



**CAPE  
WHITE  
BLEND  
REPORT  
2018**

Compiled by [Winemag.co.za](http://Winemag.co.za)

## KEY FINDINGS

This is the third year that the Cape White Blend Report has been compiled, and while the number of entries is always small – 43 from 36 producers in 2016, 38 from 31 producers in 2017 and now 38 from 32 producers – we continue to believe that this is an important category.

To re-iterate, we define a Cape White Blend as a wine made from any combination of varieties as long as it includes a significant Chenin Blanc component, specifically more than 15% and less than 85%. Chenin is our most planted variety by far (17 543ha in the ground at the end of 2017, this making up 18.6% of the national vineyard) and we should find ways to celebrate it.

What was the panel's impression this time around? Once again, there was a sense of adventure that pervaded much of what was in the line-up, producers clearly relishing the freedom to experiment that this relatively new category allows. "It would seem that everyone's having a lot of fun making these wines but I'm not sure the results are all equally successful," noted James Pietersen.

In fact, Cape White Blends are particularly tricky to judge because there aren't established aesthetics that apply as is the case with Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc, for instance. Aromatic and flavour profiles can be unfamiliar and, in some instances, downright challenging. In this regard, Roland Peens noted clumsy oaking and excessively oxidative vinification as leading to wines with "unattractive traits".

Better barrel management is surely something that will come about relatively quickly but oxidative winemaking is very much in vogue at the moment and is more contentious. Controlled oxidation is done to add complexity and richness but too many wines seemed to have sacrificed nuance and any sort of freshness. There was, the panel felt, a fine line between brave and foolhardy winemaking.

When everything comes together for good, however, the resulting wines are particularly rewarding. Not perhaps everyday drinking but, we would argue, indispensable for those looking for a deeper insight into what the Cape winelands truly have to offer.

For those interested in the stats, 17 wines (44.7% of the line-up) rated 90 points or higher on the 100-point quality scale and the average score was 89.3. Average price of the top 17 was R178 a bottle, indicating that most producers believe that these wines are worth some sort of premium. We included a ringer in the form of the Chapoutier Belleruche Blanc 2016. From the Côtes du Rhône, this wine obviously does not contain Chenin Blanc but is broadly similar in style to what many are trying to achieve with Cape White Blends – of modest reputation, it still managed to rate 90 points and serves as a reminder that it's competitive out there...

## **JUDGING PROCEDURES**

The judging panel was chaired by me and further consisted of two trusted colleagues, namely Roland Peens and James Pietersen, both of Wine Cellar, Cape Town merchants and cellarers of 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**

**94**

Boplaas Gamka Branca Reserve 2017

Price: R150

Total production: 3 972 bottles

Abv: 13.25%

49% Chenin Blanc, 20% Chardonnay, 14% Grenache Blanc, 9% Viognier and 8% Verdelho sourced from across the Western Cape. Fermented and matured for nine months in barrel. Citrus, apple, herbs and a little earthiness on the nose. The palate is light and very fresh with a savoury finish – has a great energy about it and comes across as very elegant.

**94**

Org de Rac Die Waghuis 2017

Price: R140

Total production: 6 900 bottles

Abv: 13.34%

51% Verdelho, 28% Roussanne and 24% Chenin Blanc. Fermentation involved new and older barrels plus staves. Cut apple, peach, some nuttiness and spice on the nose. The palate is rich and broad with plenty of flavour – good fruit weight plus a nice line of acidity. A very good example of wine made in a more oxidative style.

**94**

The Fledge & Co. Vagabond 2017

Price: R170

Total production: 7 476 bottles

Abv: 13.16%

54% Chenin blanc, 18% Chardonnay, 12% Grenache Blanc, 8% Verdelho, 4% Viognier and 4% Roussanne sourced from across the Western Cape. Fermented and matured for nine months in barrel. A herbal top note before citrus and peach plus some earthiness on the nose. Rich, full and rather forceful on the palate – concentrated fruit and punchy acidity before a savoury finish. Lots going on.

**94**

Van Wyk Family Wines Olivia Grace 2017

Price: R220

Total production: 4 148 bottles

Abv: 13.5%

56% Chenin blanc, 23% Riesling, 19% Chardonnay and 2% Viognier sourced from across the Western Cape. Matured for seven months in a combination of 10% new oak, 70% old oak and 20% concrete egg. A wonderfully complex nose – floral perfume, herbs and hay before pear, peach, apple and spice. The palate shows concentrated fruit and racy acidity before a pithy finish. Pure, focused and altogether rather lovely.

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

### **92**

Painted Wolf Pictus VI 2017 – R130

Lammershoek The Mysteries White Blend 2017 – R185

### **91**

Malanot The Flower Pot White Blend 2014 – R90

Cavalli Cremello 2016 – R135

Darling Lime Kilns 2017 – R136

Muratie Laurens Campher 2017 – R150

Beaumont New Baby 2017 – R370

Springfontein Limestone Rocks Darkside of the Moon 2016 – R425

### **90**

Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2017 – R90

Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Rossouw's Heritage 2017 – R120

Painted Wolf Pictus V 2016 – R130

Fairview Nurok 2017 – R170

Chapoutier Belleruche Blanc 2016 – Wine Cellar price: R200

B Vintners Haarlem to Hope 2017 – R225

## COMPLETE SCORES A – Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Asara Vineyard Collection Cape Fusion White 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Babylonstoren Candide 2018	Simonsberg-Paarl	88
Beaumont New Baby 2017	Bot River	91
Bergsig Icarus 2015	Breedekloof	86
Bergsig Icarus 2016	Breedekloof	89
Bergsig Icarus 2017	Breedekloof	86
Boland Cellar One Formation 2018	Paarl	87
Boplaas Gamka Branca Reserve 2017	Western Cape	94
Bosman Family Vineyards Adama White 2017	Western Cape	88
B Vintners Haarlem to Hope 2017	Stellenbosch	90
Cavalli Cremello 2016	Stellenbosch	91
Chapoutier Belleruche Blanc 2016	Côtes du Rhône	90
Darling Lime Kilns 2017	Darling	91
DeMorgenzon Maestro White 2016	Stellenbosch	89
DeMorgenzon Maestro White 2017	Stellenbosch	89
Dornier Donatus White 2016	Stellenbosch	87
Fairview Nurok 2017	Paarl	90
Hazendal Christoffel Hazenwinkel The White 2017	Stellenbosch	87
Jacaranda Incognito Viognier Chenin Blanc 2017	Wellington	88
Joostenberg Fairhead 2017	Paarl	88
Lammershoek The Mysteries White Blend 2017	Swartland	92
L'Alliance 2017 (Doran Vineyards)	Voor Paardeberg	87
Leipzig White Leipzig 2018	Western Cape	87
Malanot The Flower Pot White Blend 2014	Western Cape	91
Meerhof Chenin Blanc Chardonnay Grenach Blanc Roussanne 2018	Swartland	88
Muratie Laurens Campher 2017	Stellenbosch	91
Opstal Carl Everson Cape White Blend 2017	Slanghoek	87
Org de Rac Die Waghuis 2017	Swartland	94
Painted Wolf Peloton Blanc 2016	Coastal Region	87
Painted Wolf Pictus V 2016	Coastal Region	90
Painted Wolf Pictus VI 2017	Coastal Region	92
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Rossouw's Heritage 2017	Western Cape	90
Springfontein Limestone Rocks Darkside of the Moon 2016	Walker Bay	91
The Fledge & Co. Vagabond 2015	Western Cape	88
The Fledge & Co. Vagabond 2017	Western Cape	94
The Tea Leaf 2017 (Boutinot)	Piekenierskloof	88
Van Wyk Family Wines Olivia Grace 2017	Western Cape	94
Vrede en Lust White Mischief 2018	Elgin	87
Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2017	Stellenbosch	90