

Park-and-ride could save your hide after wine fest

IT'S GOOD to see a growing awareness of the dangers of driving after drinking too much alcohol.

Frankly, it's taken South Africans far too long to start taking this seriously. We tend to live rather far apart and public transport has never been much good, so it is always tempting to take a chance after a few too many.

The idea of having a non-drinking "designated driver" in every party apparently doesn't appeal.

But we're going to have to learn fast.

The authorities are stepping up their vigilance and I know several people who have been caught and penalised very heavily.

Most of them have spent embarrassing and rather uncomfortable nights in jail.

Be warned.

Obviously the organisers of the ninth annual Stellenbosch Wine Festival are aware of this and they have organised a fleet of shuttle buses to and from the various participating wine farms from now until the end of the festival on Tuesday.

Visitors can park in any of the eight park-and-ride sites and be taken in safety to the wine farms of their choice.

The park-and-ride sites are at Bottelary Hills Wine Centre, Blaauwklippen, Delvera, Eikendal, Oude Libertas, Skilpadvlei, Zorgvliet, with the



central one at the Information Centre at Doornbosch.

To keep visitors happy while waiting for their shuttles to arrive, Checkers have set up cheese and wine stops at each park-and-ride site.

Festival passes will be available for sale at all park-and-ride sites and shuttles will travel between 9am and 5pm.

A time-table will be available at every park-and-ride site and each shuttle will have its very own "festival ambassador" on board to ensure that you are well informed and entertained.

Tickets for the festival cost R150 for a day pass and R500 for the golden pass and include a tasting glass from Consol, a festival programme and five vouchers, redeemable for special festival offerings as well as a shuttle pass. Kids under the age of 18 enter free!

Tickets will be for sale at all park-and-ride areas, the Doornbosch Information Centre and online at www.computicket.co.za and www.wineroute.co.za

Visitors with a sense of adventure can take a trip on

the Stellenbosch Wine Festival Helicopter Extravaganza tomorrow or on Sunday.

Base 4 Helicopters will fly wine lovers between Blaauwklippen, Skilpadvlei and Zorgvliet, where you can experience the festival offerings in VIP style. Booking is essential and tickets are available at R750 a person, which includes your festival pass. For more information, call 021 934 440.



I was delighted to taste Graham Beck's 2009 Game Reserve Chenin Blanc.

The name comes from the fact that Graham Beck has established a 1 400ha game reserve adjoining the Robertson winery and part of the price of each bottle of wine in the Game Reserve range will go toward the running of the reserve.

This chenin blanc is deliciously juicy and packed with ripe fruit salad flavours of peaches and melons, ending elegantly dry.

Again, it demonstrates the versatile nature of chenin blanc, once regarded among South African winemakers as a rather boring "plonk" grape.

Now, more and more Cape winemakers are discovering that superb, characterful wines can be made from this grape.

Watch out for them.

