

Prescient

PINOTAGE  
REPORT 2021

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



De Grendel 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 wine writer Malu Lambert and James Pietersen 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](http://Winemag.co.za)*



# KEY FINDINGS

Pinotage, to put it mildly, will always be controversial. South Africa's very own, it is a crossing of Pinot Noir and Cinsault (Hermitage) and it can't be denied that wines from this variety can have an unusual flavour profile. There are some who will apparently never be able to get over their negative beliefs and feelings about it but it is very much part of the South African wine milieu (the country's sixth most planted variety behind Shiraz and ahead of Chardonnay) and the question really should be: How to make the best of it?

For the second annual Prescient Pinotage Report, 58 entries were received from 46 producers with 23 (40%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

Among the Top 10, it was again Stellenbosch in a leading position with six wines from this district while there were two multi-area blends and one wine each from Paarl and Swartland.

If the Pinotage category was plagued by some outright poor wines 20 years ago that is far less the case now. However, what this tasting revealed was lots of sound stuff but little that was really exciting. The strength of the variety is its generosity of fruit but it is notoriously difficult to work with in the cellar (on account of its inherently high pH, a proneness to micro-bacterial spoilage and sometimes quite aggressive tannins) so extra-careful vinification is essential.

One way to avoid tannin astringency is obviously to pick riper but the danger here is that the resulting wines can become sweet and jammy. In contrast, there are clearly some producers who are attempting to dial it right back, picking earlier and adopting a gentler treatment in the cellar – get it right and wines of refinement and elegance result, get it wrong and something quite dilute and insubstantial is the outcome.

Settling on the appropriate barrel maturation regime also seems to be more of an issue than it does with other red wine categories, many wines showing rather too much oak-derived character such as overt vanilla, cola, coconut, chocolate and toffee aromas and flavours. Reduction, too, must be mentioned – a little of this character being a point of interest but too much being discordant, quite of the few of the wines showing brooding notes of smoke, tar and shoe polish.

What characterises the Top 10, then? In a word, fruit integrity. Consumers will find a diversity of styles from Old School (highly concentrated fruit with firm tannins) to New Wave (lighter and fresher) but in all instances, they are wines where the purity and clarity of Pinotage has not been too compromised.

The average price of the 23 wines to rate 90-plus is R266 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R249. Offering the best quality relative to price is Du Toitskloof 2018 with a rating of 92 and selling for R75 a bottle.

## TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



### De Grendel Amandelboord 2019

R235

Total production: 12 320 bottles Abv: 15.1%

*Matured for 12 months in French and American oak, 12% new. Exotic aromatics of red currant, pomegranate and cherry alongside floral perfume and herbs as well attractive oak-derived notes. The palate is intense but not weighty - great fruit purity, fresh acidity and powdery tannins make this an extraordinarily well-balanced wine.*



### Môreson The Widow Maker 2019

R300

Total production: 2 642 bottles and 123 magnums Abv: 14.48%

*Matured for 18 months in French oak, 40% new. Black cherry, flowers and fynbos plus some toasty oak character on the nose while the palate has a dense core of fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins. Full but balanced with excellent fruit purity and real drive.*



### Bellevue The Reserve Collection 2017

R220

Total production: 3 986 bottles Abv: 13.93%

*Matured for 18 months in French and American oak, some new. Red and black fruit, a slight herbal edge plus vanilla and spice on the nose while the palate is medium bodied with bright acidity and fine, mouthcoating tannins, the finish gently savoury.*





## B Vintners Liberté 2019

R315

**Total production: 600 bottles Abv: 13.5%**

*50% whole-bunch fermentation before maturation lasting 18 months in older French oak. Red berries, fynbos and some floral perfume on the nose. The palate is medium bodied with clean fruit, fresh acidity and crunchy tannins, the finish long and salty. As ever, a particularly elegant take on the variety.*



## Du Toitskloof 2018

R75

**Total production: 85 000 bottles Abv: 14.8%**

*Grapes from the Swartland. Fermented and matured for 12 months using a mixture of barrels and staves. Particularly fragrant on the nose with notes of cranberry, pomegranate, flowers and herbs while the palate has a lovely juicy sweetness about it but also crunchy tannins – accessible and refreshing.*



## Francois van Niekerk 2019

R500

**Total production: 2 500 bottles Abv: 14.5%**

*Grapes from Paarl and Wellington. Matured for 24 months in French oak, 70% new. Aromatics of black cherry, dried herbs, earth, cola and spice. The palate is full but balanced with dense fruit, fresh acidity and pleasantly firm tannins. Plenty of weight and power but equally layers of flavour, the finish long and dry.*





## Windmeul Reserve 2017

R150

Total production: 10 514 bottles Abv: 14.66%

*Grapes from Agter Paarl. Matured for 18 months in French oak, 100% new. Cherry, an attractive herbal note plus vanilla and spice on the nose while the palate is rich and broad – good fruit density, vibrant acidity and tannins that are starting to resolve nicely.*



## Nederburg 2019

R98

Total production: 33 866 bottles Abv: 14.54%

*Grapes from Darling, Paarl and Stellenbosch. Fermented and matured for 12 months using a mixture of barrels and staves. Plenty of ripe berry fruit plus tilled earth, herbs and spice on the nose while the palate is light and fresh with pleasingly soft tannins. Nicely judged vinification making for an instantly accessible wine.*



## Simonsig Redhill 2018

R410

Total production: 19 081 bottles Abv: 14.63%

*20% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 15 months in French oak, 100% new. Attractive oak-derived notes before black cherry, earth and dried herbs. The palate is full bodied and plush – pure fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and dry.*





## L'Avenir Provenance 2018

R180

Total production: 13 700 bottles Abv: 14.44%

*Matured for 10 to 14 months in a combination of steel tanks and barrel, 25% new. Red and black cherry, fennel plus some smoky, tarry notes on the nose while the palate shows good focus with pure fruit and fresh acidity before a dry finish. Medium bodied and harmonious.*





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

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
De Grendel Amandelboord 2019	94	R235
Môreson The Widow Maker 2019	94	R300
Du Toitskloof 2018	92	R75
Windmeul Reserve 2017	92	R150
Bellevue The Reserve Collection 2017	92	R220
B Vintners Liberté 2019	92	R315
Francois van Niekerk 2019	92	R500
Nederburg 2019	91	R100
Simonsig Redhill 2018	91	R410
L'Avenir Provenance 2018	90 (Top 10)	R180
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2018	90	R99
L'Avenir Horizon 2020	90	R100
Meerhof 2020	90	R105
Mooiplaas 2020	90	R135
Asara Vineyard Collection 2018	90	R145
Lievland Bushvine 2019	90	R160
La Cave 2019 (Wellington Wines)	90	R220
Lyngrove Platinum 2018	90	R230
Aaldering 2019	90	R265
Bellingham The Bernard Series Bush Vine Limited Release 2017	90	R320
Flagstone Writer's Block 2018	90	R330
Passione 2017 (Asara)	90	R350
Lanzerac Pionier Single Vineyard 2018	90	R1 165

# COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
Aaldering 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Aaldering 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Aaldering Lady M 2019	Stellenbosch	87
Allée Bleue 2018	Franschhoek/ Piekenierskloof	89
Allée Bleue Black Series Old Vine 2018	Piekenierskloof	89
Asara Vineyard Collection 2018	Coastal Region	90
<b>Bellevue The Reserve Collection 2017</b>	<b>Bottelary Stellenbosch</b>	<b>92</b>
Bellingham The Bernard Series Bush Vine Limited Release 2017	Coastal Region	90
Beyerskloof Reserve 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Beyerskloof Reserve 2019	Stellenbosch	88
Beyerskloof Woolworths Signature 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Bowwood 2017 (Vondeling)	Voor Paardeberg	88
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2018	Breedekloof	90
<b>B Vintners Liberté 2019</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>92</b>
Croydon Covenant 2019	Stellenbosch	87
<b>De Grendel Amandelboord 2019</b>	<b>Durbanville</b>	<b>94</b>
Delheim 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Delheim Vera Cruz 2017	Simonsberg Stellenbosch	88
Diemersdal The Journal 2019	Durbanville	89
<b>Du Toitskloof 2018</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>92</b>
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Promenade 2018	Durbanville Cape Town	88
Fat Bastard 2019	Robertson	88
Flagstone Writer's Block 2018	Breedekloof	90
Fleur du Cap Essence du Cap 2018	Western Cape	85
Fleur Du Cap Unfiltered 2017	Paarl	87
<b>Francois van Niekerk 2019</b>	<b>Coastal Region</b>	<b>92</b>
Gentis Koffie 2021 (Thor Vintners)	Swartland	84
Groot Phesantekraal 2019	Cape Town	89
Kaapzicht 2019	Stellenbosch	85
Kaapzicht Steytler 2018	Stellenbosch	88
L'Avenir Horizon 2020	Stellenbosch	90
<b>L'Avenir Provenance 2018</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>90</b>
La Cave 2019 (Wellington Wines)	Wellington	90
Laibach 2018	Simonsberg Stellenbosch	87
Lanzerac Pionier Single Vineyard 2018	Jonkershoek Valley Stellenbosch	90
Leipzig 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Lievland Bushvine 2019	Coastal Region	90
Lyngrove Platinum 2018	Stellenbosch	90
MAN Family Wines Bosstok 2019	Coastal Region	89
Meerhof 2020	Swartland	90
Meinert Printer's Ink 2017	Stellenbosch	87
Meinert Printer's Ink 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Mooiplaas 2020	Stellenbosch	90

<b>Môreson The Widow Maker 2018</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Nederburg 2019</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>91</b>
Neethlingshof 2020	Stellenbosch	87
Orpheus and the Raven No.7 2019	Western Cape	89
Passione 2017 (Asara)	Stellenbosch	90
Piekenierskloof Johan van Zyl 2019	Piekenierskloof	87
Robertson Winery 2020	Robertson	85
Simonsig 2018	Stellenbosch	88
<b>Simonsig Redhill 2018</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>91</b>
Spier 21 Gables 2017	Stellenbosch	89
Stanford Hills Veldfire 2020	Walker Bay	89
Stellenbosch 1679 2019 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	88
The Giant Periwinkle Sun Spider 2019	Cape Agulhas	88
Villa Esposito 2018 (Klawer)	Olifants River	88
<b>Windmeul Reserve 2017</b>	<b>Coastal Region</b>	<b>92</b>

# CONTACT DETAILS

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