



**10-YEAR-OLD  
WINE REPORT  
2019**

## INTRODUCTION

Just how well do modern-era South African wines perform as they get older? One of the most important measures of great wine is that it should be age-worthy, that is it should become more pleasurable and more interesting to drink with time in the bottle and the annual 10-Year-Old Wine Awards sets out to examine precisely this.

## KEY FINDINGS

The 2009 vintage is generally considered one of the greatest of the modern era – the 2008 winter was cold and wet facilitating good moisture reserves in the soil while unseasonably cool weather in late December and early January meant a late start to harvest. Fruit came into cellars in superb condition – ripe but with high acidities.

The high reputation of the vintage evidently meant that the industry was keen to strut its stuff and we had a very good turn-out of wines - 92 entries from 42 producers were received compared to 56 entries from 27 producers when the more challenging 2008 vintage was reviewed last year. Of the 94 entries, two were Méthode Cap Classique, 27 white wines, 58 reds, four Noble Late Harvest and one fortified.

Based on this tasting, 2009's much eulogized status is well deserved – 47.8% of the line-up (a total of 44 wines) rated 90 points or higher on the 100-point quality scale compared to 26.8% last year when the 2008 vintage featured and 26.4% in 2017 when the 2007 vintage featured.

Of the 44 wines to score 90-plus, the break-down was as follows: one MCC, 16 white wines, 22 red wines, four Noble Late Harvest and one fortified. In percentage terms, 59% of the white wines and 38% of the red wines rated 90-plus suggesting once again that litre for litre, South Africa makes better white wine than red.

Top performing cellars were Nederburg with seven wines to rate 90-plus, Tokara with five and Rustenberg with four. Tokara had highest scoring Chardonnay, White Blend and joint-highest Red Blend. Rustenberg, meanwhile, had the highest-scoring red wine overall, namely the Peter Barlow Cabernet Sauvignon 2009 on 94 points. The highest scoring wine overall was the Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2009 on 95 points. Remhoogte, who famously enjoyed the services of super-consultant Michel Rolland during the 2000s, had the highest-scoring Merlot on 93 points.

Perhaps what differentiates a great vintage from the merely ordinary is that there are more wines which undergo a transformation that renders them both more gratifying and more fascinating than they were on release – whereas in the case of 2008s tasted last year, I made the following observation that “the majority of the wines were merely holding up rather than having undergone some magical transformation... time, in most instances, bringing a certain mellowness rather than real complexity and refinement”, this time around there were wines that had gained significantly due to the passage of time.

As to what this tasting tells us about the state of the industry, the white wines were relatively uncontroversial in the sense that these had either made a decade in bottle or they hadn't. The reds, meanwhile, caused more debate among the panel. How much pyrazine character to tolerate was again an issue while acid additions in some wines seemed disjointed – panellist Roland Peens felt that there were too many wines where the strategy had been to pick as ripe as possible to achieve fruit power and then add acidity back in an attempt to lend freshness.

Other points of interest were 1) the highest scoring white wines (two on 92 and three on three on 93) were all closed with screwcap; 2) single-variety Merlot, often much maligned locally, enjoyed a

good showing with three of the six wines entered rating 90-plus; and 3) all four examples of Noble Late Harvest entered rated 90-plus – let's hope this wonderful category will always be with us despite no great popular following.

Boplaas, as the producer of the highest scoring wine overall, received a Victorinox Swiss Army INOX Carbon Men's Watch worth approximately R15 000 from retailer Luxury Time.

## **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, 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**

### **WHITE**

#### **93**

Raats Chenin Blanc 2009

Alc: 14% RS: 2.42g/l TA: 5.9g/l pH: 3.55

20% fermented and matured for nine months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 80% in tank. Some floral perfume before citrus, peach and some leesy complexity. Pure fruit, fresh acidity and a pithy finish. Flavourful and sophisticated.

#### **93**

Tokara Reserve Collection Stellenbosch Chardonnay 2009

Alc: 14.5% RS: 2.3g/l TA: 6.5g/l pH: 3.37

Fermented and matured in French oak, 35% new. Slight reduction before citrus, peach plus toasty oak – still remarkably primary. The palate is rich and full – good depth of fruit and bright acidity before a savoury finish. Flavourful and rather beguiling.

#### **93**

Tokara Director's Reserve White 2009

Alc: 14.04% RS: 2g/l TA: 7.7g/l pH: 3.3

70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Semillon. Fermented and matured for nine months in 400-litre French oak barrels, 26% new. A complex nose with top notes of fynbos, hay and floral perfume before lime, apple and peach plus a little oak spice. Lovely pure fruit, driving acidity and a long, dry finish. Rich but very well balanced.

### **RED**

#### **94**

Rustenberg Peter Barlow Cabernet Sauvignon 2009

Alc: 14.4% RS: 3g/l TA: 6.4g/l pH: 3.57

Matured for 24 months in French oak, 64% new. Intense black in colour. The nose shows dark fruit and attractive oak notes. The palate possesses extraordinary power – great fruit concentration, fresh acidity and firm but fine tannins. The finish, meanwhile, is long and salty. Excellent structure and still very youthful.

#### **93**

Haut Espoir Shiraz 2009

Alc: 14.9% RS: 3.5g/l TA: 6.3g/l pH: 3.73

Matured for 20 months in French oak. Light in colour. Red fruit, some floral perfume, some herbal character and spice on the nose. The palate is deep and alluring with sweet fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins, the finish very savoury – quite striking.

## 93

La Bri Affinitiy 2009

Alc: 14% RS: 1.5g/l TA: 6.1g/l pH: 3.7

50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot. Matured for 24 months in French oak, 66% new. Red and black fruit plus some floral perfume and oak spice. Rich and full on the palate with layers of flavour. Still very much intact.

## 93

Remhoogte Merlot 2009

Alc: 15% RS: 2.2g/l TA: 6.3g/l pH: 3.61

Matured for 15 months in French oak. Floral perfume and an attractive herbal note before red, black and blue fruit plus chocolate and oak spice on the nose. Rich and broad on the palate, the tannins starting to mellow nicely – flavourful and rewarding.

## 93

Tokara Director's Reserve Red 2009

Alc: 15.15% RS: 2.2g/l TA: 6.5g/l pH: 3.59

78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot, 5% Merlot and 5% Malbec. Matured for 20 months in French oak, 76% new. Intense black in colour. Cassis and some herbal character to go with toasty oak and spice. Pure fruit, fresh acidity and firm but fine tannins. Full, deep and still youthful.

## SWEET

### 93

Nederburg Private Bin Eminence Noble Late Harvest 2009

Alc: 10.59% RS: 225.6g/l TA: 7.5g/l pH: 3.4

Top notes of mint and other herbs to go with citrus and stone fruit on the nose. The palate is luscious but equally not short of freshness. Plenty of detail, the finish long and savoury.

## FORTIFIED

### 95

Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2009

Alc: 17.56% RS: 77.6g/l TA: 5.3g/l pH: 3.7

A blend of Touriga Nacional, Tinta Barocca and Souzão. A captivating nose of black and blue fruit, fresh herbs plus chocolate, liquorice and spice. The palate is rich but impeccably balanced with a lovely line of acidity and firm but fine tannins. Spirit addition very well handled. Sweet-sour and properly complex. Extraordinarily long finish.

## COMPLETE SCORES A – Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
<b>MCC</b>		
Desiderius Pongracz 2009	Western Cape	90
Guinevere MCC 2009 (Namaqua Wines)	Olifants River	88
<b>CHARDONNAY</b>		
Bergsig 2009	Breedekloof	88
Durbanville Hills Rhinofields 2009	Durbanville	86
Jordan Barrel Fermented 2009	Stellenbosch	90
La Bri 2009	Franschhoek	84
Neil Ellis Elgin 2009	Elgin	91
Rustenberg Five Soldiers 2009	Stellenbosch	90
Rustenberg Stellenbosch 2009	Stellenbosch	91
Tokara Reserve Collection Stellenbosch 2009	Stellenbosch	93
Vriesenhof 2009	Stellenbosch	88
<b>CHENIN BLANC</b>		
Raats 2009	Stellenbosch	93
Rudera Platinum 2009	Stellenbosch	89
Rudera Robusto 2009	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenrust 2009	Stellenbosch	90
<b>GRENACHE BLANC</b>		
The Foundry 2009	Coastal Region	87
<b>SAUVIGNON BLANC</b>		
Almenkerk 2009	Elgin	89
Durbanville Hills Biesjes Craal 2009	Durbanville	91
Highlands Road 2009	Elgin	92
Nederburg II Centuries 2009	Coastal Region	
Shannon 2009	Elgin	90
Tokara Reserve Collection Elgin 2009	Elgin	90
<b>SEMILLON</b>		
Haut Espoir 2009	Franschhoek	83
Steenberg 2009	Constantia	89
<b>WHITE BLENDS</b>		
Hildenbrand Emma and Asa 2009	Wellington	86
Naudé White 2009	Western Cape	91
Nederburg Ingenuity White 2009	Western Cape	91
Tokara Director's Reserve White 2009	Stellenbosch	93
Trizanne Signature Wines Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2009	Elim	92
<b>CABERNET FRANC</b>		
Raats 2009	Stellenbosch	89
<b>CABERNET SAUVIGNON</b>		
Allesverloren 2009 (Magnum)	Swartland	89
Alto 2009 (Magnum)	Stellenbosch	90
Bergsig 2009	Breedekloof	89
Fleur Du Cap Unfiltered 2009	Stellenbosch	89
Jordan 2009	Stellenbosch	88
Le Riche Reserve 2009	Stellenbosch	89
Plaisir De Merle 2009	Paarl	85
Meerlust 2009	Stellenbosch	90

Nederburg Private Bin R163 2009	Paarl	92
Zonnebloem Limited Edition 2009	Stellenbosch	89
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection 2009	Jonkershoek Valley	91
Rudera 2009	Western Cape	86
Rustenberg Peter Barlow 2009	Simonsberg- Stellenbosch	94
Stellenrust Douwe Steyn 2009	Stellenbosch	87
<b>GRENACHE</b>		
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection 2009	Piekenierskloof	91
<b>MERLOT</b>		
Eagles' Nest 2009	Constantia	92
Fleur Du Cap Unfiltered 2009	Stellenbosch	
La Bri 2009	Franschhoek	89
Nederburg Private Bin R181 2009	Groenekloof	90
Remhoogte 2009	Simonsberg- Stellenbosch	93
Shannon Mount Bullet 2009	Elgin	88
Steenberg 2009	Constantia	88
<b>PETIT VERDOT</b>		
KWV The Mentors 2009	Stellenbosch	90
<b>PINOTAGE</b>		
Spencer Bay 2009 (Namaqua Wines)	Olifants River	87
Vriesenhof 2009	Stellenbosch	90
Zonnebloem 2009	Stellenbosch	89
<b>PINOT NOIR</b>		
Vriesenhof 2009	Stellenbosch	89
<b>RED BLENDS</b>		
Beaumont Vitruvian 2009	Bot River	90
Buitenverwachting Christine 2009	Constantia	85
Creation Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon Petit Verdot 2009	Walker Bay	87
Creation Syrah Grenache 2009	Walker Bay	86
Fleur Du Cap Laszlo 2009	Coastal Region	91
Holden Manz Big G 2009	Franschhoek	88
Iona One Man Band Red 2009	Elgin	91
Ken Forrester The Gypsy 2009	Western Cape	88
KWV Roodeberg 2009	Western Cape	92
KWV The Mentors Canvas 2009	Coastal Region	88
La Bri Affinity 2009	Franschhoek	93
Lourens River Valley 2009 (Morgenster)	Stellenbosch	89
Luddite Saboteur 2009	Bot River	86
Meerlust Rubicon 2009	Stellenbosch	91
Morgenster 2009	Stellenbosch	87
Nederburg The Brew Master 2009	Western Cape	85
Plaisir de Merle Grand Plaisir 2009	Paarl	91
Rustenberg Stellenbosch John X Merriman 2009	Simonsberg- Stellenbosch	90
Steenberg Catharina 2009	Constantia	88
Stellenrust Timeless 2009	Stellenbosch	89
Tokara Director's Reserve Red 2009	Stellenbosch	93
Vriesenhof Kallista 2009	Stellenbosch	88



Zonnebloem Lauréat 2009	Stellenbosch	88
Zonnebloem Shiraz Mourvedre Viognier 2009	Stellenbosch	88
<b>SHIRAZ</b>		
Eagles' Nest 2009	Constantia	92
Haut Espoir 2009	Franschhoek	93
La Bri 2009	Franschhoek	86
Metzer 2009	Stellenbosch	87
Rudera 2009	Walker Bay	89
The Foundry 2009	Stellenbosch	89
<b>NOBLE LATE HARVEST</b>		
Nederburg Private Bin Edelkeur 2009	Paarl	90
Nederburg Private Bin Eminence 2009	Paarl	93
Nederburg The Winemaster's Reserve 2009	Western Cape	92
Tokara Reserve Collection Sauvignon Blanc 2009	Western Cape	90
<b>PORT-STYLE FORTIFIED</b>		
Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2009	Western Cape	95