



LIQUID GOLD MALUS TERROIR SPIRIT

"It's not bad, it's wicked!" say Mark Drewell and Tim George, two of the partners in the Elgin Distilling Company, which recently released SA's first terroir spirit. Called Malus, recalling the English word "malice", the name is derived from *Malus domestica*, the taxonomic designation for apples grown in the Western Cape's Elgin Valley, from which the spirit is made. And if it has connotations of Eve tempting Adam in the Garden of Eden, then Drewell and George are fine with that.

Total production comprises just one thousand 750ml decanters selling for R6 840 each, inclusive of delivery in SA. Drewell explains that Malus is intended to stand alongside the other great terroir spirits of the world, namely Cognac, Calvados from Normandy and single malt whisky from Scotland. What is a terroir spirit? Not only must it be great

quality, but it must be unique to a particular region.

While Malus and Calvados are both made from apples, Drewell insists that this is the only commonality. Malus is made from sweet eating apples while Calvados is from bitter cider apples; Malus is distilled in a Cognac-style pot still for extra complexity while Calvados is made in a column still; and finally Malus is matured in young French oak barrels to impart smoothness and spice, while Calvados typically goes into very old barrels that have much less impact on the end product.

Malus is very much a digestif, to be served at the end of a good meal. To describe it as having a fragrant nose is an understatement: it fair shouts its apple origins from the glass, while on the palate it is rich and rewarding. It has pleasing viscous texture and though

possessing a standard alcohol by volume of 43%, does not appear overly spirituous or "hot". Drewell advises that while it can be drunk neat, the addition of a little water helps lift the nose and, for those possessing more sensitive palates, cut the alcohol.

As you might expect for nearly R7K a pop, there's no skimping on the packaging: the decanters are all handmade by master glass-blower David Reade, and each one comes in an intricately designed wooden case termed a Sepal, which comes apart much like a flower blooming. In addition, each Malus decanter is accompanied by a richly illustrated hardcover book which takes the owner through the story of the spirit's creation.

CHRISTIAN EEDES

For more information visit
www.malus.co.za

