

Prescient

CAPE WHITE BLEND  
REPORT 2021

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



Muratie Wine Estate.

# ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2021



Winemag.co.za is set to produce 14 category reports over the course of the year with multinational financial services company Prescient as sponsor. Each report will be based on the outcome of a blind tasting of wines entered within a specific category.

A report includes key findings, tasting notes for the top wines, buyer's guide and scores on the 100-point quality scale for all wines entered. Upon release, producers can purchase both Top 10 and regular rating stickers – consumers are encouraged to look out for these in the retail environment.

The year culminates in a gala event when the individual best wine in each category will be celebrated. These top-performing 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 James Pietersen and Jollette Steyn of Wine Cellar, Cape Town merchants and cellarers of fine wine. We tasted blind, labels out of sight. Ratings were done according to the 100-point system, final scores 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

Cape White Blends make for an important, if niche, category. No official definition exists but our proposal is that such wines can be made from any combination of varieties as long as they include a significant Chenin Blanc component, specifically more than 15% and less than 85% - Chenin is our most planted variety by far (17 148ha in the ground at the end of 2020, this making up 18.6% of the national vineyard) and we should find ways to celebrate it.

After 2020's somewhat poor turn-out for the relevant Prescient Report with just 20 entries from 17 producers submitted, it was heartening to see bigger numbers this year – 32 wines from 28 producers. Of these, 17 (53% of the line-up) rated 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

As has been the case for some time now, the fundamental issue the panel confronted was the extreme divergence in stylistics that the line-up showed, wines ranging from light and fresh to dense and oxidative.

Part of the strategic importance of the Cape White Blend category, at least in theory, is that consumers will drink them and automatically think of South Africa but it remains somewhat difficult to articulate what these wines have in common. Quite a few contain varieties broadly associated with the Rhône such as Viognier, Grenache Blanc and Roussanne and these typically seem to lend wines extra body but on the whole, just about anything goes – B Vintners Haarlem to Hope 2019, which placed Top 10, contains Chenin Blanc, Semillon, Muscat Blanc and Muscat d' Alexandrie, these varieties thought to have been some of the first to arrive with the Dutch settlers and it's therefore hard to think of a blend that is more true to its country of origin than that!

If pressed to summarize a trait that all the best examples share, then it is probably that they possess both texture AND freshness. In addition, there seems to pretty much be an eschewal of new oak – the wines typically vinified in big-format, old barrels or concrete eggs and that texture therefore is derived from the grapes being used.

After all said and done, these wines might remain somewhat unusual and challenging for the uninitiated, but it is probably best at this relatively early stage that the category remain as loose as possible – what makes the category so interesting is precisely the lack of a formulaic approach, winemakers seeking out vineyards of interest and then letting their imaginations run wild as to which varieties to combine with one another. These wines also tend to offer extraordinary bang for your buck – the average price of this year's Top 10 is a mere R147,20 a bottle.

## TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



### Coterie by Wildeberg 2020

R170

**Total production: 2 080 bottles Abv: 13.5%**

*67% Chenin Blanc from a Franschhoek vineyard planted in 1962 and 33% Grenache Blanc from Paarl. Spontaneously fermented and matured in older 600-litre barrels. Yellow fruit, some leesy complexity, earth and spice on the nose while the palate shows good density, tangy acidity and a savoury finish. Powerful but equally very characterful.*



### The Tea Leaf 2020 (Strange Kompanjie)

R105

**Total production: 5 328 bottles Abv: 13.5%**

*44% Chenin Blanc from a Paarl vineyard planted in 1977, 42% Crouchen Blanc from a Franschhoek vineyard planted in 1976 and 14% Palomino from a Piekenierskloof vineyard planted in 1977. Spontaneously fermented and matured for 10 months in 600-litre barrels. Beguiling aromatics of flowers and herbs to go with white and yellow fruit while the palate is broad with good texture and fresh acidity before a long and gently savoury finish. Plenty of detail.*



### Afrikaans Vol. III 2020

R150

**Total production: 1 358 bottles Abv: 14.13%**

*75% Chenin Blanc and 25% Chardonnay. A hint of reduction before notes of flowers and herbs plus white and yellow fruit on the nose. The palate is full and layered - impressive density matched by bright acidity, the finish long and savoury.*





## Boplaas Gamka Branca Reserve 2019

R150

Total production: 2 100 bottles Abv: 13.32%

45% Chardonnay, 26% Chenin Blanc, 11% Verdelho, 10% Grenache Blanc, 4% Viognier, 3% Roussanne and 1% Sauvignon Blanc. Spontaneously fermented and matured for nine months in older oak barrels of various sizes. A hint of reduction before flowers, herbs, pear and peach on the nose. The palate is light but simultaneously intensely flavoured – a great core of fruit and driving acidity make for a poised, wonderfully energetic wine.



## Forager White 2020 (African Pride Wines)

R90

Total production: 10 344 bottles Abv: 13.8%

82% Chenin Blanc and 18% Grenache Blanc from Wellington and Paarl. Matured for five months in a combination of stainless-steel tank and older 500-litre barrels. The nose shows citrus, peach and some waxy complexity while the palate is full but balanced – quite thick in texture but this offset by punchy acidity, the finish long and dry.



## Meerhof White Blend 2019

R150

Total production: 2 615 bottles Abv: 13%

37.5% Chenin blanc, 12.5% Chardonnay, 12.5% Roussanne, 12.5% Grenache Blanc, 12.5% Verdelho and 12.5% Viognier. A complex nose of citrus, peach and pineapple, herbs and a little earthiness as well as some waxy, nutty notes. The palate is medium bodied and harmonious with a lovely gentle acidity.





## Bonfire Hill White 2020 (Bruce Jack Wines)

R69

Total production: 6 225 bottles Abv: 13.5%

67% Chenin Blanc, 12% Grenache Blanc, 12% Roussane and 9% Viognier sourced variously from Wellington, Breedekloof and Robertson. Subtle aromatics of honeysuckle, citrus and peach with spice and some earthiness in the background. The palate, meanwhile, is tightly wound with a good core of fruit to go with some phenolic grip, the finish intensely savoury.



## B Vintners Haarlem to Hope 2019

R275

Total production: 1 450 bottles Abv: 13%

77% Chenin Blanc, 19% Semillon, 2% Muscat Blanc and 2% Muscat d' Alexandrie. Matured for 12 months in French oak, 25% new. Complex aromatics with notes of pear, peach and apple plus some leesy complexity. The palate has good depth of fruit, bright acidity playing off against the relatively thick texture of the wine, the finish long and savoury.



## Muratie Laurens Campher Blended White 2019

R198

Total production: 10 500 bottles Abv: 13.57%

54% Chenin Blanc, 30% Sauvignon Blanc, 12% Verdelho and 4% Viognier. Components vinified separately, then blended after maturation lasting 11 months in new and older 500-litre barrels. Citrus and white peach plus some vanilla and lanolin on the nose while the palate shows pure fruit and racy acidity – nicely weighted with layers of flavour.





Zevenwacht  
The Tin Mine Cape White Blend 2020

R115

Total production: 6 164 bottles Abv: 13.57%

*43% Chenin Blanc, 37% Chardonnay, 18% Roussanne and 2% Viognier. Matured for 10 months, 60% in older oak, 20% in new oak and 20% in concrete eggs. Citrus, apple and peach plus vanilla, baking spice and some yeasty complexity. The palate is somewhat sweet and soft but not without character – accessible now but should grow in complexity with time in bottle.*





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

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
The Tea Leaf 2020 (Strange Kompanjie)	94	R105
Coterie by Wildeberg 2020	94	R170
Afrikaans Vol. III 2020	93	R150
Boplaas Gamka Branca Reserve 2019	93	R150
Forager White 2020 (African Pride Wines)	92	R90
Meerhof 2019	92	R150
Bonfire Hill White 2020 (Bruce Jack Wines)	91 (Top 10)	R69
Zevenwacht The Tin Mine Cape White Blend 2020	91 (Top 10)	R115
Muratie Laurens Campher Blended White 2019	91 (Top 10)	R198
B Vintners Haarlem to Hope 2019	91 (Top 10)	R275
White Leipzig 2020	91	R175
Cavalli Cremello 2019	90	R175
Bosman Family Vineyards Adama 2020	90	R185
Stark-Condé Field Blend 2020	90	R235
Van Wyk Olive Grace 2019	90	R240
B Vintners Haarlem to Hope 2018	90	R250
Fairview Beryl Back 2019	90	R260

# COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
<b>Afrikaans Vol. III 2020</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>93</b>
Beaumont New Baby 2018	Bot River Walker Bay	88
<b>Bonfire Hill White 2020</b>	<b>Wellington Breedekloof Robertson</b>	<b>91</b>
Boplaas Gamka Branca Reserve 2018	Western Cape	89
<b>Boplaas Gamka Branca Reserve 2019</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>93</b>
Bosman Family Vineyards Adama 2020	Wellington	90
B Vintners Haarlem to Hope 2018	Stellenbosch	90
<b>B Vintners Haarlem to Hope 2019</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>91</b>
Cavalli Cremello 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Cavalli Cremello 2019	Stellenbosch	90
<b>Coterie by Wildeberg 2020</b>	<b>Coastal Region</b>	<b>94</b>
Croydon Vineyards Title Deed Cape Blend 2019	Western Cape	89
De Wet Vintage Mashup 2020	Worcester	88
DeMorgenzon Maestro White 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Eenzaamheid Vin Blanc 2020	Paarl	89
Fairview Beryl Back 2019	Paarl	90
<b>Forager White 2020 (African Pride Wines)</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>92</b>
Groote Post The Old Man's Blend 2020	Western Cape	89
Joostenberg Fairhead 2020	Paarl	88
<b>Meerhof 2019</b>	<b>Swartland</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Muratie Laurens Campher Blended White 2019</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>91</b>
Painted Wolf Peloton Blanc 2019	Western Cape	85
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Rossouw's Heritage 2018	Western Cape	87
Rascallion Aquiver 2019	Western Cape	89
Rascallion Susurrous 2019	Western Cape	89
Stark-Condé Field Blend 2020	Jonkershoek Valley	90
The Fledge & Co. Vagabond 2019	Western Cape	89
<b>The Tea Leaf 2020 (Strange Kompanjie)</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>94</b>
Van Wyk Olive Grace 2019	Western Cape	90
Vrede en Lust White Mischief 2020	Elgin	88
White Leipzig 2020	Western Cape	91
<b>Zevenwacht The Tin Mine Cape White Blend 2020</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>91</b>

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