

## Harvest in South Africa Experience 2017 by Allison Rahill

As a woman working on the corporate side of the wine industry, I had never experienced a day working on a farm or at a winery. Up until this year, my career has been dominated by computer screens and observing the weather patterns change from the window of a 15-story building.

Upon arriving at Jordan – my first impression was dominated by the surrounding beauty of the landscape. I did not know how many hectares Gary & Kathy owned nor how many were under vine until my third week working harvest, when I had an opportunity to leave the cellar and explore the property with \_Hilton Phipson their harvest manager. In one direction, I could see the hazy lining of Table Mountain to the west and to east I could see the Simonsberg Mountains and Franschhoek just beyond. I felt grounded at the moment, imagining a map I'd studied so many times before and being able to physically place myself within it.

When I look back on my experience at Jordan – I can recall a morning spent with Gary most clearly. He took me out into the vineyards and picked up four different types of rocks. He explained how each rock came from a different plot within the estate. These plots, each within view and walking distance from the next, are composed of a different soil type such as white quartz, red clay, black tourmaline and shale. Soil diversity is key to Jordan and to South Africa as a winemaking region – it is a pivotal reason for their ability to make world class wine from so many varieties. He continued to walk through several rows of vines, selecting bunches at random to test ripeness levels. He pointed out leaves that suffered sunburn and explained how you could differentiate a Merlot bunch from a Cabernet Sauvignon bunch. Not only did I learn from him and his experiences as a winemaker, but I could discern that this was his most natural of habitats.



*The incredible Women in Wine 2017 candidates, (from left to right): Yoshi from Japan who interned at Journeys End, Corinne from Calgary, who interned at Ken Forrester & The Drift, Allison from New York who joined us at Jordan and Young, who came all the way from Shanghai & interned at The Winery of Good Hope.*



*The Cellar team at Jordan Wine Estate. From Left to right: Jamie Fredericks (SA), Josh Castle (AUS), Allison Rahill (USA), Ryan (UK) Front: George Sandbach (UK) and Denovan Daniels (SA)*

As a New Yorker, patience is not a trait about which the people of our city can boast. In fact our impatience and the immediacy of New York is one of our most famous descriptors. The day I rode the tractor, I learned which rows had to be harvested by hand rather than machine and observed how one row could be riper than its neighbor. Winemaking is not only a labor of love for those picking crate after crate of grapes - it is so much about time and patience. It is about following an instinct in reaction to the unpredictable behavior of Mother Nature, and this ability is one that I now most highly respect of all winemakers.