



PRESCIENT

PINOT NOIR  
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

After the tasting for the fourth annual Pinot Noir Report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, Roland Peens, managing director of Wine Cellar and panel member, was moved to comment: "I'm really impressed. Much more purity and detail as well as less clumsy use of oak than ever before. We not quite at Grand Cru level yet, but lots of delicious wines on the table and the future is bright!"

Peens went on to say that whereas producers had been overly ambitious in the past, he had a sense that there was now more of an effort to get the fundamentals right with a view to achieving greater structure and complexity further down the line.

30 entries were received from 24 producers, 17 rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. Of the Top 10, five are from Elgin, two from Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge and one each from Ceres Plateau, Elandsloof and Outeniqua. The average price of the Top 10 is R319 a bottle with Sutherland 2017 the most affordable at R190 a bottle.

In line with Peen's comments above, it must be said that local Pinot Noir is very much a work in progress. Plantings remain small with 1 201 ha in the ground at the end of 2019, the equivalent of just 1.3% of the national vineyard. As the seventh most planted red variety, it comes in behind Cinsault and ahead of Cabernet Franc, with much of it utilised for Cap Classique.

Through the 1980s, the clone which prevailed was the rather ordinary BK5, developed in Switzerland for sparkling wine, and it was only in the 1990s that the superior Dijon clones appeared. Determining how to get the best out of these clones under local conditions is therefore still far from resolved.

Site is also an issue. The Hemel-en-Aarde and Elgin may have traditionally vied for bragging rights as to the source of the country's best Pinot but it would appear that there are other, less heralded locations that can produce Pinot of a high standard witness the good showing in this and previous reports of De Grendel which sources grapes from Ceres Plateau while it is interesting to note Flying Cloud among the Top 10 now, fruit from Herold Wines, a property established in 1999 in the Outeniqua Mountains, north of George.

And, of course, there is the winemaking which seems to get more judicious as time goes by. Fermentations and extractions seem to be less violent and oaking regimes defter, the result being far more wines that possess the perfume, fruit concentration and balance that makes Pinot so seductive to so many wine lovers.

# TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



## De Grendel Op die Berg 2018

R220

**Total production: 9 814 bottles Abv: 13.7%**

*Matured for 13 months in older oak. Red and black cherry, some floral perfume and vanilla on the nose. The palate shows good fruit concentration, bright acidity and relatively soft tannins. Balanced and just very pleasing to drink.*



## Flying Cloud Sovereign of the Seas 2018

R295

**Total production: 800 bottles Abv: 13.1%**

*20% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 20 months in two 300-litre barrels, one new and one third-fill. A pronounce and very attractive note of rose-like perfume as well as red berries, white pepper and other spice. The palate has succulent fruit, bright acidity and powdery tannins. Particularly pure and poised.*



## Iona Elgin Highlands 2018

R290

**Total production: 6 728 bottles Abv: 13.74%**

*Matured for 12 months in 300- and 500-litre barrels, 30% new. Compelling aromatics of red and black berries, musk, vanilla and a hint of reduction. The palate has good depth of fruit, vibrant acidity and crunchy tannins. Rich and flavourful.*





## Kershaw Elgin Clonal Selection 2018

R605

Total production: 8 100 bottles Abv: 13.5%

*Spontaneous fermentation before maturation lasting 11 months in French oak, 10% new. The nose shows some flinty reduction before red berries, tea leaf and attractive oak spice. Lovely fruit purity, vibrant acidity and nicely grippy tannins.*



## Kruger Family Wines Elandskloof 2019

R195

Total production: 3 600 bottles Abv: 13%

*Matured for nine months in older oak. Attractive aromatics of red berries, flowers, herbs and white pepper. The palate is light bodied with great energy – lovely purity, bright acidity and fine, crunchy tannins. Precisely made.*



## La Vierge Noir 2016

R230

Total production: 4 662 bottles Abv: 13.73%

*Matured for nine months in French oak, 20% new. Attractive oak notes before red and black cherries, musk and some pleasant evolved character. Deep, rich and full on the palate – sweet fruit, bright acidity and silky tannins before a good dry finish. Drinking well now.*





## Lothian Vineyards Vineyard Selection 2019

R295

Total production: 10 169 Abv: 14.09%

*Matured for 11 months in French oak, 25% new. Aromatics of red and black berries, musk plus oak-derived notes of vanilla, char and spice. The palate shows lots of pure, sweet fruit to go with bright acidity and silky tannins – delicious!*



## Shannon Rockview Ridge 2018

R345

Total production: 3 600 bottles Abv: 13%

*Matured for 12 months in French oak, 20% new. Red berries, flowers, herbs, pepper and other spice on the nose while the palate is light-bodied with pure fruit, fresh acidity and wonderfully fine tannins – flavourful and wonderfully energetic.*



## Sutherland 2017

R190

Total production: 12 716 bottles Abv: 13.5%

*100% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 10 months in French oak, 10% new. A hint of smoky reduction before red and black berries and some floral perfume. Rich and full on the palate – good depth of fruit and smooth tannins. Layers of flavour before a long, dry finish.*





Tesselaarsdal  
2019  
R525

**Total production: 3 930 bottles Abv: 13.3%**

*Matured for nine and a half months in 228-litre barrels, 35% new. The nose shows red and black berries, rose and an intriguing herbal note. Good definition and structure – juicy fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish nicely savoury.*



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

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
Sutherland 2017	Top 10	R190
Kruger Family Wines Elandskloof 2019	Top 10	R195
De Grendel Op die Berg 2018	Top 10	R220
La Vierge Noir 2016	Top 10	R230
Iona Elgin Highlands 2018	Top 10	R290
Flying Cloud Sovereign of the Seas 2018	Top 10	R295
Lothian Vineyards Vineyard Selection 2019	Top 10	R295
Shannon Rockview Ridge 2018	Top 10	R345
Tesselaarsdal 2019	Top 10	R525
Kershaw Elgin Clonal Selection 2018	Top 10	R605
Shannon 2019	90	R149
Nitida 2018	90	R165
Old Road Wine Co. 2018	90	R195
Seven Springs Vineyard 2019	90	R195
Peter Falke PF 2018	90	R220
Donkiesbaai 2018	90	R330
The Fledge & Co. Elgin 2017	90	R350



# COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
David Finlayson 2019	Coastal Region	89
De Grendel Op die Berg 2018	Ceres Plateau	<b>Top 10</b>
Domaine des Dieux Josephine 2015	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge	88
Donkiesbaai 2018	Ceres Plateau	90
Esona Single Vineyard 2017	Robertson	86
Flying Cloud Sovereign of the Seas 2018	Outeniqua	<b>Top 10</b>
Hazendal 2017	Stellenbosch	88
Idun Crepuscule 2019	Elgin	87
Iona Elgin Highlands 2018	Elgin	<b>Top 10</b>
Kara-Tara 2018	Western Cape	88
Kershaw Elgin Clonal Selection 2018	Elgin	<b>Top 10</b>
Kershaw GPS Hemel & Aarde Rigde 2018	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge	89
Kruger Family Wines Elandskloof 2019	Elandskloof	<b>Top 10</b>
Kruger Family Wines Pearly Gate 2019	Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley	88
La Vierge Noir 2016	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge	<b>Top 10</b>
Lothian Vineyards Vineyard Selection 2018	Elgin	89
Lothian Vineyards Vineyard Selection 2019	Elgin	<b>Top 10</b>
Meerlust Pinot Noir 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Nitida 2018	Durbanville Cape Town	90
Oak Valley Groenlandberg 2019	Elgin	88
Old Road Wine Co. Elgin 2018	Elgin	90
Peter Falke PF 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Seven Springs Vineyard 2019	Overberg	90
Shannon 2019	Elgin	90
Shannon Rockview Ridge 2018	Elgin	<b>Top 10</b>
Sutherland 2017	Elgin	<b>Top 10</b>
Sutherland 2018	Elgin	89
Tesselaarsdal 2019	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge	<b>Top 10</b>
The Fledge & Co. Elgin 2017	Elgin	90
The Fledge & Co. Katvis 2018	Western Cape	86

# 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

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