



Vesuvio History and Heritage

In the 1950's, Italian immigrant, Baron Andreis purchased the farm called Agterdam in the Paarl region of the Western Cape on which he planted olive trees. Some 20 years later, the farm was bought by the Cape Town-based Clifford Harris Civil Engineering group along with Olienhof Farm near Wellington. Dr Carlo Castiglione was appointed as General Manager.

Dr Carlo Castiglione, born in Naples, came to South Africa in 1967. He had majored in olive culture at the University of Naples, and in 1968 was appointed as the research professional officer in charge of olive culture at the Fruit and Food Technology Research Institute, Pomology Department, Stellenbosch. Dr Castiglione introduced intensive planting of olive trees, irrigation by micro-sprinklers and the first continuous cycle olive oil extraction plant. In the early 1970's, he left to pursue other interests.

Between 1977 and 1996, the farms were sadly neglected. However, a new era began in 1996 when the farms were purchased by the Dotoli family (an Italian family from Naples) who were experts in the olive oil industry. Mr Arturo Dotoli had previously invested in South Africa and owned Adot Running Waters, his sub-tropical fruit farms in Hazyview, Mpumalanga. Coming from a family who had been farming olives in Sorrento, on the slopes of the Vesuvio Volcano in Naples for many generations, Arturo was naturally drawn to these olive farms in South Africa where they were already producing Extra Virgin Olive Oil according to the best Italian traditions. Arturo had a special affection for the Cape and decided to rename his new farms after his family's first olive oil operation. The farms were called Sorrento and Positano, and the company he established is now known as Vesuvio Estates.

Arturo and Carlo Castiglione were known to each other in Italy, and Arturo was delighted to re-instate his friend as General Manager. The farming operation began in earnest; the existing buildings were given a facelift, and a new office building was constructed, followed shortly by a processing plant. The trees responded generously to good orchard management and attention, and there was a dramatic increase in production. In 1997, the first Vesuvio Extra Virgin Olive Oil was extracted using a Rapanelli continuous cycle extraction plant.

In 2001, Arturo decided to further develop and expand the farms. Gert and Alinda van Dyk joined Arturo and the Vesuvio team. During this year an additional 15000 olive trees were planted and in 2003, Carlo retired and remained part of Vesuvio Estates as an advisor. The following year, great developments took place when more land was made available for new plantations and the olive oil factory was expanded. A "giant monster", state-of-the-art extraction plant was commissioned from Rapanelli and installed into the newly upgraded factory. It is the largest extraction plant of its type in the Southern Hemisphere. An additional farm bordering Positano went on the market and was purchased with no hesitation by Arturo. Named Amalfi, this farm was prepared for further development and planting of olive trees.

During 2005, Vesuvio Estates planted another 35 000 olive trees. Arturo also had a passion for table olives, and in 2006 a new factory for table olives was established on the farm. Alinda was put in charge of the new operation and worked directly with Arturo to keep their recipe a secret and to ensure the quality of their olives.

In 2007, Arturo Dotoli passed away leaving the wonderful legacy of Vesuvio Estates as the largest Extra Virgin Olive Oil producer in South Africa. His son Antonio then took over and we are proud today to be making a superior quality, award-winning, authentic South African product using the best Italian tradition and know-how.

Truly South African with an Italian tradition

