MINISTER
AGRICULTURE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X250, Pretoria, 0001; 20 Steve Biko Street, Pretoria, 0001
Tel.: 012 319 6000; Email: queries@nda.gov.za; Web: www.nda.gov.za

MEDIA STATEMENT **11 December 2025**

Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen pays tribute to Cap Classique pioneer, Achim von Arnim

It is with great sadness that I learned of the passing of Achim von Arnim, a man whose name is woven into the story of South African wine. As the pioneer of Cap Classique under the Pierre Jourdan label, Achim did far more than craft exceptional wines; he shifted the trajectory of an entire industry. With his curiosity, uncompromising standards and unmistakable flair, he helped South Africa believe that our sparkling wines could stand proudly among the world's best. Many producers who have gone on to build their own legacies will quietly tell you that they learned their courage, their palate, or their sense of potential from Achim.

Achim leaves behind a hole far larger than the vineyards he tended to or the cellars he had built. He leaves behind a community of winemakers, farm workers, restauranteurs and loyal customers who were shaped by his generosity and his irrepressible spirit. Furthermore, he leaves behind memories shared around countless family tables where many a Sunday lunch across South Africa was made a little more special by opening a bottle of his iconic Haute Cabrière Chardonnay Pinot Noir.

On behalf of the Department of Agriculture, I extend my sincere condolences to his family, to the team at Haute Cabrière, and to all who walked part of their professional journey with him. South Africa has lost a true legend; however, the imprint Achim von Arnim leaves on our wine culture will endure for generations.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Ms Joylene van Wyk
Director: Media Liaison Ministry of Agriculture
Email: joylenev@nda.gov.za

Mobile: 083 292 7399 or 063 298 5661

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