



WWF
Conservation
Champion



CHAMPIONS OF THE CAPE WINELANDS

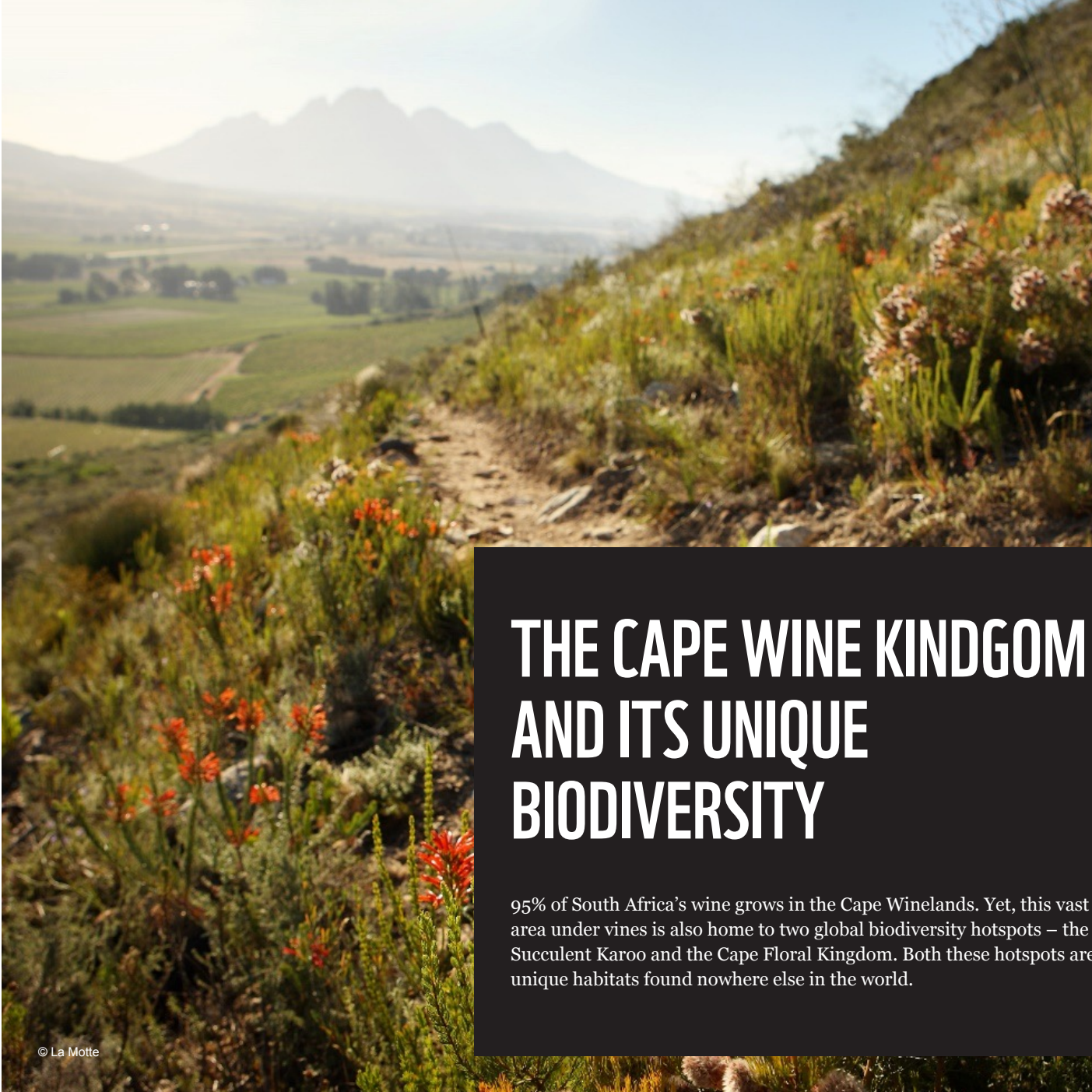
CONNECT. EXPLORE. PROTECT. SUPPORT.

FARMING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

Sitting at the very tip of Africa, South Africa is home to some of the world's most abundant biodiversity. Among the top ten most biodiverse countries in the world, it has rich and unique biomes, including the Cape Floral Kingdom and Succulent Karoo.

South Africa has been blessed with a diverse landscape that supports an incredible variety of plants and animals – many found nowhere else on Earth – and provides us with essential goods and services, from the rich soil to clean, fresh water. However, with an ever-growing demand for our natural resources, we are placing these life-giving systems at risk of collapse and compromising their life-supporting function.

As a proactive environmental organisation, WWF South Africa is working holistically to face these challenges by inspiring and empowering individuals and organisations to deliver lasting positive outcomes for people and nature in the places we work and from the priority environmental challenges we focus on.



THE CAPE WINE KINGDOM AND ITS UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY

95% of South Africa's wine grows in the Cape Winelands. Yet, this vast area under vines is also home to two global biodiversity hotspots – the Succulent Karoo and the Cape Floral Kingdom. Both these hotspots are unique habitats found nowhere else in the world.

FYNBOS

The Cape Floral Kingdom, located in the country's southwestern corner, is the smallest and the richest of the Earth's six floral kingdoms. Home to nearly half of South Africa's plant species, its characteristic vegetation – commonly known as fynbos – is found nowhere else in the world. Less than 20% of this region is qualified as “pristine”, which only exists in disconnected fragments that cannot maintain the necessary ecological processes required for species' survival.

A perfect example is the beautiful symbiosis between the Cape sugarbird and mature protea bushes. The Cape sugarbird derives sustenance from the flowers of the protea, and this indigenous plant depends on these endemic birds for pollination. The two species are so interlinked that the birds begin nesting as soon as the proteas start to bloom so as to ensure their food source for both adults and chicks is secured. In turn, the protea flowers provide nectar for the adult birds and also attract insects, which the adults then capture to feed their chicks.

This symbiotic relationship is encapsulated in the WWF Conservation Champions logo which shows the Cape sugarbird and protea. This is in recognition of the landowners' commitment to farming with nature and playing their part in conserving the critical habitats for these majestic long-tailed birds and many other creatures within the Cape Floral Kingdom.





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SUCCULENT KAROO

The Succulent Karoo is an international biodiversity hotspot, extending from the southwest of South Africa through the northwestern areas and into southern Namibia. Home to over 6 000 plant species – 40% found nowhere else in the world – this unique semi-arid ecoregion is genuinely a biodiversity treasure. It contains about one-third of the world's approximately 10 000 succulent species. Yet the Succulent Karoo's incredible natural diversity is under pressure from mining, unsustainable agriculture and poorly planned grazing.

A BETTER FUTURE FOR BIODIVERSITY AND WINE

In the early 2000s, the local wine industry was growing rapidly, and the vineyard footprint was expanding into highly threatened conservation-worthy habitats.

This spurred a unique and powerful partnership between the conservation sector and the wine industry. Because the wine farm owners are the custodians of the land, they are the ones who can ensure that they farm in harmony with nature and ensure that the natural areas are protected to continue providing essential natural services.

The farms reduce the impact of their farming practices on the environment by implementing regenerative and sustainable farming practices. The focus is to promote healthy soils through planting an array of soil nurturing cover crops and promoting natural corridors between the agricultural landscape that, in turn, provide habitat for pollinators and natural predators. The Conservation Champions farms also conserve their natural habitats by removing water-thirsty invasive alien vegetation, restoring the natural vegetation and, as a result, improving their water quality and quantity.

With a changing climate and ever-increasing input costs, there is also a need to collaborate with landscape partners to address shared-risks and opportunities, such as alien plant clearing, biomass management, restoration and preventing wildfires. WWF and the Conservation Champions form strategic partnerships with conservation bodies like CapeNature and conservancies as well as governmental institutions and industry associations to support the impact at scale and for long-term sustainability.



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MEET OUR CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS

A WWF Conservation Champion is an environmental leader in the wine or fruit industry. These farms have committed to following best practices in water stewardship and energy efficiency and conserving a portion of their natural land. WWF provides advisory support to eligible and committed farms as part of a biodiversity and water stewardship programme. It recognises those committed to farming with nature, not against it.

As well as working closely with more than 55 Conservation Champions, WWF also engages with conservation partners, government, wine industry bodies, retailers and consumers.





Above, from top: Green Mountain Trail hike;
Paul Cluver mountain bike route; Bartinney fynbos
and wine pairing

Right: Lourensford Vinifari





BE A CHAMPION SUPPORTER

Support nature and conservation-committed farms by supporting the Conservation Champions.

As consumers, we all need to contribute to promoting healthier ecosystems which include more natural pollinators, improved water quality and flourishing habitats that are home to an array of native fauna and flora. By choosing a Conservation Champion wine you directly support the farms that are committed to conserving our natural heritage. You can also enjoy the variety of eco-activities on the Champion farms, from fynbos walking trails and cycling tracks, to seasonal menus at scenic restaurants and special places to relax. Download the Champion wine farm app to find out more:



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  Conservation Champions

 #followthesugarbird

 #ConservationChampion

We acknowledge the funding support from Pamela and Neville Isdell since 2019 and are grateful for their commitment to supporting the Conservation Champions until 2025.



For Nature. For You.

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SUPPORT WWF'S CONSERVATION CHAMPIONS AND PURCHASE WITH PURPOSE



Working towards lasting, positive outcomes for people and nature in the places where we work and from priority environmental challenges we focus on.

FOR NATURE. FOR YOU.

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