

— PRESCIENT —

CAP CLASSIQUE
REPORT 2020



WINEMAG.CO.ZA

ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2020

Winemag.co.za will produce 13 category reports over the course of the year. Each report is based on the outcome of a blind tasting of wines entered within the specific category.

Winemag.co.za will announce a Top 10 with the release of each successive report. Producers of the Top 10 will be notified and are able to purchase newly designed Top 10 stickers while producers of the remaining wines may acquire regular rating stickers.

The programme culminates in a gala dinner where the individual best wine per category will receive an award and ratings on the 100-point quality scale for all the Top 10 wines will be revealed.

The Best of Category wines will subsequently be shown at tastings in both Johannesburg and London.

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*

KEY FINDINGS

There were 50 entries received for the inaugural Cap Classique Report convened by Winemag.co.za and sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, the outcome somewhat disappointing with just 13 wines (the Top 10 plus three others) rating 90-plus on the 100-point scale.

Sparkling wine sales are booming globally – it has escaped the confines of being solely a celebratory drink and is now a symbol of success and opulence. In addition, at a time when consumers are becoming more mindful of health issues, relatively lower alcohol content is in the category's favour. In line with this, Cap Classique (bottle fermented sparkling wine) has done very well commercially in recent times but there is a sense that one level, quality is suffering as some of the bigger producers attempt to scale while on another, the smaller producers are entering the category without enough technical expertise.

There were many examples that scored in the 87 – 89 point bracket and these were pleasant enough but ultimately lacked refinement – Cap Classique demands a premium on account of the length of the production process but it would be nonsensical to pay very much more than R200 a bottle for such wines.

What was of particular concern is how poorly the vintage examples showed in general – extended time on the lees is meant to result in extra complexity but these wines often looked excessively advanced, coming across as too dark in colour, lacking in fruit and energy and overly aldehydic with too much honeyed or nutty character in evidence. At best, these wines are geeky and at worst just plain rustic.

The mainstream non-vintage commercial offerings were typically sound enough but a bit predictable, sweet-ish fruit offset by lively acidity and very foamy. It's difficult not to be cynical about the Demi-Sec sub-class, these wines very often having an alco-pop lack of poise about them. The examples of Rosé under scrutiny also left a lot to be desired, insufficient Pinot Noir character being a particular criticism.

The panel was ultimately looking for subtlety and sophistication and that's what set the wines to score 90-plus apart – unfortunately there were not nearly as many of these as was expected at the outset of the tasting. It might seem churlish to be so negative about such a popular category, but we would suggest that quality improvements need to be made urgently lest credibility is lost.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Babylonstoren Sprankel 2014

R650

Total production: 7 173 bottles Abv: 12.22%

92% Chardonnay and 8% Pinot Noir. 48 months on the lees prior to disgorgement. Plenty of yeasty character to go with citrus on the nose while the palate is rich and broad with nicely coated acidity and a creamy mousse, the finish gently savoury – a more aldehydic style done well.



Babylonstoren Sprankel 2015

R650

Total production: 9 329 bottles Abv: 12%

91% Chardonnay and 9% Pinot noir. 54 months on the lees prior to disgorgement. Citrus, apple and peaches plus freshly baked bread and some leesy complexity on the nose. The palate is rich with a soft, creamy mousse, while tangy acidity lends verve. Full of flavour.



Benguela Cove Joie de Vivre 2017

R280

Total production: 9 300 bottles Abv: 12.5%

64% Chardonnay and 34% Pinot Noir. Disgorged on 8 August 2019 – 30 months on the lees. A really complex nose – a floral top note before citrus, peach and red apples plus a little vanilla. The palate has excellent fruit definition, a great line of acidity and a fine mousse, the finish long and dry.





Cavalli Capriole 2018

R235

Total production: 3 024 bottles Abv: 11.27%

100% Chardonnay. Disgorged after 18 months. Notes of blossom and herbs before citrus, green apple and a little reduction on the nose. The palate displays good fruit purity, fresh acidity and a lively acidity – lean and refreshing.



Delaire Graff Sunrise Brut NV

R435

Total production: 6 300 bottles Abv: 12.38%

64% Chenin Blanc, 30% Chardonnay and 6% Cabernet Franc. Disgorged after 18 months. An attractive and inviting nose showing some floral perfume before citrus and peach plus a little yeasty complexity. The palate has a great core of fruit, arresting acidity and a fine mousse, the finish bone dry. Very classy.



Genevieve Blanc de Blancs 2015

R225

Total production: 12 000 bottles Abv: 12.5%

100% Chardonnay. Disgorged after 48 months. The nose shows citrus plus some attractive secondary notes including buttered toast, almond and a leesy quality. The palate is rich and full with a creamy mousse and a savoury finish – quite a particular rendition.





Kleine Zalze Brut NV

R136

Total production: 160 000 bottles Abv: 11.5%

60% Chardonnay and 40% Pinot Noir. Disgorged after 10 months. The nose has plenty of attractive primary character – blossom, citrus and red berry plus a little reduction. The palate is clean and pure with racy acidity and fine mousse, the finish lingering and dry. Precisely made, the result is elegant and understated.



Kleine Zalze Vintage Brut 2013

R238

Total production: 10 000 bottles Abv: 12%

60% Chardonnay and 40% Pinot Noir. Disgorged after 54 months. Lots going on aromatically with notes of pear, peach and apple, some brioche and a slight earthy quality. The palate is full but balanced and nicely detailed with a fine mousse and a savoury finish.



Peter Falke Signature Noelina 2015

R250

Total production: 2 250 bottles Abv: 12%

100% Chardonnay. Disgorged after 46 months. Citrus and peach, some bread-like character and liquorice on the nose. Rich, round and flavourful on the palate with a creamy mousse.





Simonsig
Cuvée Royale Blanc de Blancs 2014
R350

Total production: 11 378 bottles Abv: 12.46%

100% Chardonnay. Disgorged after 60 months. Citrus and stone fruit plus some sea breeze and spice. The palate is rich and full with a slightly lazy mousse and a gently savoury finish. Some leesy character adds interest.



COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
Babylonstoren Sprankel 2014	Simonsberg-Paarl	Top 10
Babylonstoren Sprankel 2015	Simonsberg-Paarl	Top 10
Benguela Cove Joie de Vivre 2017	Walker Bay	Top 10
Cavalli Capriole 2018	Stellenbosch	Top 10
Creation Elation Rosé Brut Nature 2015	Cape South Coast	87
De Grendel Brut 2016	Cape Town	86
Delaire Graff Sunrise Brut NV	Western Cape	Top 10
Dieu Donné Blanc de Blancs 2017	Franschhoek	87
Durbanville Hills Blanc de Blancs 2016	Durbanville Hills	89
Genevieve Blanc de Blancs 2015	Cape South Coast	Top 10
Graham Beck Blanc de Blancs 2015	Robertson	90
Graham Beck Bliss Nectar NV	Western Cape	86
Graham Beck Bliss Nectar Rosé NV	Western Cape	84
Graham Beck Brut NV	Western Vape	87
Graham Beck Brut Rosé NV	Western Cape	87
Graham Beck Brut Zero 2012	Western Cape	89
Graham Beck Cuvée Clive 2014	Western Cape	86
Graham Beck Pinot Noir Rosé 2015	Western Cape	87
Groot Constantia Brut Rosé NV	Constantia	88
Filia Kaap Klassiek 2015	Swartland	87
Huis van Chevalerie Circa Brut Rosé NV	Swartland	83
Huis van Chevalerie The Hummingbird 2019	Coastal	85
Kleine Zalze Brut NV	Western Cape	Top 10
Kleine Zalze Brut Rosé NV	Western Cape	88
Kleine Zalze Vintage Brut 2013	Western Cape	Top 10
Krone Borealis Vintage Cuvée Brut 2018	Western Cape	88
Krone Vintage Rosé Cuvée Brut 2018	Western Cape	89
Lateganskop Livia's Laughter 2014	Breedekloof	89
Longridge Vintage Reserve Brut 2014	Stellenbosch	88
Mariëtte Blanc de Blanc 2014	Breedekloof	87
Mulderbosch Brut 2015	Stellenbosch	88
Nuy Celine Brut NV	Western Cape	89
Org de Rac Cuvée La Verne 2016	Swartland	88
Peter Falke Signature Noelina 2015	Stellenbosch	Top 10
Pierre Jourdan Belle Nectar Demi-Sec Rosé NV	Western Cape	85
Pierre Jourdan Belle Rose NV	Western Cape	90
Pierre Jourdan Brut NV	Western Cape	88
Plaisir De Merle Grand Brut 2016	Western Cape	87
Simonsig Cuvée Royale Blanc de Blancs 2014	Stellenbosch	Top 10
Simonsig Kaapse Vonkel Brut 2015 1.5L	Western Cape	88
Simonsig Kaapse Vonkel Brut 2017	Western Cape	88
Simonsig Kaapse Vonkel Brut Rosé 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Simonsig Pinot Noir Rosé No Sulphur Added 2018	Stellenbosch	87
Steenberg 1682 Chardonnay Brut NV	Western Cape	88
Steenberg 1682 Pinot Noir Brut NV	Western Cape	86
Steenberg Lady R 2015	Western Cape	89
Thelema Brut 2015	Elgin	88
Villiera Monro Brut 2013	Stellenbosch	87
Villiera Tradition Brut NV	-	88
Villiera Tradition Brut Rosé NV	Stellenbosch	90

CONTACT DETAILS

Editorial

Christian Eedes
christian@winemag.co.za
+27 83 454 3644
@ChristianEedes

Business Director

Jacqueline Lahoud
jax@winemag.co.za
+27 83 654 7721
@JaxLahoud

Proudly sponsored by multinational financial services company:

PRESCIENT

www.prescient.co.za