

WHITEWATER VALLEY WINE SOCIETY
July 2026 Tasting
Wines of Journeys End, South Africa
Presented by Aoife Curtin

Aoife is UK Brand Development Manager for South Africa's Journey's End Vineyards. She is a young and hugely enthusiastic ambassador for their winery and was excited about coming to show our members wines from across the winery's portfolio. Regular members will know that our Chair, Keith Cooper is always keen to offer our members an evening tasting wines from a single winery, as it gives the opportunity to explore the wines in more depth. In 1996 the Gabb family, originally from Shropshire, UK, fell in love with the Journey's End wine farm, restoring it to what it is today, now surrounded by 40 hectares of beautiful vineyards. They feel fortunate to be nestled amongst the Schapenberg Hills, beneath which lay 350-million-year-old decomposed granite soils. This creates one of the most prestigious terroirs in South Africa, and is where their vines are planted, in the most south western area of Stellenbosch. [Trade prices are quoted below].

The Welcome Wine was our introduction to the Gabb wine range with a **Journey's End Reserve Brut MCC NV** [11.5%, £17.50] made according to the Champagne method. It was crisp and elegant, full of citrus with orchard fruit notes and hints of brioche. A lovely bubbly start to our tasting!

Our first official tasting wine was an **Ad Infinitum Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon 2023** [13%, £25.33] an 87/13% blend of the two grapes. This Premium white, Bordeaux-style is highly acclaimed and was even enjoyed by some members who avoid the usually favoured Sauvignon. Pale lime in colour with aromas of green fig, kiwi fruit and gooseberry it was rounded in the mouth with a saline freshness. The touch of oak added some weight and depth.

The next two wines were from the more neutral Chardonnay grape; the first being a **Journey's End V1 Chardonnay 2024** [13.5%, £16.49] with a pale gold in colour. This fruit-forward wine had been fermented in French oak, concrete eggs, and clay amphorae and had citrusy-like aromas. On the palate there was a crisp citrus element leading to a creamy vanilla and minerally finish.

Its partner was a **Journey's End Destination Chardonnay 2023** [13.5%, £26.81], another of the winery's acclaimed Flagship wines. made according to Burgundian methods with 10 months in French oak with lees stirred regularly, it had flavours of citrus, tropical and stone fruit accompanied by a toasty buttery feel in the mouth. There was also a crisp natural minerality on the creamy finish with a hint of smoky spice. It was well-liked even by lovers of white Burgundy!

Our first red wine of the evening was next - **Journey's End Owl's Nest Pinot Noir Coastal Region 2023** [12.5%, £12.00] that was cherry red in colour and translucent. The cherry element recurred in the aromas with notes of plum. Light-medium in weight, the flavours of cherry and plum continued onto the palate, accompanied by a well-balanced acidity and tannins with a lingering finish.

Next came a **Journey's End V3 Cabernet Franc 2022** [14%, £15.47] that had a dark-cherry colour. Floral aromas predominated leading to red and blackberry flavours on the palate of this full-bodied wine. There was a lively acidity with silky tannins in this well-liked wine.

It was followed by a **Journey's End V2 Merlot 2020** [14.5%, £17.15], another wine benefiting from even longer immersion in French oak - between 12-18 months. It had predictable aromas of cherry, plum and blackcurrant with some undertones of eucalyptus and mint. There were also elements of vanilla, toast and nutmeg in this well-balanced enjoyable wine.

The penultimate wine was a **Journey's End V5 Shiraz 2021** [14%, £18.59] that had a very dense red/black cherry colour, reflective of the grape's skin colour. There were aromas of cherry, ripe olives on the nose with a hint of cinnamon spice. The tannins were soft and silky - so most pleasant on the palate: it was a big, soft-hearted and enjoyable wine with a lengthy finish.

Our evening ended with yet another Premium and Flagship wine, the first blended red of the night - a **Journey's End The Cape Doctor Cabernet Sauvignon 2021** [14.5%, £25.64] that takes its name from the cleansing benefits of the winds from the Southern Atlantic. This was a 45/31/8/8/8% blend of Cabernet Sauvignon/ Merlot/ Cabernet Franc/ Malbec/ Petit Verdot made in Bordeaux style. It was lush and fleshy on the nose with fruitcake richness and accompanying spices. There was a voluptuous richness in the mouth too, with a long and complex finish, helped by 22 months in barrel.

Members are most grateful to Aoife for her selection of the Gabb family wines. It was a wonderful introduction to the Journey's End Brand and what an English family has achieved in the world of South African Wines!