

Prescient

CHENIN BLANC
REPORT 2021

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



Le Belle Rebelle.

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 Jolette 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

For the second annual Prescient Chenin Blanc Report, 90 entries were received from 67 producers with 49 rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. Among the Top 10, five were from Stellenbosch, one each from Breedekloof and Swartland and three were multi-regional blends.

Regarding what style prevailed, the panel was inclined to reward wines that saw fruit to the fore and not hidden behind stacks of new oak. As is well documented, the variety is capable of a wide array of legitimate but divergent expressions, and yet the very best iterations increasingly seem to be where grapes are not left to tire out in the sun but are picked relatively early, thus allowing the variety's crisp and invigorating natural acidity to shine forth.

In contrast, there is a sub-set of wines that are made in a more oxidative manner and come across as rich and broad on the palate. These are not without interest, but they often appear unduly advanced and a little rustic.

Residual sugar is also an issue. Demi-Sec and Moelleux make for some of the greatest examples of Loire Chenin but in South Africa, wines made to be off-dry sometimes come across as a bit cloying and listless – given our sunshine, fruit concentration is not something we struggle for.

The average price of the 49 wines to rate 90-plus is R192 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R144. Offering the best quality relative to price is Perdeberg Classic Collection 2020 with a rating of 92 and selling for R55 a bottle.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Cavalli Filly 2020

R130

Total production: 14 000 bottles Abv: 13.64%

Fermented and matured for 10 months in a combination of new, second- and third-fill barrels. Wonderfully complex aromatics of pear, white peach, lime plus hay and dried herbs and some leesy character while the palate has a weightless intensity about it – great fruit purity, fresh acidity and a saline finish. Full but balanced – has a luscious quality to it in addition to possessing plenty of detail.



Delaire Graff Swartland Reserve 2020

R225

Total production: 28 100 bottles Abv: 14.37%

From 30 to 40-year-old Swartland vineyards. Matured in French oak, 60% in 400-litre barrels and 40% in 2 500-litre foudre. Top notes of flowers and herbs before citrus, peach and some leesy complexity on the nose while the palate shows excellent fruit concentration and punchy acidity before a dry finish. Great definition and balance.



Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2020

R120

Total production: 98 800 bottles Abv: 13.44%

Fermented and matured for seven months in a combination of older barrels and amphorae. Enticing aromatics of flowers, herbs, citrus and peach plus some leesy complexity while the palate is wonderfully pure with zingy acidity and a pithy finish. An extraordinarily vibrant wine.





Laibach Sur Lie 2019

R120

Total production: 18 400 bottles Abv: 13.6%

From organically farmed grapes. Matured for 11 months in concrete egg and used larger format French and Hungarian oak barrels. A complex nose showing citrus, yellow peach, mushroom, some yeasty character, ginger and other spice. Rich and broad with layers of flavour – lovely fruit expression and well-integrated acidity before a savoury finish.



Longridge 2019

R155

Total production: 6 900 bottles Abv: 13.42%

Grapes farmed using organic and biodynamic practices. Spontaneously fermented and matured for 12 months, 90% in older oak and 10% in concrete eggs. Some flinty reduction before herbs, pear, peach and lime. Great purity of fruit and lively acidity, the finish long and dry. Stacks of flavour and full of energy.



Raats Original 2020

R135

Total production: 29 689 bottles Abv: 13.5%

Fermented and matured for six months in tank. Hay and herbs before citrus, pear and white peach on the nose. The palate, meanwhile, is electric – an excellent core of fruit is matched by high acidity before a bone-dry finish.





Gabriëlskloof 2020

R115

Total production: 25 000 bottles Abv: 13.33%

Grapes mostly from Swartland, however around 15% came from own vineyards. Spontaneously fermented and aged in a combination of old barrels and stainless-steel tanks for about six months. Citrus, peach, struck match reduction and lanolin on the nose while the palate is rich and full with tangy acidity and a savoury finish. Smooth textured and entirely seductive.



Mariëtte 2019 (Le Belle Rebelle)

R195

Total production: 950 bottles Abv: 14.29%

Matured for nine months in 225-litre barrels, 20% new – a barrel selection of a bigger production. Some flinty reduction before jasmine, pear, peach and apple plus a little vanilla on the nose. The palate is broad with moderate acidity – subtle flavours and good balance.



Painted Wolf The Den 2020

R85

Total production: 35 000 bottles Abv: 12.82%

Grapes were harvested from Leeuwenkuil in the Swartland and Welgegund in Wellington - the Leeuwenkuil grapes were tank fermented using natural yeast and blended with a smaller portion of barrel-fermented wine from Welgegund. A very expressive nose with notes of pear, peach, flowers and herbs while the palate has a dense core of fruit with zesty acidity and a pithy finish – a wine with a lovely energy about it.





Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2019

R170

Total production: 6 000 bottles Abv: 12.66%

Grapes from Franschhoek and Paarl. Spontaneously fermented and matured for 10 months in 500-litre French oak barrels and Austrian foudre. A floral top note before stone fruit, pineapple, some leesy complexity and spice on the nose. Excellent fruit concentration and punchy acidity – just the right amount of weight and texture, the finish long and dry.



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

| WINE | SCORE | PRICE |
|---|-------|-------|
| Cavalli Filly 2020 | 96 | R130 |
| Delaire Graff Swartland Reserve 2020 | 95 | R225 |
| Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2020 | 94 | R120 |
| Laibach Sur Lie 2019 | 94 | R120 |
| Raats Original 2020 | 94 | R135 |
| Longridge 2019 | 94 | R155 |
| Painted Wolf The Den 2020 | 93 | R85 |
| Gabriëlskloof 2020 | 93 | R115 |
| Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2019 | 93 | R170 |
| Mariëtte 2019 (Le Belle Rebelle) | 93 | R195 |
| Perdeberg Classic Collection 2020 | 92 | R55 |
| Flagstone Tributary Bush Vine 2020 | 92 | R110 |
| Le Belle Rebelle Solitude 2020 | 92 | R165 |
| Roodekrantz Rhenosterbosrug 2020 | 92 | R220 |
| Roodekrantz 1974 Old Bush Vine 2019 | 92 | R220 |
| David Finlayson Camino Africana Old Vine 2019 | 92 | R230 |
| Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Chenin Blanc Wine of Origin Cape Town 2019 | 92 | R235 |
| MAN Family Wines Free-Run Steen 2020 | 91 | R79 |
| Leyland Steen 2020 (De Wet) | 91 | R80 |
| Kunjani 2020 | 91 | R130 |
| Stellenbosch Reserve Hangbrug 2019 | 91 | R135 |
| Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2019 | 91 | R175 |
| Knorhoek 2019 | 91 | R180 |
| Mariëtte 2020 (Le Belle Rebelle) | 91 | R185 |
| Schultz Skeleton Bay 2020 | 91 | R200 |
| Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Limited Release 2019 | 91 | R235 |
| Villion Henning 2020 | 91 | R250 |
| The Fledge & Co. Hoeksteen 2019 | 90 | R100 |
| Rickety Bridge 2020 | 90 | R110 |
| Zevenwacht Old Vine 2020 | 90 | R125 |
| Kaapzicht Kliprug 2020 | 90 | R160 |
| L'Avenir Provenance 2020 | 90 | R160 |
| Painted Wolf 2019 | 90 | R160 |
| Romansrivier Steen 2019 (Mountain Ridge) | 90 | R160 |
| Stellenbosch Vineyards Credo 2017 | 90 | R165 |
| Eenzaamheid 2019 | 90 | R180 |
| Joostenberg Die Agteros Old Vine 2020 | 90 | R195 |
| The Drift Ghost in the Machine 2019 | 90 | R195 |
| Leeuwenkuil Heritage 2018 | 90 | R200 |
| Painted Wolf Lycaon Old Vine 2019 | 90 | R200 |
| Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2019 | 90 | R240 |

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|---|-----------|------|
| Cederberg Five Generations 2019 | 90 | R250 |
| Meinert 6Chen 2019 | 90 | R250 |
| Donkiesbaai Steen 2020 | 90 | R275 |
| Van Wyk 2019 | 90 | R280 |
| Roodekrantz Die Kliphuis Ou Bosstok Steen 2020 | 90 | R300 |
| Old Road Wine Co. StoneTrail Single Vineyard 2019 | 90 | R345 |
| Warwick Old Vine 2019 | 90 | R390 |
| Kaapzicht The 1947 2020 | 90 | R630 |

COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

| NAME | WINE OF ORIGIN | SCORE |
|--|---------------------|-----------|
| Allesverloren 2020 | Swartland | 88 |
| Altydgedacht Old Vine 2020 | Cape Town | 87 |
| Arendsig Inspirational Batch 3 2020 | Robertson | 87 |
| Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Limited Release 2019 | Coastal Region | 91 |
| Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Wine of Origin Cape Town 2019 | Cape Town | 92 |
| Bosman Family Vineyards Optenhorst 2019 | Wellington | 89 |
| Bowwood 2019 (Vondeling) | Voor Paardeberg | 87 |
| Bruce Jack Boer Maak 'n Plan 2018 | Breedekloof | 89 |
| Cavalli Filly 2020 | Stellenbosch | 96 |
| Cederberg Five Generations 2019 | Cederberg | 90 |
| Croydon Vineyards Covenant 2020 | Stellenbosch | 87 |
| DA Hanekom Familie Wyne Witteberg 2017 | Paarl | 84 |
| Daschbosch Mossiesdrift Steen 2020 | Breedekloof | 89 |
| David Finlayson Camino Africana Old Vine 2019 | Stellenbosch | 92 |
| Delaire Graff Swartland Reserve 2020 | Swartland | 95 |
| Delheim Wild Ferment 2019 | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| DeMorgenzon Reserve 209 | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| Donkiesbaai Steen 2020 | Piekenierskloof | 90 |
| Doolhof Riviersteen 2017 | Limietberg | 89 |
| Domier Moordenaarskloof 2020 | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cape Garden 2019 | Cape Town | 88 |
| Eenzaamheid 2019 | Agter Paarl | 90 |
| Flagstone Paradigm 2020 | Agter Paarl | 89 |
| Flagstone Tributary Bush Vine 2020 | Coastal Region | 92 |
| Frater Family Wines Barrique Selection 2019 | Swartland | 88 |
| Gabriëlskloof 2020 | Western Cape | 93 |
| Joostenberg Die Agteros Old Vine 2020 | Paarl | 90 |
| Jordan Inspector Péringuey 2020 | Stellenbosch | 88 |
| Kaapzicht Kliprug 2020 | Stellenbosch | 90 |
| Kaapzicht The 1947 2020 | Stellenbosch | 90 |
| Kleine Zalze Cellar Selection Bush Vines 2020 | Coastal Region | 88 |
| Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2019 | Stellenbosch | 90 |
| Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2020 | Stellenbosch | 94 |
| Knorhoek 2019 | Stellenbosch | 91 |
| Kunjani 2020 | Stellenbosch | 91 |
| Laibach Sur Lie 2019 | Stellenbosch | 94 |
| Laibach The Ladybird 2020 | Western Cape | 89 |
| L'Avenir Provenance 2020 | Stellenbosch | 90 |
| L'Avenir Single Block 2019 | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| Le Belle Rebelle Intrepid 2020 | Breedekloof | 89 |
| Le Belle Rebelle Solitude 2020 | Swartland | 92 |
| Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2019 | Klein Karoo | 91 |
| Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2020 | Klein Karoo | 89 |
| Leeuwenkuil Heritage 2018 | Worcester | 90 |
| Leeuwenkuil Heritage 2019 | Swartland | 88 |

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------|
| Leyland Steen 2020 (De Wet) | Worcester | 91 |
| Longridge 2019 | Stellenbosch | 94 |
| MAN Family Wines Free-Run Steen 2020 | Coastal Region | 91 |
| Mariëtte 2019 (Le Belle Rebelle) | Breedekloof | 93 |
| Mariëtte 2020 (Le Belle Rebelle) | Breedekloof | 91 |
| Meinert 6Chen 2018 | Swartland | 88 |
| Meinert 6Chen 2019 | Swartland | 90 |
| Old Man Sam 2020 (Maree Family Wines) | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| Old Road Wine Co. Anemos 2018 | Coastal Region | 88 |
| Old Road Wine Co. StoneTrail Single Vineyard 2019 | Franschhoek | 90 |
| Opstal Carl Everson Single Vineyard 2019 | Slanghoek | 86 |
| Painted Wolf 2019 | Coastal Region | 90 |
| Painted Wolf Lycaon Old Vine 2019 | Wellington | 90 |
| Painted Wolf The Den 2020 | Coastal Region | 93 |
| Perdeberg Classic Collection 2020 | Coastal Region | 92 |
| Perdeberg Endura Single Vineyard 2018 | Swartland | 87 |
| Pilgrim 2019 | Voor Paardeberg | 89 |
| Quest Old Vine 2020 (Du Toitskloof) | Breedekloof | 87 |
| Raats Old Vine 2019 | Stellenbosch | 88 |
| Raats Original 2020 | Stellenbosch | 94 |
| Rascallion The Devonian 2019 | Swartland | 89 |
| Rickety Bridge 2020 | Western Cape | 90 |
| Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2019 | Coastal Region | 93 |
| Romansrivier Steen 2019 (Mountain Ridge) | Breedekloof | 90 |
| Roodekrantz 1974 Old Bush Vine 2019 | Coastal Region | 92 |
| Roodekrantz Die Kliphuis Ou Bosstok Steen 2020 | Swartland | 90 |
| Roodekrantz Rhenosterbosrug 2020 | Swartland | 92 |
| Schultz Skeleton Bay 2020 | Western Cape | 91 |
| Simonsig 2020 | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| Simonsig Chenin Avec Chêne Wooded 2019 | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| Spier 21 Gables 2019 | Cape Town | 87 |
| Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2019 (Koelenhof) | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| Stellenbosch Reserve Hangbrug 2019 | Stellenbosch | 91 |
| Stellenbosch Vineyards Bushvine 2020 | Stellenbosch | 89 |
| Stellenbosch Vineyards Credo 2017 | Stellenbosch | 90 |
| The Drift Ghost in the Machine 2019 | Stellenbosch | 90 |
| The Fledge & Co. Hoeksteen 2019 | Stellenbosch | 90 |
| Tierhoek OVP 2019 | Piekenierskloof | 89 |
| Van Wyk 2019 | Western Cape | 90 |
| Villion Henning 2020 | Bot River | 91 |
| Vrede en Lust Kogelberg 2018 | Elgin | 89 |
| Warwick Old Vine 2019 | Simonsberg Stellenbosch | 90 |
| Welgegund Heritage Wines Old Vine 2019 | Wellington | 87 |
| Wild House 2020 (Wildeberg) | Western Cape | 89 |
| Zevenwacht Old Vine 2020 | Stellenbosch | 90 |

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