-all" family memoir. Great writing, excellent acting and a calm, assured job of direction make it a classy conversation piece. **BR** ★★

THE INDIAN IN THE CUPBOARD: A magnificently realised version of the popular classic novel about a young boy who is able to bring his toys to life but learns that there's a profound difference in owning an inanimate toy and owning a living creature. Superb special effects and a good

message make it a winner. **BR** ★★

JACK AND SARAH: A delightful and gentle British film - with superb performances by Richard E Grant, Ian McKellen and Judi Dench - about a young father who has to raise his daughter on his own when his wife dies in childbirth. Sometimes sad, often funny, the film's strength lies in the fact that it never wallows in sentimentality. **JW** ★★

A MONTH BY THE LAKE: H E Bates's story of late blooming love does not transfer well to the screen, though the film has its pleasures, like Vanessa Redgrave - that principled lefty - playing the quintessential bourgeois Englishwoman. **DFA** ★★

NEVER TALK TO STRANGERS: Rebecca de Mornay and Antonio Banderas star in this insipid psychological thriller about a stalker. The two characters have sexual encounters that occupy much

Your Essential Leisure Guide

what's on

valuable screen time but contribute little to the flow of a narrative with about as much excitement as watching a pot plant wither in a drought. **PF** ★ **OPERATION DUMBO DROP:** In the midst of the Vietnam war a squad of Green Berets have to find and deliver an elephant to a strategically important hill-tribe village. This action-comedy is Disney at its best, with good performers - Danny Glover and Ray Liotta - and it is a treat for families. **BR** ★★

THE POSTMAN: A tender, lyrical film about an incident in the life of poet Pablo Neruda whose brief friendship with a shy postman changed the young man's life forever. A graceful comedy about the link between passionate feelings and passionate poetry. **BR** ★★

PRIEST: A profoundly shocking and challenging film about priests who come into conflict with the rules and dogma of the Roman Catholic church. Incest, child abuse, homosexuality and heresy are blended in a powerful but disturbing film. Strictly for adults only. **BR** ★★

THE SCARLET LETTER: A ponderous, passionate and at times self-indulgent reworking by Roland Joffe of Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel with Demi Moore, as adulteress Hester Prynne, Gary Oldman as the minister and her lover, and Robert Duvall as the vengeful husband. High on atmosphere and visually splendid. **PF** ★★

SEVEN: A ferocious, bleak thriller about mismatched cops tracking a serial killer with a mystical bent. Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman excel and although the film is relentlessly dark and exceptionally violent it is extremely well made. One of the year's best thrillers. **BR** ★★

SHOWGIRLS: This brassy, bitchy view of a stripper's progress from sleaze-club to Las Vegas

star is undeniably exploitative but it is a well-made movie. The sense of back-stage life is sharp, the pace is electrifying and it makes for an entertaining and extremely sexy film. **BR** ★★

SMOKE: The rare and refined pleasure of great story-telling is perfectly showcased in this elegantly quirky tale about men who love to tell stories. Set mainly in a cigar-shop it is a lucid, sensitive study of drab urban lives enriched by friendship and the ability to turn life's experiences into fine fiction. It is specialist stuff and not for "Judge Dredd" fans but it is superb. **BR** ★★

SOMEBODY TO LOVE: Two of film's unluckiest stars - Rosie Perez and Harvey Keitel - team up in this quirky romance, which examines corrupting aspects of the American Dream and the lives of Hispanic Americans (legal or illegal). Irony, comedy and touches of magical realism make for a gritty film notable for honesty and humanity. **DFA** ★★

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT: A film by Swedish director Lasse Hallstrom about a young Southern woman (Julia Roberts) whose attitude to life changes when she catches her husband (Dennis Quaid) kissing a beautiful blonde in his lunch break. A fine blend of comedy and drama. **PF** ★★

SUDDEN DEATH: Jean-Claude van Damme delivers his usual display of explosions, bone-crunching fights and gravity defying martial-arts leaps but this time he does it on ice. The Muscles from Brussels tackles terrorists at an ice-hockey championship. Strictly for Van Damme fans. **BR** ★★

TO WONG FOO, THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, JULIE NEWMAR: A rip-off of *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. But all that To Wong Foo, etc, shares with that intensely human and intelligent film is a long title. Patrick Swayze and Wesley Snipes are caricatures, affectations of affectation, though John Leguizamo is notable as the Latino drag queen. **DFA** ★★

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING: A nimble romantic comedy about a girl who claims to be the fiancée of a handsome hunk in a coma and then has to worry about what happens when Sleeping Beauty wakes up. Funny and expertly performed, but essentially fluff. **BR** ★★

WILD REEDS: A richly nostalgic "rites of passage" film about four youngsters in rural France in the 60s grappling with the political upheaval of the Algerian war and with the complexity of their own emerging sexual identities, gay and straight. Lyrical photography and passionate acting make it an impressive work. **BR** ★★

The Star TOP 10 TV

1. Opening match of the African Nations Cup soccer (CCV on Saturday January 13 - 15 ARs)
2. Ezodumo (CCV traditional music on Thursdays - 15 ARs)
3. Velaphi (CCV sitcom on Thursdays - 15 ARs)
4. Mama's Love (CCV drama on Tuesdays - 14 ARs)
5. Suburban Bliss (TV1 sitcom on Mondays - 14 ARs)
6. The Marshall (CCV drama on Saturdays - 14 ARs)
7. Cricket: SA v England (TV1 on Tuesday January 9 - 14 ARs)
8. Kgatelopele (CCV drama on Mondays - 14 ARs)
9. Body and Soul (CCV magazine on Tuesdays - 14 ARs)
10. D (CCV music on Mondays - 14 ARs)

SEVEN ARTS Norwood

TODAY:

6.00pm: **NEARLY A NASTY ACCIDENT** (A British comedy)

8.00pm: **THE DEVIL'S EYE** (Ingmar Bergman classic)

Another great video... about Generation X

is *For Honors*, the story of four Harvard students whose life of privilege in digs on campus is rudely interrupted by the arrival of a homeless man who begins his relationship with them on a bribe. As the film grows, it shows how youth and ageing and beauty and decrepitude collide in our society. The film stars Joe Pesci, Brendan Fraser, Moira Kelly and a lovely-looking Patrick Dempsey.

FAMILY SECRETS

(Richard Haines Theatre, at the Alhambra): Michele Maxwell makes a tasty meal of the five characters she plays in this highly entertaining diversion. Examining the lives of her range of distinctly offbeat characters, she provides one laugh on top of another, as she skillfully switches roles. **GM** **FRIDA KAHLO'S EYES:** Pieter Roos, Civic Theatre: Harry Kalmer's arresting play based on extraordinary insights and images links a Pretoria talkshow jockette with that icon of feminist art, the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo. Kalmer doesn't entirely realise the scope of his material yet director Sandra Prinsloo and actor Helene Lombard do much to reconcile the conflicts in the play. **RG** **KAFKA DANCES** (Upstairs at The Market Theatre): Timothy Daly's play about the Czech writer Franz Kafka sidesteps the pitfalls of theatricalised biography by vividly evoking the act of artistic creation and theatre-making as metaphors for life. Clare Stopford's passionately elegant collaborative production, featuring virtuoso perfor-



THEATRE

mances, engages the mind and the senses in a marvellously imaginative evening of theatre. **AS** **LEADER OF THE PACK** (Civic Theatre) A superb cast sing like the stars they are in this colourful, musical celebration of the hits composed by Ellie Greenwich, the queen of Doo-Wop Shoo-Bop rock and roll hits. It is light, sassy holiday fun, perfect for a family outing and the 30-something generation will revel in

the nostalgia of these great '60s songs. **BR** **RICHARD LORING'S MUSIC HALL** (Sound Stage, Midrand): It's colourful, extravagant and filled with many memorable moments and many old time music hall songs and ditties, as well as a host of wonderfully hoary old gags. **GM** **SWOPPING COMICS** (Tesson Theatre, at the Civic): The art of Standup comedy is alive and well at the Civic. How many laughs you get will depend largely on the line-up on a particular evening as the mix and match cast varies. At its best, it's terrific. **GM**

ART GALLERY (NATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, Hoofd St, Braamfontein) is having an exhibition of Chinese Brushpainting and Calligraphy Scrolls, from Feb 1 to Feb 3. The public can view the exhibition from 9am - 4pm on Feb 1 and 2 and at 9am - 12noon on Feb.3. Artists will also be demonstrating brushpainting, calligraphy, framing of scrolls and the use of dried flowers. **ALLIANCE FRANCAISE** (39 Empire Rd, Cr Doveton Rd, Parktown, Ext 2). "Visions Africaines d'Afrique Du Sud: An exhibition of works by Marleen de Waele-de Bock and Judus Mahlangu. **BISHOPS COURT ART:** (Killarney Mall. Tel: 646-5366) is having an on-going exhibition of South African artists. Featuring Ingrid Weiersbye and Grace Broderick.

CHERIE DE VILLIERS GALLERY (Shop 160, Lower Level, Nedbank Entrance, The Mall, Rosebank. Tel: 788-9949) is having an ongoing exhibition of leading South African Painters and Sculptors. **CIVIC GALLERY** (Civic Theatre, Braamfontein. Tel: 403-3408) will be exhibiting "Rainbow: Prints from Bob Blackburn's Printmaking Workshop" from Jan.30 until February 29. The exhibition features 40 prints by 39 artists from a variety of cultural, ethnic and

artistic backgrounds. **CHRIS TUGWELL - ZONA BOSHOF GALLERY** (2nd floor, Waterhouse building, 531 Fehrsten St, Brooklyn, Pretoria. Tel: (012) 346 3376) is exhibiting a selection of large recent works by George Boys, Isabel Le Roux, Michael Heyns, Schwenecke and Buchel. Open daily.

CHRIS TUGWELL (Simon Bekker St, Kosmos. Tel: (012) 311 30606) is exhibiting works by Boyley, Boys, Boshoff and Buchel. **EASEL STREET GALLERY** (Shop L1, Centro Continental, Geranium St, Rosettenville. Tel: 435-1358) is holding an exhibition by the renowned sculptor Orlando de Almeida. **EVERARD READ:** (6 Jellicoe Ave, Rosebank. Tel 788-5912) is exhibiting recent paintings by Martin Tose. From Jan.27 - Feb.11. Previews by request. **FRANCOIS VAN HALTER STUDIO** (2 Pafuri Rd, Emmarentia Ext. Tel: 888-3396) is having an exhibition of his paintings. Viewing by appointment only. **GALLERY ON TYRONE** (60 Tyrone



GALLERIES

Ave, The Village, Parkview. Tel: 486-1686) is having an exhibition by Ardmore Studio from November 21. **GALLERY PLETT** (53 Dudley Rd, cor Bolton and Dudley Roads, Rosebank. Tel: 442 6516) is having an ongoing exhibition of various paintings. **GALLERY & SCULPTURE GARDEN "OUT OF AFRICA"** (17 Salvia Rd/cor Maple, Kyalami. Tel 702-1553) An

ongoing contemporary stone sculpture exhibition by Africa's internationally acclaimed artists. **GENCOR GALLERY** (RAU University, Johannesburg) is exhibiting works by Dutch Artists. From Feb.7 - Feb.28. For further enquiries phone Mrs Willy Schneider on 489 2099 mornings only. **GERTRUDE POSEL GALLERY** (Ground floor, Senate House, Jorissen St, Braamfontein. Tel: 716 3632) presents the University of Witwatersrand's "Annual Students Exhibition". The works were made during 1995. From Feb.6 - Mar.1

HENRY TAYLOR (Fourways Mall: Tel 705-3194) is exhibiting works by Hans Bub, W.H.Coetzer, Tony Ribton, Wessel Marias, Chris Tugwell and Christiaan Niece.

HERITAGE (14 Woolston Road, Westcliff. Tel 646-9226). Resident artist Bev Watson. Open daily by appointment and last Sunday of the month.

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY (King George St, Joubert Park. Tel 725-3130) is exhibiting Positive Lives: Responses to HIV. The exhibition presents the work of thirteen photographers, including Gideon Mendel's images from South Africa. Until Feb.11, '96. On Jan 31 "Portraits in the Collection". Saturday Art classes will be held from Jan.27 - March 30. For further info phone Steven Sack on 725-3130 or Boni Mswane on 725-3184.

KAREN MCKERRON (42 Mandeville Road, Bryanston. Tel 704-2537) is exhibiting works by Cecily Sash from Jan.21 - Feb.3 and the latest paintings by Trevor Coleman from Feb.11 - March 20. **KEITH ALEXANDER STUDIO** (73 Hamilton Avenue, Craighall Park. Tel 880-1352) is exhibiting every day by appointment or 10am - 1pm weekdays. Originals, prints and posters available as well as selected African sculptures.



Recent artworks... by Martin Tose are on show at the Everard Read Gallery at 6 Jellicoe Avenue in Rosebank. The exhibition closes on February 11 and further enquiries may be made by calling 788-4805.

German money for local books

TONIGHT REPORTER

The Federal Republic of Germany has contributed to the development of book publishing in South Africa by assisting the country's marketing efforts abroad and promoting the translation of its literature in German-speaking regions.

For more than a decade, the German Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs has been helping South Africa's literature to gain improved access to the literary markets in Europe, by financing the translation of its books into German.

The most recent translations of South African literature into German supported by the ministry include Don Mattera's *Gone with the Twilight*, Ivan Vladislavic's *Missing Persons* and Peter Abraham's *Mine Boy*. Among South African authors who have benefited from this programme are Richard Rive, Bessie Head, Godfrey Molo, Beverley Naidoo, Mongane Wally Serote, Sindiwe Magono and Etienne van Heerden.

South African literature is the most widely published from sub-Saharan Africa, in the German-speaking region. German translations of more than 120 books by South African authors and several anthologies on their writings are currently available in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Translation grants of the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs are part of a comprehensive programme of literature promotion for developing nations, which is aimed at helping to build their national publishing industries and improving marketing of their books in Europe and other regions.

A main area of this

assistance has been the financing of participation by developing nations in the International Frankfurt Book Fair. More than 80 nations from Africa, Asia and Latin America have gained access to book markets in Europe and other regions through their participation in the Frankfurt Book Fair with the support of the German government.

Following political changes in South Africa, the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs has been supporting the marketing efforts of the country's small, independent and progressive publishers at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The Independent Publishers Association of South Africa (IPASA) in Johannesburg and the Congress of South African Writers were invited by the ministry in two consecutive years to promote their books at the fair.

Books by South Africa's black and progressive writers and small and independent publishing houses were again a focus of public and trade visitors' interest at the collective display of books from developing nations, sponsored jointly by the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the German Publishers and Booksellers Association in the 47th Frankfurt Book Fair.

An impressive range of educational books, fiction, children's literature and books on Christian religion from 11

publishing houses were displayed by the Witwatersrand University Press, parallel to the exhibition of books from South Africa by the country's mainstream publishing industry. Witwatersrand University Press was among 30 publishers from Africa, Asia and Latin America who were invited by the German Foreign Office to present their books in the newly-created "South-North Meeting Point" of the book fair.

Nelson Mandela — *The Struggle is My Life*, a collection of speeches and writings, *Twilight of the Struggle* by Lawrence Tutu, *Raising the Red Flag* by Sheridan Johns and *Revolutions in my Life* by Baruch Hirson were among the titles displayed at the South African stand.



Wanting to get to London ... The members of Not the Midnight Mass.

Help for the Masses

Popular a capella group Not the Midnight Mass has been invited to perform at the Kings Head Theatre in London. The theatre has launched an impressive array of western productions and actors, so where better to

present South Africa's leading and most enduring theatrical event?

Not The Midnight Mass is a non-subsidised, independent theatre group, and due to the weakness of the rand/pound exchange

rate, the cost of transferring the show is proving prohibitive for the group to carry alone. With 1 500 performances under their collective belt, Not The Midnight Mass is obviously popular with the South African public and now

appeals for funds to assist in this venture.

If you or your company are in any way able to help, be it airline tickets or accommodation in London, funds etc, please contact them at (021) 92-5776 or (021) 24-2192.

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Opera, State Theatre Pretoria

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EDITED BY

JAMES MITCHELL



JAPANESE writer Shoji Yuki, considered the country's foremost spy novelist, died last week aged 68. Yuki came to prominence in 1962 with his spy novel *Gomoku's Name is Gomoku*. A year later he published *When the Night Ends*, a detective novel about corrupt law enforcement officers.

In 1970, he won the prestigious Naoki Prize for *Under a Fluttering Standard*, based on crimes committed by Japanese military officers during World War II. The novel was based on knowledge accumulated while working as a public prosecutor during wartime court martials.



THE biggest guessing game around in Washington DC is just who is "Anonymous", the clever author of a new novel about a barely veiled Bill and Hillary Clinton — warts and a lot more — during the 1992 presidential campaign.

The book, *Primary Colours*, carries a disclaimer saying, "None of these events ever happened" — and then launches into a too-close-for-comfort replay of the campaign in which a Southern governor tries for a presidential nomination while dodging controversies over his anti-Vietnam war stance and whether he violated his marriage vows by "bedding down bimbos". The book is filled with pointed one-liners and plenty of dirty laundry.

LEGAL thriller writer John Grisham has proved that his courtroom skills haven't grown rusty: last week, in Brookhaven, Mississippi, he argued — and won — his first case in seven years.

Fans drew tickets to watch their favourite author perform. Grisham was representing the family of a railway brakeman killed in a rail accident in 1991.

THOSE who complain about the price of books in South Africa had better not go to Nigeria — once one of the most thriving literary scenes on the continent.

Nobel prize winner Wole Soyinka's latest book, *Ibadan — the Penkele Years*, costs about 4 000 naira — more than the monthly salary of most civil servants.

Publishers blame the economy and bookshops which don't pay, while Information and Culture Minister Walter Oforiagor said last November that the dearth of books in the country had to do with piracy in the form of intellectual plagiarism.

A note for those who would re-impose censorship in South Africa: "Censorship, like charity, should begin at home; but unlike charity, it should end there," once commented noted American publisher Clare Booth Luce.

A Web link which mocks world-wide book censorship attempts is <http://www.banned.books.com/>. There are plenty of video and audio clips as well.

Background info includes the full *Satanic Verses* story, from its publishing in September 1988, its banning by India and South Africa a month later, followed by such enlightened countries as Sudan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Iran, Tanzania, Singapore, Venezuela and Indonesia.



SAfm: Morning Novel, broadcast Monday to Friday at 9.45 am: *The Smell of Apples* by Johannesburg-based author Mark Behr, finishes today. It will be followed by a BBC production of Anita Brookner's *Hotel du Lac*, read by Anna Massey.

SAfm: Classic Serial, broadcast Sundays at 4 pm: BBC production of *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens.

SAfm: Bookshelf with Joy Cameron-Dow, after 7 pm news, Sunday.

SAfm: Sunday 10.50 Peter James-Smith in Sunday Edition — reader interests.

SABC-TV1 GMSA: Book Forum, Tuesday 8.10 am.

ANOTHER link that should worry the zealous is Banned Books on Line, to be found at <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Web/People/spok/banned-books.html>. It includes crosslinks to full Internet texts of such wicked and immoral works as *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, the Bible, and Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

GARETH PATTERSON, author of *With My Soul Amongst Lions* (Hodder & Stoughton R92.95) and others, will be talking next week about his experiences with the lions and elephants of the Tuli Wilderness. He will also show his video documentary *Shadows of Gold and Gray*.

The Sandton Library, in conjunction with Struik Book Distributors, will be hosting this event at the Sandton Main Library Auditorium (Sandton Square) at 5.30 pm on Wednesday February 7. For more information contact Isabel at (011) 881-6415 or Ingrid at 881-6401. But be warned, seating is limited.

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela has been topped from the premier position on the paperback best-seller list by Magnus Heystek's *World of Money*.

Mandela's popular biography, *Long Walk To Freedom*, now occupies second place on the best-seller list, which is compiled weekly by Exclusive Books in Hyde Park.

World of Money, now in its fourth edition, has sold over 45 000 copies since its initial release in 1991.

FALCON BOOKS' first title, *Murder by Magic*, by Nandi D'lova, has had the film option bought by American producer Kit Reynolds.

In the book, Manhattan-based Jon Zulu, a black Sherlock Holmes, interrupts a holiday in his native South Africa to rescue a hunted orphan girl.

Murder by Magic is also available in Zulu translation as *Ukubulala Ngomlingo*.

Oz Clarke's Wine Atlas: Wines and Wine Regions of the World (Little, Brown R199.99)

THE next best thing to drinking wine is, I suppose, reading about it — even if only to raise a thirst. This is not the first such wine atlas, nor will it be the last. If one is interested only in South African wines, then there is a better one available for this purpose. But how boring it would be if we only looked at our own country's products, without comparing them with others, and seeing the gaps in our own performance.

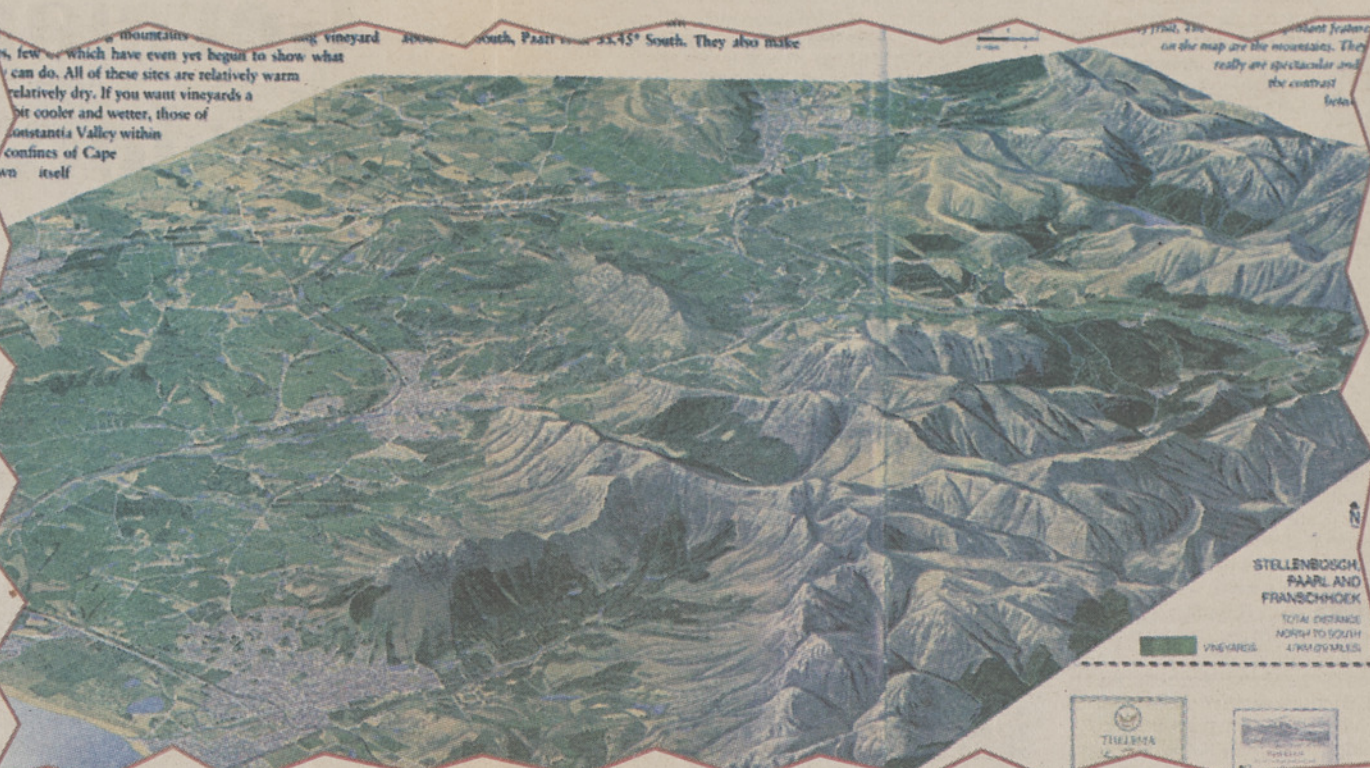
I remember the height of the Chardonnay frenzy, when ridiculous prices were being asked for the local version, when farmers were planting that grape as if there were nothing else, and when no kugel or yuppie would be heard dead ordering any other cultivar.

A lawyer from New Zealand (managing to combine visiting a client with taking an intelligent interest in the then rugby tour of South Africa) said over dinner at a leading Johannesburg hotel that he didn't know what all the fuss was about: he hadn't yet found a decent SA Chardonnay. Hurried consultation with the wine steward at last produced an overpriced bottle that, thank goodness, the visitor pronounced to be "not bad".

So by what standards was he judging our product? Turning to his country's 10 pages in *Oz Clarke's Wine Atlas* (South Africa only rates four), I see that in New Zealand's Wairarapa district there are "positively Burgundian conditions for great Chardonnay", while in the South Island "there are already some stunning examples of luscious, full, intense Chardonnays, as producers work out how to make it perform better, and we will see top-quality wines in due course."

The "Burgundian conditions" are described thus: "Surrounded by mountains to the south-west, west and north-east, the region is protected from both summer and autumn rains. And although the land down by the river flats is heavy clay, a series of flat-topped river terraces to the north-east round the town of Martinborough are shallow gravelly silt over deep, free-draining, virtually pure gravel. "Add to this relatively cool and windy, but rainless, summers and autumns, and a bit of drip irrigation..."

When one considers South Africa's Sauvignon Blancs, many of which hover between an over-oaked state and a sort of empty neutrality, perhaps we could learn from those far-off islands. It's not even as though New Zealand has anything like South Africa's long



Stellenbosch, Franschhoek and Paarl ... showing the relationship between desirable mountain slopes and coastal breezes.

Next best to a glass



history of wine making. Clarke recalls the post-World War 2 Royal Commission which unkindly found that "a considerable quantity of wine made in New Zealand would be classified as unfit for human consumption in other wine-producing countries."

To go from the particular to the general, I can say that *Oz Clarke's Wine Atlas* is stunningly illustrated, while the panoramic maps painted by Keith and Sue Gage give one an astonishing feel for the countryside. That for Stellenbosch, Paarl and Franschhoek (reproduced with this review) shows how, while the sun "warms the vines at Stellenbosch and Paarl, cold breezes are drawn inland from False Bay, keeping the vines cool enough to produce fine-quality fruit."

The mountains "provide excellent, sloping vineyard sites, up to about 600 m (1970 ft) high at which point the slopes generally become too steep for cultivation and the soil gives way to bare rock, and mostly facing away from the direct sunlight. But of course these sites are much more difficult to work than the vineyards on the river flats, and yields are lower, if of far higher quality. So if you look

enthusiasts trekking up those slopes, clearing the soil, and planting vines."

I only hope Clarke is right. Otherwise, what a devastating

indictment of our good old South African habit of taking the easy way out, failing to train the over-expensive labour, and then whingeing (and demanding protection against competition) when the results are not up to expectation.

The map, by the way, is accompanied by a key (not shown here) giving the principal wineries and the wine district boundary. As well as this country-by-country analysis, the atlas contains introductory chapters — not least interesting where they describe the on-going revolution in wine-making as experts take their skills from one side of the world to the other. Production and consumption are detailed, as are the vine and its environment, world climates and vineyards, siting the vineyard, the importance of soil, the modern vineyard, grapes of the world, wine styles, and wine making.

Even some tragedies of the wine world are included, as with the single page on North Africa, which once, under French rule, produced huge quantities of inferior plonk (of which horror stories were told, of tanker-loads being smuggled up the Rhône Valley to illicitly dilute the honest appellation contrôlée vintages of the motherland).

Now the remaining North African vines are elderly, "making rough, fruitless, baked wines without flavour or acidity," even though the vineyards themselves have all the basics that nature provides. But as Clarke notes: "Anywhere else — for example, in Australia or Burgundy — they'd be jumping up and down with resources like that. They'd be making incredibly concentrated, earthy, spicy red wines and they'd have buyers queuing down the street."

He is nothing if not positive. And from that comes much of the pleasure of this book, in which text, photography and maps all combine to produce an exceptional product — just as vine, soil, climate and winemaker should be able to combine in a bottle of the best. — JM

GIVEAWAY

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