



**CAPE
BORDEAUX
RED BLEND
REPORT
2018**

Compiled by Winemag.co.za

KEY FINDINGS

When the panel had concluded the judging process that would form the basis of this year's Cape Bordeaux Red Blend Report, the general feeling was that the overall quality of the single-variety Cabernet Sauvignon category reviewed earlier in the year was better. Compare average scores of the two tastings, however, and there really isn't much in it – 89.1 on the 100-point quality scale for blends vs 89.3 for Cabs.

Averages aside, why might blends appear to be that little bit less convincing than straight Cab right at the moment? One possible explanation is that winemakers have greater clarity of purpose when they set out to make single-variety Cab while there's still too much blending for blending's sake when it comes to Cape Bordeaux – many examples incorporate all five of the Bordeaux varieties when perhaps leaving out one or two might make for a better end-result.

In any event, this was another terrific showing for Stellenbosch with 22 of the 33 wines to rate 90-plus from this district. Somewhat surprisingly, however, only 30 wines from the total line-up were from the much vaunted 2015 vintage, 15 of which rated 90-plus.

Cape Bordeaux red blends is a category that demands a premium (the average cellar-door price of the 33 top performing wines is R372 a bottle with Rousseau Babette 2015 at R120 being the cheapest and MR de Compostella 2014 at R1 265 the most expensive) and most producers are, as ever, attempting to come up with something suitably impressive in terms of weight and power.

The wines which the panel felt were most successful were those that showed fruit concentration and tannic structure without forfeiting freshness and balance. Unfortunately, however, in attempting to create something exceptional, too many winemakers end up with something overblown – the general trend has long been towards riper fruit in order to achieve richness but the panel discerned quite a few wines which were unduly sweet; in a similar vein, extraction regimes that are intended to lend plushness to a wine very often seem counter-productive in that they lend a hardness to the tannins and hence an astringency to the finish.

There were also a sub-group of wines which were more lighter bodied, their aromas and flavours more towards the red fruit end of the spectrum. These tended to be quite appealing but not necessarily super-complex and the panel was wary not to over-reward them so as not to be guilty of the score inflation that is so rampant in other quarters.

It bears mentioning that in addition to the 81 entries received from 64 local producers, we included a ringer in the form of Bordeaux Second Growth Leoville Poyferre 2014, this wine rating 88 points (available from Wine Cellar at R1 405 a bottle). What was instructive about this wine was just how extra dense the fruit was and how compact the tannins were in relation to the South African wines making it that much more inaccessible.

The producer of the wine judged best overall won a new 300-litre Selection barrel worth €955 (equivalent to R15 175 at the time of writing) from Tonnellerie Sylvain – this went to Zorgvliet for the Richelle 2016.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judging panel was chaired by myself and further consisted of two trusted colleagues, namely Roland Peens and James Pietersen, both of Wine Cellar, a Cape Town firm which brokers and cellars fine wine. We tasted blind, ratings done according to the 100-point system. Final scores were awarded on the basis of discussion that involved retasting where necessary rather than relying solely on arithmetic averaging.

Christian Eedes,
Editor, Winemag.co.za

TASTING NOTES

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Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2016

Price: R325

Total production: 64 000 bottles

Abv: 14.5%

69% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Cabernet Franc, 12% Petit Verdot, 3% Merlot and 3% Malbec. Matured for 16 months in French oak, 50% new. Red and black berries, some herbal character and attractive oak on the nose while the palate shows excellent fruit concentration, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and gently savoury. A powerful wine but this has been achieved without sacrificing composure – should mature well.

94

Mulderbosch Faithful Hound 2015

Price: R170

Total production: 84 000 bottles

Abv: 14.5%

32% Cabernet Franc, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 9% Petit Verdot and 7% Malbec. Matured for 18 months in French oak, 30% new. The nose shows top notes of flowers and fresh herbs before red and black berries plus subtle oak spice. The palate is marked by lovely fruit purity, fresh acidity and particularly fine tannins. Polished in the best sense.

94

Zorgvliet Richelle 2016 – **BEST WINE OVERALL**

Price: R290

Total production: 4 567 bottles and 100 magnums

Abv: 14.6%

47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Cabernet Franc, 12% Merlot and 12% Petit Verdot. Matured for 18 months in French oak barrels, 60% new before a further four months in tank. Red and black fruit, a subtle leafy quality plus vanilla and oak spice. Full but balanced – plenty of sweet, juicy fruit on entry while the extraction is very well managed, the wine having a creamy texture and lots of length. Most accomplished.

93

Ernie Els Signature 2014

Price: R785

Total production: 12 000 bottles

Abv: 14.96%

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Malbec and 5% Petit Verdot. Matured for 20 months in French oak, 80% new. An exotic nose of black fruit, some leafy character, olive tapenade, earth and spice. Extremely rich and full with succulent fruit, fresh acidity and a long, dry finish. Plenty of wow factor.

93

MR de Compostella 2014

Price: R1 265

Total production: 7 200 bottles

Abv: 14.5%

41% Cabernet Franc, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Malbec, 14% Merlot and 9% Petit Verdot. Each variety matured separately for 12 months in barrel, the blended wine for another 12 months, a third each first-, second- and third-fill.

Red and black fruit, a hint of leafiness and pencil shavings on the nose. Impressive depth of fruit, fresh acidity and tannins that are grippy without being astringent – very well balanced and particularly long on the finish. Classy stuff.

93

Muratie Ansela van de Caab 2015

Price: R360

Total production: 15 500 bottles

Abv: 14.1%

59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 8% Petit Verdot. Each variety matured separately for 16 months, the blended wine for another six months, 50% new. Red and black fruit, fresh herbs, earth and attractive oak spice on the nose. Really well structured with great depth of fruit, lovely freshness and firm but fine tannins - rather tight now, this needs time to realise its potential.

BUYING GUIDE: CELLAR-DOOR PRICES FOR WINES RATED 90 - 92

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Miravel 1952 Family Blend 2015 – R175
Fairview Drie Pape Fontein Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2016 – R200
Tokara Director's Reserve 2014 – R400
Fleur du Cap Laszlo 2015 – R415
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2015 – R415

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Spier Creative Block 5 2015 – R159
Idiom Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Cabernet Franc Petit Verdot Malbec 2015 – R300

90

Rousseau Babette 2015 – R120
Diemersdal Private Collection 2013 – R150
Warwick Three Cape Ladies 2015 – R160
Raats Red Jasper 2015 – R195
Leopard Frog Vineyards Tantra 2006 – R199.95
Louis57 Jasoma Conclusion 2016 (Boschkloof) – R200
Creation Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Petit Verdot 2016 – R202
Vrede en Lust Boet Erasmus 2014 – R205
DeMorgenzon Maestro Red 2016 – R215
Bartinney Elevage 2011 – R276
Simonsig Tiara 2015 – R325
Haskell IV 2012 – R350
Warwick Trilogy 2015 – R350
Overgaauw Tria Corda 2014 – R388
Fleur du Cap Laszlo 2014 – R430
Babylonstoren Nebukadnesar 2016 – R498
Keet First Verse 2013 – R385
Lanzerac Le Général 2015 – R500
Vondeling Philosophie 2015 – R720
MR de Compostella 2015 – R1 150

COMPLETE SCORES A – Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue L'Amour Toujours 2014	Banghoek	89
Babylonstoren Nebukadnesar 2016	Simonsberg-Paarl	90
Bartinney Elevage 2011	Stellenbosch	90
Bartinney Elevage 2012	Stellenbosch	88
Benguela Cove Collage Red Blend 2015	Walker Bay	85
Beyerskloof Field Blend 2014	Stellenbosch	87
Buitenverwachting Christine 2012	Constantia	89
Cavalli Warlord 2016	Western Cape	88
Conradie Penhill Saw Edge Peak 2015	Western Cape	87
Constantia Glen Five 2013	Constantia	89
Constantia Glen Three 2015	Constantia	87
Creation Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Petit Verdot 2016	Walker Bay	90
Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2016	Stellenbosch	94
DeMorgenzon Maestro Red 2016	Stellenbosch	90
Diemersdal Private Collection 2011	Durbanville	88
Diemersdal Private Collection 2013	Durbanville	90
Diemersdal Private Collection 2016	Durbanville	87
Eikendal Classique 2015	Stellenbosch	88
Ernie Els Signature 2014	Stellenbosch	93
Fairview Drie Papen Fontein Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2016	Darling	92
Fleur du Cap Laszlo 2014	Coastal Region	90
Fleur du Cap Laszlo 2015	Coastal Region	92
Gabriëlskloof The Blend 2016	Bot River	89
Glen Carlou Grand Classique 2015	Paarl	88
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2015	Constantia	92
Groenland Steenkamp 2014	Stellenbosch	88
Haskell IV 2012	Stellenbosch	90
Haskell IV 2013	Stellenbosch	88
Holden Manz Big G 2014	Franschhoek	88
Idiom Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Cabernet Franc Petit Verdot 2013	Stellenbosch	88
Idiom Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Cabernet Franc Petit Verdot 2014	Stellenbosch	88
Idiom Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Cabernet Franc Petit Verdot Malbec 2015	Stellenbosch	91
Idiom Vin Rouge 2014	Stellenbosch	87
Jordan Cobblers Hill 2015	Stellenbosch	88
Keet First Verse 2013	Stellenbosch	90
KWV The Mentors Orchestra 2014	Western Cape	87
La Bri Affinity 2014	Franschhoek	88
Laibach The Ladybird Red 2016	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	89
Lanzerac Le Général 2015	Jonkershoek Valley	90
Leopard Frog Vineyards Tantra 2006	Stellenbosch	90

Leipzig Grand Master 2016	Coastal Region	88
Leoville Poyferre 2014	St Julien	88
Longridge Eliptika 2015	Stellenbosch	86
Louis57 Jasoma Conclusion 2016 (Boschkloof)	Western Cape	90
Meerlust Rubicon 2015	Stellenbosch	88
Miravel 1952 Family Blend 2015	Stellenbosch	92
Mitre's Ede Sholto 2014	Simonsberg-Paarl	87
Morgenster 2012	Stellenbosch	89
Morgenster Estate Reserve 2013	Stellenbosch	89
MR de Compostella 2014	Stellenbosch	93
MR de Compostella 2015	Stellenbosch	90
Mulderbosch Faithful Hound 2015	Stellenbosch	94
Muratie Anselva van de Caab 2015	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	93
Nitida Calligraphy 2015	Durbanville	88
Oldenburg Rhodium 2015	Stellenbosch	88
Overgaauw DC Classic 2013	Stellenbosch	86
Overgaauw Tria Corda 2014	Stellenbosch	90
Raats Red Jasper 2015	Stellenbosch	90
Raats Jasper Red Blend 2016	Stellenbosch	88
Rainbow's End Family Reserve 2014	Banghoek	88
Rainbow's End Family Reserve 2015	Banghoek	88
Rietvallei Estéanna 2015	Robertson	88
Rousseau Babette 2015	Western Cape	90
Sir Robert Stanford The Hansom 2015	Walker Bay	85
Silver Myn Argentum 2017	Stellenbosch	89
Simonsig Tiara 2014	Stellenbosch	89
Simonsig Tiara 2015	Stellenbosch	90
Spier Creative Block 5 2015	Coastal Region	91
Stellenrust Timeless 2015	Stellenbosch	88
Thelema Rabelais 2014	Stellenbosch	88
The High Road Director's Reserve 2014	Stellenbosch	88
Tokara Director's Reserve 2014	Stellenbosch	92
Uva Mira O.T.V. 2015	Stellenbosch	88
Vondeling Philosophie 2014	Voor Paardeberg	87
Vondeling Philosophie 2015	Voor Paardeberg	90
Vrede en Lust Boet Erasmus 2014	Simonsberg-Paarl	90
Vriesenhof Kallista 2013	Stellenbosch	89
Warwick Three Cape Ladies 2015	Stellenbosch	90
Warwick Trilogy 2015	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	90
Waverley Hills De Huijsbosch 2016	Coastal Region	88

Zevenwacht Reserve 2014	Stellenbosch	88
Zorgvliet Richelle 2016	Banghoek	94