



PRESCIENT

SHIRAZ  
REPORT 2020



# ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2020



Winemag.co.za is set to produce 12 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.

We will announce a Top 10 with the release of each successive report. Producers of these wines will be notified and are able to purchase newly designed Top 10 stickers while producers of the remaining wines may acquire regular rating stickers – consumers are encouraged to look out for these in the retail environment.

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 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

# KEY FINDINGS

There is a stylistic dichotomy within every wine category between the elegant and the powerful but it currently seems particularly pronounced when it comes to local Shiraz/Syrah. In the first camp, there are wines which are light, fresh and distinctly peppery and in the second, wines that are rich, sturdy and more earthy. Stylistic diversity is not necessarily a bad thing but when it gets too extreme it must surely lead to consumer confusion and ultimately a reluctance to buy.

For the second annual Shiraz Report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, 70 entries were received from 56 producers, 36 rating 90-plus or more on the 100-point quality scale so not a bad showing at all but many of the wines proved divisive making a final rating difficult to arrive at. The lighter wines will appeal to some on account of their transparency and refreshment value while others will no doubt find them lean and tart. The heavier wines, meanwhile, often seem to lack some definition and prone to premature oxidation.

Where does this stylistic split come from? One way of explaining it might be to view it as arising from a difference in approach between the New Wave and the Old Guard/Establishment, the former favouring early picking, whole-bunch fermentation, minimal intervention and the latter opting more for fruit power, heavier extraction and more obvious oak. The rise of “light and fresh” wines is partly the result of fashion and partly commercial expediency - it’s what younger, less conservative drinkers want. In fairness to all, however, growing conditions in South Africa are such that the two basic styles of Shiraz can both be done successfully and it’s not like one style is inherently better than the other.

Whereas Stellenbosch tends to be the pre-eminent area when the Bordeaux varieties are under scrutiny, Shiraz appears well suited to a variety of growing conditions, with wines in the Top 10 coming from a wide range of appellations - three from Stellenbosch, two from Swartland, one each from Elim, Franschhoek, Walker Bay and Wellington plus one designated as W.O. Western Cape, this being Vrede en Lust Lady J 2017, incorporating fruit from both Elgin and Simonsberg-Paarl. Average cellar-door price of the Top 10 is R238.65 per 750ml bottle, Lammershoek The Innocent Syrah 2018 being the most affordable at R94 a bottle.

# TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Allée Bleue  
2018  
R180

Total production: 8 400 bottles Abv: 14%

*Matured for 15 months in 95% French and 5% American oak, 55% new. A pretty nose with notes of flowers, fresh herbs and musk to go with red berries while the palate is light-bodied with pure fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins. Lovely definition and energy.*



Casa Simelia  
Syrah 2018  
R240

Total production: 7 051 bottles Abv: 14.5%

*Grapes predominantly from a 2014 block but some from a 1980 block. Matured for 12 months in French oak, 10% new. A subtle and enticing nose with notes of flowers and herbs before red and black berries, pepper and spice. The palate displays good depth of fruit, bright acidity and crunchy tannins while the finish is long and savoury.*



De Grendel  
Elim 2018  
R756 per magnum

Total production: 1 368 magnums Abv: 13.5%

*30% whole-bunch fermented. Matured for 13 months in second- and third-fill barrels. Aromatics that are compelling in their wildness – plenty of pepper and spice to go with red and black fruit. The palate is intensely flavoured with snappy acidity and extremely salty finish. A most particular example of the variety.*





## Lammershoek The Innocent Syrah 2018

R94

*A variety of fermentation techniques used including some 20% whole-bunch before maturation lasting 11 months in a combination of concrete tanks, wooden foudre and old barrels. Wonderfully distinct aromatics of red and black fruit, flowers, herbs and cured meat while the palate is wonderfully juicy and fresh with some crunch to the tannins.*



## Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2017

R375

**Total production: 1 632 bottles Abv: 13.71%**

*Matured for 12 months in old oak. A heady nose of dark fruit, musk, lilies, fynbos and pepper while the palate is full bodied and intensely flavoured – dense fruit, bright acidity and chewy tannins. Complex and powerful.*



## Painted Wolf Walker Bay Syrah 2018

R180

**Total production: 10 500 bottles Abv: 13.9%**

*Matured for 11 months in French, American and Hungarian oak barrels, 20% new. Red and black berries, rose, herbs and spice on the nose. The palate has good fruit density, bright acidity and crunchy tannins. Great definition and energy.*





## Saxenburg Private Collection Syrah 2017

R250

**Total production: 38 040 750ml bottles and 200 magnums Abv: 14.5%**

*Matured for 12 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 18% new. A complex nose with some floral perfume before red and black berries, pepper and spice. The palate is intensely flavoured but not weighty with lovely bright acidity and fine tannins. The first vintage to be labelled as Syrah and not Shiraz, this has Rhône-like pizzazz.*



## Stark-Condé Stellenbosch Syrah 2017

R205

**Total production: 16 345 bottles Abv: 14.5%**

*100% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 20 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 20% new. Some reduction before dark fruit, herbs and pepper on the nose. The palate is tightly wound and precise – a good core of fruit, punchy acidity and powdery tannins.*



## Tokara Reserve Collection Syrah 2017

R330

**Total production: 5 200 bottles Abv: 14.65%**

*25% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 20 months in older French oak. Initially some floral perfume before dark fruit and spice plus an earthy quality. The palate is concentrated and deep – plenty of sweet fruit and sleek tannins. A typically polished effort from this cellar.*





## Vrede en Lust Lady J Syrah 2017

R150

**Total production: 25 000 bottles    Abv: 14%**

*87% Syrah, 13% Cabernet Sauvignon. Grapes from Elgin and Simonsberg-Paarl. Matured for 16 months in French and American oak. Aromatics of red and black berries, lavender and white pepper. The palate, meanwhile, shows good fruit density, fresh acidity and powdery tannins. Medium bodied and well balanced.*





# BUYING GUIDE CELLAR-DOOR PRICES FOR WINES RATED 90+

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
Lammershoek The Innocent Syrah 2018	Top 10	R94
Vrede en Lust Lady J Syrah 2017	Top 10	R150
Allée Bleue 2018	Top 10	R180
Painted Wolf Walker Bay Syrah 2018	Top 10	R180
Stark-Condé Stellenbosch Syrah 2017	Top 10	R205
Casa Simelia Syrah 2018	Top 10	R240
Saxenburg Private Collection Syrah 2017	Top 10	R250
Tokara Reserve Collection Syrah 2017	Top 10	R330
Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2017	Top 10	R375
De Grendel Elim 2018 1.5L	Top 10	R765
Dombeya Boulder Road 2016 (Haskell Vineyards)	91	R155
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2017	91	R156
Jordan The Prospector Syrah 2017	91	R190
Post House Merry Widow 2018	91	R200
Mischa 2019	91	R205
Trizanne Signature Wines Reserve Syrah 2018	91	R210
Babylonstoren 2018	91	R265
Tempel Oogwink 2018	91	R280
Peter Falke Alani 2017	91	R365
DeMorgenzon Reserve 2015	91	R430
Org de Rac 2018	90	R80
Glenelly Glass Collection Syrah 2017	90	R125
Org de Rac Reserve 2017	90	R125
Julien Schaal Syrah Walker Bay 2019	90	R150
Under Oaks Reserve 2017	90	R150
Boschendal 1685 2018	90	R160
Mellish Family Vineyards Bakenkop Syrah 2018	90	R185
Strandveld Vineyards Syrah 2018	90	R190
Vrede en Lust Artisan Range Casey's Ridge 2016	90	R190
La Cave 2018 (Wellington Wines)	90	R200
Thelema 2016	90	R200
Kleinoord Tamboerskloof Syrah 2017	90	R229
Dorrance Cuvee Ameena Syrah 2017	90	R230
Van Wyk Family Wines Syrah 2018	90	R260
Zandvliet Hill of Enon Small Berry Pick 2018	90	R420
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2016	90	R425



# COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
Allée Bleue 2018	Franschhoek	<b>Top 10</b>
Allée Bleue Single Vineyard Syrah 2015	Franschhoek	88
Babylonstoren 2018	Simonsberg-Paarl	91
Boschendal 1685 2018	Cape Coast	90
Casa Simelia Syrah 2018	Wellington	<b>Top 10</b>
De Grendel 2018	Coastal Region	88
De Grendel Elim 2018	Elim	<b>Top 10</b>
DeMorgenzon Reserve 2015	Stellenbosch	91
Diemersdal 2019	Cape Town	88
Dombeya Boulder Road 2016 (Haskell Vineyards)	Stellenbosch	91
Dornier Siren 2017	Stellenbosch	88
Dorrance Cuvee Ameena Syrah 2017	Western Cape	90
Driefontein Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	88
Eagles' Nest 2016	Constantia	88
Esona Single Vineyard 2017	Robertson	73
Flagstone Dark Horse 2016	Western Cape	89
Glenelly Glass Collection Syrah 2018	Stellenbosch	90
GlenWood Grand Duc Syrah 2017	Franschhoek	84
Haskell Pillars 2015	Stellenbosch	89
Highlands Road Syrah 2016	Elgin	84
Jordan The Prospector Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	91
Julien Schaal Syrah Walker Bay 2019	Walker Bay	90
Kershaw Elgin Clonal Selection Syrah 2016	Elgin	89
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2016	Stellenbosch	90
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2017	Stellenbosch	91
Kleinood Tamboerskloof Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	90
Klein Roosboom Janét 2017	Durbanville Cape Town	89
La Bri Syrah 2017	Franschhoek	88
La Cave 2018 (Wellington Wines)	Wellington	90
Lammershoek The Innocent Syrah 2018	Swartland	<b>Top 10</b>
Leeuwenkuil 2018	Swartland	89
Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2017	Swartland	<b>Top 10</b>
Leipzig 2019	Stellenbosch	89
MAN Family Wines Skaapveld Syrah 2018	Coastal Region	88
Mellish Family Vineyards Bakenkop Syrah 2018	Durbanville Cape Town	90
Mischa 2019	Wellington	91
Mountain Ridge 2017	Western Cape	89
Nuy Mastery 2018	Nuy	87
Old Road Wine Co PepperWind Limited Release Syrah 2017	Franschhoek	89
Org de Rac 2018	Swartland	90
Org de Rac Reserve 2017	Swartland	90
Painted Wolf Swartland Syrah 2017	Swartland	89
Painted Wolf Walker Bay Syrah 2018	Walker Bay	<b>Top 10</b>
Peter Falke Alani 2017	Stellenbosch	91
Post House Merry Widow 2018	Stellenbosch	91

Post House Merry Widow Reserve 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Quoin Rock 2015	Simonsberg Stellenbosch	89
Saxenburg Private Collection Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	<b>Top 10</b>
Simelia Senectus Syrah Reserve 2017	Wellington	89
Stark-Condé Stellenbosch Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	<b>Top 10</b>
Stark-Condé Three Pines Syrah 2017	Jonkershoek Valley	88
Strandveld Vineyards Syrah 2018	Elim	90
Sutherland Elgin Syrah 2016	Elgin	89
Tempel Oogwink 2018	Elgin	91
Thelema 2015	Stellenbosch	89
Thelema 2016	Stellenbosch	90
Tokara Reserve Collection Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	<b>Top 10</b>
Trizanne Signature Wines Reserve Syrah 2018	Elim	91
Under Oaks Reserve 2017	Coastal Region	90
Van Loveren Christina 2017	Robertson	87
Van Loveren Christina 2018	Robertson	88
Van Wyk Family Wines Syrah 2018	Elgin	90
Vrede en Lust Lady J Syrah 2017	Western Cape	<b>Top 10</b>
Vrede en Lust Artisan Range Casey's Ridge 2016	Elgin	90
Wildeberg 2019	Franschhoek	89
Wildeckrans Barrel Select Reserve 2017	Bot River	89
Windmeul Reserve 2016	Coastal Region	89
Zandvliet Hill of Enon Small Berry Pick 2018	Robertson	90
Zandvliet Kalkveld 2017	Robertson	88
Zevenwacht 2018	Stellenbosch	88

# 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](http://www.prescient.co.za)