



WM

BEST VALUE  
TASTINGS  
2019

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

# OVERVIEW

Over the past few months, Winemag.co.za has convened a series of tastings aimed at finding the best wines costing between R60 to R120 a bottle.

Our intention was to identify great everyday drinking – wines which offer refreshment and flavour under ordinary circumstances, are widely available and don't cost too much.

Minimum stock requirement that producers had to meet was 300 six-bottle cases or 1800 bottles. Wines were tasted blind by a three-person panel of experienced judges using the 100-point system. Over the next couple of pages, you will find all the wines to rate 88 or higher by type/variety.

# TASTINGS NOTES

## CHARDONNAY

#BestValueWhiteWine

# 90

### Fat Bastard Chardonnay 2018

R95

**Total production:** 11 818 bottles **Abv:** 13% **W.O.** Robertson

*'Tank fermented with an element of the jolly good stuff scientists call quercus fragmentus,' say the producers (Robertson Winery in collaboration with Thierry & Guy). On the nose, this wine seduces with ripe stone fruit, tropical melon too, and subtle hints of vanilla. There's good mid-palate fruit intensity, showing some development, an off-dry impression enhanced by vanilla cream oak notes and a mere hint of burnt butter. Bold but well-rounded and balanced.*



## CHENIN BLANC

# 91

### Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection Chenin Blanc 2018

R108

**Total production:** 68 038 bottles **Abv:** 13.5% **W.O.** Stellenbosch

*Smart wines continue to pour out of this Stellenbosch powerhouse and this barrel-fermented Chenin Blanc is no exception. Fermentation took place in old barrels and the wine was aged on the primary lees for another six months. Fruit, fruit, fruit. Notes of candied ginger and white flowers join peaches and orange citrus. Layered and evolving, it's rich and ripe in style with a luscious mouthfeel, balanced by good, energetic acidity.*



# 91

### Schultz Family Wines Skeleton Bay Chenin Blanc 2018

R120

**Total production:** 5 100 bottles **Abv:** 12% **W.O.** Western Cape

*Schultz Family Wines is the own label of Rudi Schultz, who is the winemaker at Thelema in Stellenbosch. Two parcels, a 43-year-old vineyard in Somerset West and a 58-year-old vineyard in Paarl, were whole-bunch pressed and naturally fermented in old barrels and aged on the primary lees for nine months. It's a wine full of detail. White blossom, white pear, peach lemongrass and herbaceous scrub on the nose, expanding into a waxy, mineral palate. Nicely textured, it still manages to finish bone dry. Haunting in the best possible way.*



90

## Tierhoek Chenin Blanc 2017

R118

**Total production: 3 768 bottles Abv: 13.5% W.O. Piekenierskloof**

*Made from the farm's 38-year-old Chenin Blanc vines, grown on sandstone. The vines are trellised on an east-facing system known as skuinskap, so that the bunches receive the morning sun. 50% of this was tank fermented, and the other 50% fermented in second-and third-fill French oak barrels for a period of eight months. Subtle aromas of straw and white flowers combine with winter melon, peaches and lime zest. The palate is full, luscious and waxy while a crispy acidity ties it all together.*



89

## Alvi's Drift Signature Chenin Blanc 2019

R60

**Abv: 14% W.O. Western Cape**

*A steal at this price. Only the best free-run juice was used in the production of this fruity, unwooded wine. Highly clarified juice was cold fermented to maximize flavour retention. On the nose it offers citrus and plenty of tropical fruit – paw paw, pineapple, passion fruit. The fruit-forwardness continues on the palate, but it's delivered in a fresh and zesty way with good, lemony acidity.*



89

## Wildeberg & Kompanjie Wild House Chenin Blanc 2018

R60

**Total production: 13 128 bottles Abv: 12.5% W.O. Coastal Region**

*From Boutinot Wines comes this smartly-put-together Chenin Blanc. Fermented in stainless steel, the Chenin was then kept on its fine lees for approximately nine months. Aromas of citrus, green apples and melon, with honeysuckle and straw in the background lead onto a flavourful palate that's also got plenty of zip, the finish long and savoury.*



## SAUVIGNON BLANC

90

### DeMorgenzon DMZ Sauvignon Blanc 2019

R110

**Total production:** 22 200 bottles **Abv:** 13.89% W.O. Stellenbosch

*The ambitious estate's DMZ collection of 'everyday' wines includes this sauvignon (with 2% semillon) from Stellenbosch's Bottellary Hills. Grapes are gently destemmed and lightly pressed, with minimal exposure to oxygen, then cold settled overnight before undergoing a long, cool fermentation followed by extended lees contact. Upfront aromatics include fynbos florals as well as passionfruit and lime, which carry through to the palate along with guava and gooseberry flavours. A wine with texture and breadth as well as punchy acidity and a hint of flinty reduction.*



90

### Perdeberg Cellar The Vineyard Collection Sauvignon Blanc 2019

R70

**Total production:** 6 800 bottles **Abv:** 13.4% W.O. Western Cape

*Having only entered the bottled wine market in 2005, this Paarl winery has thousands of hectares of vines to draw on for its pocket-pleasing wines including this rather showy one, reminiscent of New Zealand sauvignon with its startling aromatics of green pepper, freshly cut grass and granadilla. On the palate, it's crisp and zesty with pineapple and grapefruit flavours, a nettle edge, nicely balanced and rather moreish.*



90

### Zevenwacht 7even Sauvignon Blanc 2019

R66

**Total production:** 39 000 bottles **Abv:** 13.5% W.O. Stellenbosch

*From the Johnson family's estate in Kuils River comes this fresh and fruity wine made from Stellenbosch and Polkadraai grapes, fermented in stainless steel tanks at cool temperatures to enhance tropical fruit ester production. There certainly is plenty of tropical fruit – pineapple, passionfruit, guava and lime – but also a rich, almost mealy texture from two months on the gross lees followed by a further three months on the fine lees. Elegant with tangy fruit intensity, a good acid core and lingering finish.*



89

## Breëland Sauvignon Blanc 2019

R65

**Total production: 3 300 bottles Abv: 13% W.O. Slanghoek**

*In the Marais family since 1825, this Breedekloof farm's sauvignon vines were planted in ancient sandstone riverbeds in 2006. A long, cool fermentation in stainless steel tanks was followed by three months of lees contact with weekly batonnage for a wine with hints of dried herbs, pepper and nettles adding complexity to tropical guava, fig, melon and papaya flavours. Soft on the mid-palate but fresh and dry with crackling acidity.*



89

## Ken Forrester Petit Sauvignon Blanc 2019

R60

**Total production: 57 000 bottles Abv: 13.5% W.O. Western Cape**

*Grapes for the Petit range are sourced from contracted vineyards managed by the Ken Forrester viticultural team to ensure they result in 'soft, market ready, instantly pleasing, easy everyday drinking wines'. From trellised vines in duplex soils on south/southwest-facing slopes, this sauvignon over-delivers with its fresh mint, fig leaf and grassy aromatics leading to granadilla, gooseberry and nectarine flavours. Crisp and dry yet nicely rounded with a fresh, persistent finish.*



89

## uniWines Vineyards Daschbosch Sauvignon Blanc 2019

R90

**Total production: 6 500 bottles Abv: 13% W.O. Western Cape**

*In its Premium range of Daschbosch wines, this large Breedekloof producer aims to deliver 'popular varietals in a more serious style' and it certainly succeeds with this focused, balanced sauvignon. Grapes are sorted, de-stemmed, crushed, cold soaked and fermented slowly at 13-15°C, followed by three months of lees contact, for fynbos and crushed herb aromatics, a feast of tropical flavours, good fruit/flint balance, lovely concentration and length.*



## WHITE BLENDS

91

### Lammershoek The Innocent Chenin Blanc Viognier Sauvignon Blanc 2018

70% Chenin / 16% Viognier / 14% Sauvignon Blanc

R94

**Total production: 6 500 bottles Abv: 12.8%** W.O. Swartland

*This farm in the scenic Aprilsloof valley has undergone major upgrades since its 2013 acquisition by a German consortium led by football legend Franz Beckenbauer. Their fine The Innocent range of everyday drinking wines has shone in Winemag's Best Value tastings (90 points for the Syrah, 89 for the SMG), and now it's the turn of this blend of 70% chenin, 16% viognier and 14% sauvignon blanc. Waxy on the nose and palate, it bursts with fresh quince and pear as well as zesty lemon and lime flavours. Full-bodied yet fresh with hints of savoury spice and pepper.*



90

### Acheron Wines & Spirits Forager White 2019

82% Chenin Blanc / 18% Grenache Blanc

R90

**Total production: 6 600 bottles Abv: 14.5%** W.O. Western Cape

*Mike Graham 'forages' for special parcels of fruit which are vinified in batches and blended to create distinctive wines 'in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts'. Sourced from bushvine and trellised vineyards in Wellington and Swartland, this is 82% chenin blanc with 18% grenache blanc. Only the free-run juice is fermented then racked into a combination of older 300l and 500l French oak barrels for five months. It's quite oxidative with cut apple, pear and cling peach as well as tangy apricot and pineapple fruit, nicely rounded by subtle, slightly savoury oak spice.*



89

### Vrede en Lust White Mischief 2018

42% Chenin / 20% Semillon / 18% Pinot Gris / 16% Sauvignon

R89

**Total production: 28 000 bottles Abv: 13%** W.O. Elgin

*This unwooded six-way blend of 42% chenin with 20% semillon, 18% pinot gris, 16% sauvignon and 2% each viognier and Riesling comes from Vrede en Lust's Elgin farm, Casey's Ridge. It's fresh and pretty with white flowers and a hint of toffee on the nose leading to concentrated fruit punch flavours on the palate. Soft and waxy with balancing acidity, it's well made for easy drinking.*



# 90

## Landskroon Cabernet Sauvignon 2017

R80

**Total production:** 60 000 bottles **Abv:** 14.29% **W.O.** Paarl

From 5th generation winemakers at Landskroon on the south-western slopes of the Paarl Mountain comes one of the highlights of the tasting. As with its top-end counterparts, this amazing value Cabernet Sauvignon shows why this varietal is still considered the backbone of South Africa's hallmark red wines. Grapes were harvested at 24°C, destemmed and transferred to open fermentation tanks where it underwent regular punch downs before maturing in French oak barrels for a further 12 months. Aromas of spiced dark fruit entice and follow through on the palate. Plush, fresh fruit surround a cool, dark core supported by fine, savoury tannins. A complete and elegant wine and an absolute steal at R80.



# 89

## Du Preez Estate Private Cellar Cabernet Sauvignon 2015

R63

**Total production:** 6 000 bottles **Abv:** 14% **W.O.** Western Cape

The grapes from this wine hail from two blocks in the Swartland. One, planted on deep Tukulu soils, produces fruit with finesse and decadence, whilst the second block planted on old river bed shale, struggles a bit more and shows more grit and intensity when harvested. Four days cold maceration is followed by roughly two weeks of fermentation with regular pump-overs, after which the wine finished malolactic fermentation in stainless steel and matures for a further eight months on French oak staves. Lean black and blue fruit on the nose translates into more blackberries, plums and vanilla on the palate. Silky, smooth tannins and a well-integrated juicy acidity makes for a superbly smashable medium-bodied wine.



# 89

## Nuy Winery Mastery Cabernet Sauvignon 2017

R115

**Total production:** 1 896 bottles **Abv:** 15.58% **W.O.** Nuy

From the Nuy Valley in the Breede-kloof comes a delectably hedonistic example of Cabernet Sauvignon. Oak aged for 14 months, this is a seductive wine exuding power and bold fruit. Generous helpings of ripe brambles and black cherries show on the nose alongside savoury soy-sauce like aromas. The palate delivers what the nose promises adding a lovely oak spice and umami notes. Big tannins and a lively acidity support the fruit which lingers considerably.



## MERLOT

89

### Le Sueur Wines Wild Card Queen of Hearts Merlot 2018

R72

**Total production:** 3 470 bottles **Abv:** 13% **W.O.** Western Cape

*Le Sueur Wines is the brainchild of Louis van der Riet from De Krans farm in Calitzdorp. This Merlot abounds with juicy, fresh plums, raspberries and black cherries on the nose. On the palate the fruit is well supported by finely integrated tannins, resulting in a deliciously smooth and elegant wine that provides fantastic value and immediate drinkability.*



## PINOTAGE

90

### Bader & Walters Pinotage 2016

R80

**Total production:** 4 776 bottles **Abv:** 13.88% **W.O.** Western Cape

*Plenty of red fruit plus a herbal note on the nose. Good depth of flavour on the palate with an edge of salinity. Medium-bodied, the fruit is supported by firm tannins and a refreshing acidity.*



90

### Bloemendal Waterlily Pinotage 2016

R95

**Total production:** 4 133 bottles **Abv:** 14.71% **W.O.** Durbanville

*Aged in 300-litre French Oak barrels for 18 months, 10% new oak. The judicious use of oak allowed the fruit to shine of this estate grown, Durbanville Pinotage. Floral aromas to go with cherry and plum, the palate is rich and smooth with a gently savoury finish.*



89

## Lammershoek The Innocent Pinotage 2017

R94

**Total production:** 12 450 bottles **Abv:** 12.17% W.O. Swartland

*The grapes for this wine were sourced from two dry-land bush vine Pinotage vineyards, 21 and 42-years-old respectively. A combination of whole bunch and de-stemmed crushed berry fermentation was carried out in open concrete fermentation tanks, and was aged for a further 10 months in these same tanks. Cherry and raspberry on the nose while the palate is super juicy with bright acidity – utterly smashable.*



89

## Bonnievale River Collection Pinotage 2018

R70

**Total production:** 6 667 bottles **Abv:** 13.7% W.O. Bonnievale

*Upfront aromas of red cherries, blackberries, a hint of smoke and liquorice. Juicy and vibrant on the palate with a well-rounded, smooth finish.*



89

## Slanghoek Private Selection Pinotage 2017

R65

**Total production:** 9 798 bottles **Abv:** 13.82% W.O. Slanghoek

*16 months in 80% new French oak, 20% second fill. Pinotage harvested from 17-year-old bush vines in the Slanghoek Valley. Strawberry, black cherry and oak spice come to the fore. There's a definite fruit-sweetness on the palate, the oak is well integrated, and the wine finishes with slightly drying, chalky tannins.*



## SHIRAZ

90

### Lammershoek The Innocent Syrah 2017

R94

**Total production:** 11 300 bottles **Abv:** 14% W.O. Swartland

*From three dryland bushvine vineyards on the farm, some of the grapes partially de-stemmed, some left to ferment as whole bunch, all vinified and aged separately in combo concrete tanks, wooden foudres and old barrels for 11 months before blending and bottling. Nose is intriguing, showing violets and hints of clove, tar and smoke as well as ripe dark fruit with an almost cordial-like intensity. On the palate there's blueberry and black cherry fruit, also a pleasant cherry pip bitterness. Full-bodied yet elegant with bright acidity balancing soft tannins, rounded mouthfeel.*



90

### Stellenrust Shiraz 2017

R74

**Total production:** 28 323 bottles **Abv:** 14.2% W.O. Stellenbosch

*A combination of 70% Helderberg fruit, rest Bottelary/Devon Valley fruit, crushed and cold macerated for up to two days then fermented with regular punch downs before being matured in 90% French, 5% American and 5% Hungarian oak for 12 months. Hint of reduction on the nose which shows pepper, smoke, black olive and crushed herbs. On the palate, delicious red fruit, luscious and ripe, with crunchy fruit tannins and a hint of smoke. Evenly oaked, with lovely depth, character and persistence. Needs time to evolve.*



89

### Bruce Jack Shiraz 2018

R60

**Total production:** 36 606 bottles **Abv:** 14.5% W.O. Western Cape

*Destemmed grapes fermented on skins in a combination of open and closed tanks. Selected vineyards punched down by hand, with natural fermentation encouraged. Aged in a combination of stainless steel tanks and barrels. Initially shy nose opens up, slight dustiness blows off, to reveal violets and spice, a hint of clove. Lovely red fruit on palate, raspberry and plum, soft and juicy, with youthfully crunchy tannins. Tangy, spicy and smoky, easily accessible and well made.*



89

## Guardian Peak Shiraz 2018

R95

**Total production:** 56 000 bottles **Abv:** 14% **W.O.** Western Cape

*Made for drinking young, fermented in a combination of open and closed stainless steel tanks to preserve the fresh fruit flavours, then matured six months in seasoned French oak barrels. Pure 'Syrah' expression on the nose: red fruit, white pepper and baking spice. Crunchy red cherry and cranberry fruit follow through to the palate, where the spice also lingers, with hints of cocoa and liquorice, too. Light and fresh and soft with a savoury crushed herb finish.*



89

## Robertson Winery Shiraz 2018

R72

**Total production:** 161 200 bottles **Abv:** 13.5% **W.O.** Robertson

*'Made to be enjoyed as a youthful red with easy drinking features.' Fully ripe grapes are fermented in stainless steel tanks, then aged up to eight months on 80% French, 20% American oak. Expressive nose of primary black/blueberry fruit and black pepper. Dark fruit concentration on the full-bodied palate, too, along with some sweet chocolate and vanilla, balanced by bright acidity and peppery notes.*



## RED BLENDS

90

### Mountain Ridge Wines De Liefde

Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot NV

R65

**Total production: 15 000 bottles Abv: 13.27% W.O. Western Cape**

*Named for De Liefde road in the Breedekloof, close to Wolsely, this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot is as pretty and charming as its name. Vibrant red and black berries as well as potpourri show on the nose. Crunchy fruit follow on palate and is underscored by the lively acidity which will please a wide array of palates.*



89

### Dornier Cocoa Hill Red 2017

32% Merlot / 25% Shiraz / 22% Cabernet Sauvignon /  
11% Petit Verdot / 10% Malbec

R84

**Total production: 58 000 bottles Abv: 14.5% W.O. Western Cape**

*This wine hails from vines planted in decomposed granite soils of Cocoa Hill – a hilltop in the folds of the Stellenbosch Mountain. All components were picked and vinified separately, barrel matured for 14 months and a small unoaked component was used for added freshness. This wine has an intriguing nose of black and red fruit, marmite and dried herbs. It is full on the palate and shows hints of oak spice, beautifully integrated and firmly supporting the luscious fruit. It's an attractive wine that lingers pleasingly.*



89

### Gabriëlskloof The Blend 2017

60% Cabernet Sauvignon / 15% Cabernet Franc / 15%  
Petit Verdot / 10% Malbec

R120

**Total production: 70 000 bottles Abv: 14.5% W.O. Botrivier**

*A stone's throw outside of the town of Botrivier, lies the family-owned-and-run estate of Gabriëlskloof. The 2017 vintage of this Bordeaux-style blend shows ample dark fruit with hints of violets, dark chocolate, leather and bay leaf. It's a muscular wine with juicy fruit, well integrated acidity and youthful tannins. It's effortless showing both power and finesse.*



89

## Lammershoek The Innocent SMG 2017

50% Shiraz / 25% Mourvèdre / 25% Grenache

R95

**Total production: 11 450 bottles Abv: 13.5% W.O. Coastal**

*Lammershoek produces this blend from grapes from dryland farmed bush vines between 15-50 years old in the Swartland. All components picked and fermented separately, with some cultivars using up to 60% whole clusters. 11 months in concrete tanks and foudre before blending and bottling. Red and black fruit along with leather, cloves and a certain smokiness on the nose with the palate showing tart red fruit, earthiness and notes of cured meat. Medium-to full bodied, this wine is elegant with long-lingering finish and entirely enchanting.*



89

## Tierhoek Grenache Syrah Mourvèdre 2017

49% Grenache / 32% Syrah / 19% Mourvèdre

R117

**Total production: 5 400 bottles Abv: 13.6% W.O. Piekenierskloof**

*From one of the jewels in the Piekenierskloof comes this vivacious Rhone-style blend. Cultivars were fermented separately in open bins, with gentle pump-overs. Malolactic fermentation occurs naturally after which wines mature for 12 months in barrel, blended and bottled. This blend has a beautiful light red colour and offers up aromas of sweet, red fruit, a slight earthiness and dried fynbos. Delicately structured the juicy acidity lifts the aromatics and spice of this medium-bodied wine and is well supported by fine, dusty tannins.*



## PER CATEGORY WINES RATED 88

WINE	PRICE
<b>CHARDONNAY</b>	
Cape Town Wine Co. 2018	R65
De Krans Wild Ferment Unwooded 2018	R74
Laibach The Ladybird 2018 (Woolworths)	R90
<b>CHENIN BLANC</b>	
Balance Winemakers Selection 2019	R68
Croyden Title Deed 2018	R83
Fat Bastard 2018	R95
Ken Forrester Petit 2018	R60
Mulderbosch Steen op Hout 2018	R80
Opstal 2018	R100
Rietvallei 2018	R80
<b>SAUVIGNON BLANC</b>	
Bruce Jack 2019	R60
Cape Point Vineyards 2019	R98
Strydom Family Wines The Freshman 2019	R90
Trizanne Signature Wines TSW 2019	R88
<b>WHITE BLENDS</b>	
Babylonstoren Candide 2018	R88
The Drift Bonfire Hill 2018	R89
<b>CABERNET SAUVIGNON</b>	
Emie Els The Big Easy 2018	R86
Morgenster 2018	R100
<b>MERLOT</b>	
Badsberg 2018	R60
Leopards Leap Family Vineyard 2018	R60
Morgenster 2018	R100
<b>PINOTAGE</b>	
Silkbush Mountain Vineyards 2017	R92

<b>SHIRAZ</b>	
Cavalli Black Beauty 2016	R100
De Wet Cellar 2017	R60
Ormonde Chip Off The Old Block 2015	R95
Simonsig Mr. Borio's 2017	R110
Wildeberg & Kompanjie Wild House 2018	R70
<b>RED BLENDS</b>	
Kaapzicht Bin 3 2016	R90
The Drift Bonfire Hill Red Blend 2018	R69

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