

10-YEAR-OLD WINE  
REPORT 2021

— WINEMAG.CO.ZA —



Remhoogte wine estate.

# 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.

## 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

The 2011 vintage is yet another that was considered “difficult” with considerable climatic fluctuations, especially heat and drought during the ripening period. This made irrigation management tricky while several varieties were inclined to ripen simultaneously, thereby placing severe pressure on cellar capacity at times.

The number of submissions for this tasting was nevertheless pleasing with 78 wines from 40 producers (compared to 74 wines from 33 producers when the 2010 vintage was reviewed last year and 92 entries from 42 producers from the 2009 vintage the year before). Of the 78 entries, two were Cap Classique, 23 were white wines, 48 reds, three Noble Late Harvest and two fortified.

Even more pleasing is how well the wines showed with 67.9% of the line-up (a total of 53 wines) rating 90 points or higher on the 100-point quality scale compared to 39.2% last year when the 2010 vintage featured. It is well documented that 2010 was particularly challenging but what is really surprising is that this outcome suggests that the wines from 2011 have aged/are ageing better than their counterparts from 2009, only 47.8% of the relevant line-up from that much vaunted vintage rating 90-plus when reviewed in 2019.

How to explain this? One hypothesis might be that South African wine industry’s learning curve has been steep in the modern era and better technique in both vineyard and cellar equates to producers becoming increasingly adept at confronting the climatic issues of any particular year.

Top performing cellar overall was Nederburg with six wines to rate 90-plus followed by Tokara with four and then Boschendal, Cape Point Vineyards, De Grendel, Delaire Graff, Neil Ellis and Remhoogte, each with three. Best white wine overall was Tokara Director’s Reserve White 2011 on 94 points and best red was Remhoogte Aspect Merlot 2011 also on 94.

Some general observations. Sauvignon Blanc and Sauv-Sem blends, with their high total acidity and low pH measurements, tend to have the inherent chemistry to at least survive but many don’t necessarily take on extra complexity, which is to say they simply show the aromatics and flavours that were there from the beginning. Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc, meanwhile, tend to show more interesting developed characteristics presuming they haven’t already succumbed to oxidation and decay.

As for the reds, a general impression of the 2011s a decade on from vintage is one of improved fruit definition. It should be remembered that on re-entry into the global market post political transformation, South African reds had been criticized by international critics for being too “green” and this was then followed by an over-reaction where growers pursued ripeness at all costs. “Optimal ripeness” is, of course, a relative concept and it may well be argued that it has only been quite recently that producers have been inclined to trust their own judgement in this regard rather than being dictated to by commentators or following market preferences too slavishly.

# TOP 10 TASTING NOTES

## WHITE



### Tokara Director's Reserve White 2011

Alc 14.33% RS 2.6g/l TA 7.3g/l pH 3.27

71% Sauvignon Blanc and 29% Semillon. Fermented and matured for nine months in barrel, the Sauvignon Blanc in 400-litre barrels and the Semillon in 225-litre casks, 26% new. Citrus, peach, black currant, baked apple, spice and some waxy character on the nose. The palate is all about reined-in power – good weight and balance, the acidity enclosed by dense fruit. Luscious, layered and long, this is classy stuff.



### De Grendel Winifred 2011

Alc 14% RS 1.73g/l TA 6.06g/l pH 3.26

48% Chardonnay, 29% Semillon and 23% Viognier, grapes predominantly from Durbanville but some Chardonnay from Ceres. The Chardonnay and Viognier partially fermented and matured for three months in 100% new oak, the remainder of the blend fermented in tank. Struck match before citrus, blossom and fresh herbs. The palate, meanwhile, is pure and focused with lovely bright acidity and a saline finish. Elegant and still very much intact.



### Tokara Reserve Collection Stellenbosch Chardonnay 2011

Alc 14.28% RS 2.2g/l TA 7.0g/l pH 3.33

Matured for 11 months in 228-litre barrels, 36% new. 30% malolactic fermentation. Citrus, vanilla plus some buttery complexity on the nose while the palate is rich and round with bright acidity and a savoury finish. Pleasantly thick textured and packed with flavour.





**De laire Graff**  
**Coastal Cuvée Sauvignon Blanc 2011**

**Alc 13.38% RS 2.1g/l TA 7.2g/l pH 3.3**

*50% of grapes from Stellenbosch, 32% Durbanville, 14% Darling and 4% Franschhoek Semillon. Some flinty reduction before lime and lemon, green apple and a pleasant herbal quality on the nose. The palate is lean and racy – lovely clean fruit before a finish that is long and dry.*



**Tokara**  
**Reserve Collection Elgin**  
**Sauvignon Blanc 2011**

**Alc 13.69% RS 2.7g/l TA 7.2g/l pH 3.0**

*A complex nose showing peach, Granny Smith apple, blackcurrant and fennel while the palate shows dense fruit and driving acidity before a saline finish. Youthful and intense.*





## RED



### Remhoogte Aspect Merlot 2011

Alc 14% RS 3.4g/l TA 5.7g/l pH 3.54

*Spontaneously fermented in 7 000-litre open-top vats before maturation lasting 24 months in French oak, 30% new. Dark berries, crushed leaves, vanilla and pencil shavings on the nose. Great depth of fruit matched by fresh acidity and supple tannins - polished in the best possible sense. Plush like all good Merlot should be.*



### Keet First Verse 2011

Alc 14.29% RS 1.7g/l TA 5.7g/l pH 3.6

*29% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 22% Cabernet Franc, 13% Petit Verdot and 10% Malbec. Matured for 19 months, 10% new. Wonderfully complex aromatics including red and black berries, tea leaf, earth, pencil shavings and oak spice. Excellent fruit concentration to go with lovely freshness and tannins that are fine yet still grippy. Well balanced and set to mature with further benefit.*



### Nederburg The Brew Master 2011

Alc 14.62% RS 3.29g/l TA 6.01 g/l pH 3.69

*51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 16% Malbec, 8% Petit Verdot and 4% Cabernet Franc – Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc from Groenekloof, Darling; Merlot from Durbanville; and Malbec and Petit Verdot from Paarl. Matured for 18 months in 300-litre barrels, partially new. Attractive aromatics of red berries, violets, a hint of leafiness plus oak spice before a palate that shows great fruit definitions, fresh acidity and fine tannins. Poised and elegant.*





## Remhoogte Sir Thomas Cullinan 2011

Alc 14.5% RS 2.8g/l TA 5.6g/l pH 3.49

65% Merlot and 35% Cabernet Sauvignon. Spontaneous fermentation in 500-litre open-top vats before maturation lasting 22 months in 225-litre French oak barrels, 60% new. Red and black berries, violets and a touch of undergrowth. Rich, full and flavourful on the palate – good fruit expression, smooth in texture, the finish long and dry.



## SWEET



## Boschendal Reserve Collection Vin d' Or 2011

Alc 10.17% RS 210g/l TA 7.39% pH 3.4

From Durbanville Chenin Blanc and Elgin Riesling. Matured for 10 months, 75% in stainless steel tank and 25% in oak. Citrus, honey plus a slight herbal edge to the nose while the palate has lovely purity and depth – sweet, dense fruit matched by zesty acidity before a super-dry finish.



# COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
<b>CAP CLASSIQUE</b>		
Tokara Blanc de Blancs 2011	Elgin	92
Babylonstoren Sprankel 2011	Western Cape	91
<b>CHARDONNAY</b>		
Babylonstoren 2011	Simonsberg-Paarl	86
Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin 2011	Elgin	88
Jordan Barrel Fermented 2011	Stellenbosch	91
Neil Ellis Elgin 2011	Elgin	91
Tokara Reserve Collection Stellenbosch 2011	Stellenbosch	93
Waterford Single Vineyard 2011	Stellenbosch	88
<b>CHENIN BLANC</b>		
Beaumont Hope Marguerite 2011	Bot River	92
Remhoogte Honeybunch Reserve 2011	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	90
Tierhoek 2011	Piekenierskloof	88
<b>SAUVIGNON BLANC</b>		
Boschendal Reserve Collection 2011	Western Cape	90
Cape Point Vineyards 2011	Cape Point	90
Cape Point Vineyards Reserve 2011	Cape Point	90
Delaire Graff Coastal Cuvee 2011	Coastal Region	92
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection Barrel Fermented 2011	Coastal Region	89
Steenberg 2011	Constantia	90
Steenberg Reserve 2011	Constantia	89
Tokara Reserve Collection Elgin 2011	Elgin	92
<b>OTHER WHITE BLENDS</b>		
De Grendel Winifred 2011	Western Cape	93
Joostenberg Fairhead 2011	Paarl	89
Joostenberg Small Batch Collection No. 6 Spaanse Spek 2011	Paarl	88
<b>SAUVIGNON BLANC-SEMILLON BLENDS</b>		
Cape Point Vineyards Isliedh 2011	Cape Point	92
Highlands Road Sine Cera 2011	Elgin	89
Tokara Director's Reserve White 2011	Stellenbosch	94
<b>CABERNET FRANC</b>		
Raats 2011	Stellenbosch	90
Warwick 2011	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	91
<b>CABERNET SAUVIGNON</b>		
Alto 2011	Stellenbosch	89
David Finlayson GS 2011	Stellenbosch	89
Delaire Graff Reserve 2011	Stellenbosch	92
Delaire Graff Laurence Graff Reserve 2011	Stellenbosch	91
Edgebaston 2011	Stellenbosch	88
Ernie Els 2011	Stellenbosch	90
Jakob's Vineyards 2011	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge	86
Jordan 2011	Stellenbosch	88



Le Riche Reserve 2011	Stellenbosch	89
Meerlust 2011	Stellenbosch	92
Nederburg II Centuries 2011	Western Cape	91
Nederburg Private Bin R163 2011	Paarl	90
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection 2011	Jonkershoek Valley	92
<b>CAPE BORDEAUX RED BLENDS</b>		
Alto M.P.H.S. 2011	Stellenbosch	89
De Grendel Rubaiyat 2011	Coastal Region	90
Diemersdal Private Collection 2011	Durbanville	87
Ernie Els Signature 2011	Stellenbosch	91
Keet First Verse 2011	Stellenbosch	93
L'Avenir Provenance Stellenbosch Classic 2011	Stellenbosch	92
Morgenster Estate 2011	Stellenbosch	88
Napier Red Medallion 2011	Wellington	92
Nederburg The Brew Master 2011	Western Cape	93
Overgaauw Tria Corda 2011	Stellenbosch	87
Quest Heroes Journey I 2011 (Du Toitskloof)	Western Cape	90
Remhoogte Sir Thomas Cullinan 2011	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	92
Stark-Condé Lingen 2011	Jonkershoek Valley	89
Tokara Director's Reserve Red 2011	Stellenbosch	89
Warwick Trilogy 2011	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	91
<b>GRENACHE</b>		
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection 2011	Piekenierskloof	89
<b>MERLOT</b>		
Groot Constantia 2011	Constantia	89
Remhoogte Aspect 2011	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	94
<b>PINOTAGE</b>		
L'Avenir Platinum 2011	Stellenbosch	89
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection 2011	Jonkershoek Valley	90
<b>SHIRAZ</b>		
Alto 2011	Stellenbosch	89
Babylonstoren 2011	Simonsberg-Paarl	91
De Grendel 2011	Coastal Region	90
Groot Constantia 2011	Constantia	90
Saxenburg Private Collection 2011	Stellenbosch	90
Stark-Condé Three Pines Syrah 2011	Jonkershoek Valley	90
Waterford Kevin Arnold 2011	Stellenbosch	90
<b>SIGNATURE RED BLENDS</b>		
Boschendal 1685 Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon 2011	Coastal Region	90
Ken Forrester The Gypsy 2011	Western Cape	91
Mellat "M" Tempranillo Cabernet Sauvignon 2011	Paarl	90
Nederburg Ingenuity Red Italian Blend 2011	Western Cape	90
Nederburg The Motorcycle Marvel 2011	Western Cape	91
Rust en Vrede 2011	Stellenbosch	91
<b>NOBLE LATE HARVEST</b>		
Boschendal Reserve Collection Vin d' Or 2011	Western Cape	93

Delheim Edelspatz 2011	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	<b>90</b>
Nederburg Private Bin Eminence 2011	Paarl	<b>91</b>
<b>PORT-STYLE FORTIFIED</b>		
Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2011	Western Cape	<b>92</b>
De Krans Cape Vintage Reserve 2011	Calitzdorp	<b>91</b>

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