

BRINGING HOME THE BACON

IT'S BEEN FOUR AND A HALF YEARS SINCE **NIKKI FRIEDMAN** TOOK OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF HER FAMILY WINE ESTATE IN FRANSCHHOEK. ALTHOUGH IT CAN BE A CHALLENGE TO RUN MÔRESON WHILE RAISING YOUNG TWINS, SHE'S PASSIONATE ABOUT WHAT SHE DOES



The farm has been in my family since I was three. We moved to Franschhoek when I was 10 and I went to school just down the road. It's got my entire childhood tied up in it, so it's a very nostalgic place for me. But, I remember being 18 and swearing I was never coming back to Franschhoek! What you want when you're 18 and when you're in your late twenties or early thirties and have children are very different things. You don't see that when you're 18.

My dad has always had other business interests so this was a lifestyle farm. He had a long-term couple who managed it, but they moved on and, one day, he suddenly woke up and the farm was just not in a good way. He was incredibly busy and was overseas at the time so he couldn't come and sort it out. He put the farm on the market under one condition: if I could get it into better shape within a year and it hadn't yet sold, we'd take it off the market. And we're still here four and a half years later!

It's not like I suddenly woke up and said, "Yes, of course, I'll make the wine and, of course, I'll manage the vineyards." That's a four-year degree and hugely scientific. But the operations management that I ended up taking on has been incredibly rewarding. It's also about learning to manage your way through procrastination when you really don't feel like it. You know those projects you don't want to do? I have them and I sit there telling myself to do it, do it, do it!

Bacon's a running joke in my family. We're Jewish but we're not practising. In our house – we're not kosher either, obviously – my dad's always spoken about bacon like it's not pork. We love bacon. It's really delicious, you can eat it by itself, it makes everything better. In bacon we trust. You know in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* where the answer to everything is 42? I believe the answer to everything is bacon.

One night, I was pondering on the Wine of the Month Club and

I thought, "Wouldn't it be cool to have a Bacon of the Month Club?" That's where it started. You can subscribe for one month, three months, six months or a year. Each month, you'll get 500g of bacon – developed and produced by Neil 'His Royal Porkness' Jewell (of Bread & Wine fame) – delivered to a designated collection point near you. So far, it's done very nicely for us and it's certainly captured people's imaginations. We get the nicest feedback from customers: fabulous phone calls or messages to say that we made their day. It's an amazing experience to have that kind of brand. **I'd like to expand Bacon of the Month Club beyond South Africa.** It has done amazingly well and I think it has fared better than we thought it would. I'd also like to see the farm go from strength to strength. I'd like to be sitting here, 10 years from now, looking back at how it evolved, while still maintaining the integrity of the past.

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