

# THE WINE ECONOMIST



## **An Urban Winery in La Jolla**

There actually are sharks in South Africa — the Great Whites that you see on TV during the Discovery Channel's Shark Week. I first met Lowell Jooste in South Africa — his family owned the historic Klein Constantia winery for twenty years before moving to La Jolla, California in 2012.

Jooste's wine is made up north in Napa and Sonoma, but as the video above shows, he trucks the barrels down south to beautiful La Jolla where he operates L.J. Crafted Wine, a kind of cross between a brew pub and an urban winery. The wines are drawn straight from the barrels and tanks using a propriety technology that keeps them fresh and clean. Customers can drink hand crafted single-vineyard wine by the glass, fill the elegant wine "growlers" or take away cork-sealed bottles.

Barrel tasting on La Jolla Avenue. Who could resist the opportunity to drink fine wine in an elegant yet casual atmosphere like this? Add in cheese and meat platters and finish off with a glass of 2009 Vin de Constance from Klein Constantia (of course). Perfect.

Lowell Jooste's La Jolla winery raises the wine bar bar, if you know what I mean, giving wine consumers the sort of intimate experience that beer lovers sometimes find at their favorite local brew pubs. The concept and design are innovative and so is the clever barrel thief device that makes it all work. Tests show that the last glass from a barrel is as fresh as the first, which is quite an achievement.

If the goal is to draw upon wine traditions to make meeting with friends for a glass of wine as appealing as hanging out at a brew pub, this might be an answer. It is certainly going to be on my itinerary the next time we are in La Jolla!