



WM

10-YEAR-OLD WINE  
REPORT 2020

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

# 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 Report sets out to examine precisely this.

# KEY FINDINGS

2010 was a testing vintage due to the constant fluctuations in weather conditions throughout – a cool, wet spring caused uneven budding in many regions while summer months were exceptionally dry and windy, the heat wave at the beginning of March 2010 which lasted longer than a week going down in the annals.

Even so, the turn-out of wines for this tasting wasn't bad – 74 wines from 33 producers (compared to 92 entries from 42 producers when the 2009 vintage was reviewed last year and 56 entries from 27 producers from the 2008 vintage the year before). Of the 74 entries, 13 were white wines, 53 reds, three Noble Late Harvest and five fortified.

How did the wines shape up? 39.2% of the line-up (a total of 29 wines) rated 90 points or higher on the 100-point quality scale compared to 47.8% last year when the much celebrated 2009 vintage featured. Only 32% of the reds rated 90-plus confirming the commonly held belief that 2010 wasn't the greatest year for wines made from dark-skinned varieties.

Top performing cellars overall were Nederburg with seven wines to rate 90-plus, Tokara with four and Neil Ellis with three. The highest scoring wine overall was the Delaire Graff Cape Vintage 2010 on 93 points.

A general observation. Those “dry and windy” conditions in the lead-up to harvest seem to have taken their toll on the resulting wines. While the white wines generally showed well enough, they didn't have quite the clarity and brightness that a collector might hope for. The reds, meanwhile, tended to present as very ripe and full bodied. The more successful wines have a sturdiness about them rather than finesse or charm while the less successful wines appeared unduly advanced and, in some cases, oxidised.

Of the top four reds, which together rated 92 points, alcohols range from 14.72% in the case of Nederburg The Brew Master 2010 to 15.06% in the case of Ernie Els Signature 2010 – whatever else you might say about them, these are not shy wines (see tasting notes below).

Among these top performers was the Le Riche Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2010 which rated 5 Stars in the Cabernet Sauvignon Report of 2013, the tasting note then as follows: “Dark fruit, iodine and pencil shavings on the nose. Hugely concentrated but still balanced – lively acidity and silky tannins. Powerful and very long on the finish. Great focus for all its undoubted size.” Clearly, 2010 was a vintage to test a winemaker's savvy and if he or she got it right, then something of great impact resulted.

De laire Graff, as the producer of the highest scoring wine overall, received a bottle of GS Cabernet 1966 worth approximately R30 000 from Amorim Cork.

# 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,  
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## TASTINGS NOTES

### RED

92

Ernie Els  
Signature 2010

Alc: 15.06% RS: 3.6g/l TA: 5.9g/l pH: 3.48

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot and 5% Malbec. Matured for 20 months in French oak, 100% new. Red and black fruit, violets and pencil shavings on the nose while the palate is full bodied and smooth textured – a luscious wine yet not short of freshness.



92

Le Riche  
Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2010

Alc: 15.0% RS: 2.0g/l TA: 6.2g/l pH: 3.76

Matured for 24 months in French oak, 70% new. Top notes of flowers and herbs before black and blue fruit plus graphite on the nose. The palate is super-full with plenty of sweet, juicy fruit to go with smooth tannins, the finish perhaps slightly hot – holding well nevertheless.



92

Nederburg  
Private Bin R163 Cabernet Sauvignon 2010

Alc: 14.88% RS: 3.33g/l TA: 5.8g/l pH: 3.5

Matured for 18 months in a combination of new, second- and third-fill barrels. Cassis, some leafiness and pencil shavings on the nose. The palate is dense and full with a lovely line of acidity, the finish long and very dry – classic SA Cab.



92

## Nederburg The Brew Master 2010

Alc: 14.72% RS: 3.29g/l TA: 6.01g/l pH: 3.29

81% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot, 6% Malbec and 4% Petit Verdot. Matured for 18 months in a combination of new, second-and third-fill barrels. Red and black fruit plus some floral perfume to go with graphite and a little earthiness. Plenty of power on the palate but not short of intricacy or freshness, the tannins still nicely grippy.



## SWEET

92

## Nederburg Private Bin Eminence 2010

Alc: 10.33% RS: 188g/l TA: 7.0g/l pH: 3.38

100% Muscat de Frontignan. Marmalade, caramel, a hint of mint and other herbs on the nose. Deep and intense on the palate – unctuous in texture and decadently sweet.



## FORTIFIED

93

### Delaire Graff Cape Vintage 2010

Alc: 19.5% RS: 85.7g/l TA: 5.3g/l pH: 3.92

55% Touriga Nacional, 45% Tinta Barocca. Elegant and refined including flowers and herbs plus red and black berries while the palate shows great focus and balance – good fruit definition, bright acidity and firm but fine tannins. Intense but not weighty, this still has many years ahead of it.



92

### Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2010

Alc: 18.5% RS: 101.5g/l TA: 5.8g/l pH: 3.73

80% Touriga Nacional, 18% Tinta Barocca and 2% Souzao. Black and blue fruit, chocolate and a little earthiness on the nose. The palate is full and rich – great depth of fruit and a comforting warmth to the finish.





# COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
<b>CHARDONNAY</b>		
Bergsig 2010	Breedekloof	85
La Bri 2010	Franschhoek	88
Neil Ellis Elgin 2010	Elgin	91
Tokara Reserve Collection Stellenbosch 2010	Stellenbosch	91
Tokara Zondemaam 2010	Western Cape	91
<b>CHENIN BLANC</b>		
Ken Forrester The FMC 2010	Stellenbosch	88
<b>SAUVIGNON BLANC</b>		
Almenkerk 2010	Elgin	88
Delaire Graff Coastal Cuvée 2010	Coastal Region	90
Durbanville Hills Biesjes Craal 2010	Durbanville	89
Iona 2010	Elgin	91
Steenberg 2010	Constantia	89
<b>WHITE BLENDS</b>		
Highlands Road Sine Cera 2010	Elgin	91
Tokara Director's Reserve White 2010	Stellenbosch	91
<b>CABERNET SAUVIGNON</b>		
Alto 2010	Stellenbosch	86
Bergsig 2010	Breedekloof	86
Durbanville Hills Rhinofields 2010	Durbanville	88
Fleur Du Cap Unfiltered 2010	Stellenbosch	89
Haut Espoir 2010	Franschhoek	87
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2010	Stellenbosch	87
Lanzerac 2010	Stellenbosch	89
Le Riche Reserve 2010	Stellenbosch	92
Meerlust 2010	Stellenbosch	89
Nederburg Private Bin R163 2010	Paarl	92
Nederburg II Centuries 2010	Western Cape	91
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection 2010	Jonkershoek Valley	90
Plaisir De Merle 2010	Paarl	90
Saxenburg Private Collection 2010	Stellenbosch	87
Tokara 2010	Stellenbosch	89
<b>GRENACHE</b>		
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection 2010	Piekenierskloof	90
<b>MERLOT</b>		
De Grendel 2010	Coastal Region	90
Fleur Du Cap Unfiltered 2010	Stellenbosch	89
<b>PINOTAGE</b>		
Durbanville Hills Rhinofields 2010	Durbanville	89
Nederburg Private Bin R172 2010	Groenekloof	86
Simonsig Redhill 2010	Stellenbosch	88
<b>RED BLENDS</b>		
Alto Rouge 2010	Stellenbosch	88



Bergsig Icarus 2010	Breedekloof	86
Durbanville Hills Caapmans Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2010	Durbanville	90
Ernie Els Signature 2010	Stellenbosch	92
Glenelly Lady May 2010	Stellenbosch	87
Grangehurst 2010	Stellenbosch	86
Grangehurst Daylea Red 2010	Stellenbosch	90
Haut Espoir Gentle Giant 2010	Franschhoek	85
Holden Manz Big G 2010	Franschhoek	87
Iona One Man Band 2010	Elgin	89
Ken Forrester The Gypsy 2010	Western Cape	87
Meerlust Rubicon 2010	Stellenbosch	86
Morgenster 2010	Stellenbosch	86
Morgenster Lourens River Valley 2010	Stellenbosch	86
Nederburg Ingenuity Red Italian Blend 2010	Paarl	91
Nederburg The Brew Master 2010	Western Cape	92
Nederburg The Motorcycle Marvel 2010	Western Cape	89
Plaisir de Merle Grand Plaisir 2010	Paarl	89
Pro Amico Merlot Shiraz 2010	Stellenbosch	90
Simonsig Frans Malan 2010	Stellenbosch	88
Simonsig Tiara 2010	Stellenbosch	84
Tokara Director's Reserve Red 2010	Stellenbosch	90
Zonnebloem Lauréat 2010	Stellenbosch	90
Zonnebloem Shiraz Mourvedre Viognier 2010	Stellenbosch	90
<b>SHIRAZ</b>		
Allesverloren 2010	Swartland	89
Almenkerk Syrah 2010	Elgin	89
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2010	Stellenbosch	88
La Bri Syrah 2010	Franschhoek	86
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection Syrah 2010	Groenekloof	88
Raka Biography 2010	Klein River	90
Saxenburg Private Collection 2010	Stellenbosch	88
<b>TOURIGA NACIONAL</b>		
Allesverloren 2010	Swartland	87
<b>NOBLE LATE HARVEST</b>		
Nederburg Private Bin Edelkeur Chenin Blanc 2010	Coastal Region	90
Nederburg Private Bin Eminence Muscadet 2010	Paarl	92
Nederburg The Winemaster's 2010	Western Cape	91
<b>PORT-STYLE FORTIFIED</b>		
Allesverloren Fine Old Vintage 2010	Swartland	89
Bergsig Cape LBV 2010	Breedekloof	89
Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2010	Western Cape	92
De Krans The Last Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2010	Calitzdorp	87
Delaire Graff Cape Vintage 2010	Stellenbosch	93

# CONTACT DETAILS

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