

Prescient

MINORITY
REPORT 2021

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



Zorgvliet.

NICHE WHITE VARIETIES | NICHE RED VARIETIES

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 Pieterse and Jolette Steyn, both 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*

INTRODUCTION

The focus of the Minority Report is on wines from varieties whose respective total plantings do not exceed 5 000ha. South Africa's eight most widely planted varieties (Chenin Blanc, Colombar, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz, Pinotage, Chardonnay, and Merlot in that order) all have plantings of over 5 000ha and together make up 82% of the national vineyard – this is a chance for the more subordinate varieties to shine!

KEY FINDINGS

For this year's report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, there were 47 white wine entries and 55 red wine entries received, with 19 (or 40%) of the whites rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale and 23 (or 42%) of the reds.

Again it was Semillon that came to the fore among the white wines with four examples in the Top 10. It is staggering to think that this variety made up almost the entirety of the Cape's vines in the early 1800s and even by the early 20th century still constituted about 40% of plantings. It cannot be denied, however, that it is one of those grapes that tend to be more appreciated by wine insiders than by the average wine drinker and today there are a mere 991 ha in the ground, the equivalent of just 1% of the national vineyard!

As for the rest of the Top 10, it will please those who like to drink broadly with it including two examples each of Roussanne and Verdelho plus a Gewüztraminer and a skin-contact Grenache Blanc. Verdelho has for a while now shown promise under local conditions – it ripens early in the growing season and can tolerate periods of drought. The resulting wines seem to hold their acidities well and it should be noted that it has become a key component in such an esteemed wine as the white blend from Donovan Rall. Plantings remain minute, however, with a mere 80.8ha under cultivation at the end of 2020.

As for the red varieties, Cabernet Franc performed well with three examples among the Top 10 and a further five rating 90 points – no surprise as the variety's charms are well established and local winemakers seem to have a good handle on how to get the best out of it.

It was Petit Verdot, however, that enjoyed an unexpectedly good showing with two in the Top 10. It is valued for its depth of colour as well as providing tannic structure and while it can play a useful role in a blend, the panel has up till now not been convinced by the variety's ability to stand alone, the resulting wines typically presenting as overdone. This time around, however, the Zorgvliet 2018 and Dornier 2016 impressed, both offering plenty of concentration but not sacrificing balance or complexity.

Worthy of particular attention are the two examples of Grenache Noir from Piekenierskloof Wine Company, specifically the standard label 2020 and the reserve Carel van Zyl 2019, which both made the Top 10. It is often said that relatively mature vineyards are a precondition for achieving anything of note from this variety and this is very much the case here, the vineyard in question established in 1973.

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Vergelegen.

NICHE WHITE VARIETIES

WHITE WINES

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Vergelegen Reserve Semillon 2019

R325

Total production: 4 046 bottles Abv: 13.56%

Fermented and matured for eight months in French oak, less than 20% new. The nose is wonderfully complex with top notes of thatch and dried herbs before blackcurrant, citrus and white peach plus a little leesy character and oak spice. The palate is very well balanced - rich and round but not lacking in freshness, the finish long and savoury. Layers and layers of flavour.



Le Belle Rebelle A Bird in the Hand Semillon 2020

R240

Total production: 1 095 bottles Abv: 13.19%

10% fermented spontaneously before maturation in older oak, 75% French and 25% Hungarian. Cut apple, peach, thatch plus vanilla and some waxy complexity on the nose while the palate is full and flavourful with a good line of acidity, the finish long and dry.



Old Road Wine Co. Grand-Mère Semillon 2018

R304

Total production: 1 500 bottles Abv: 13.5%

Grapes from a Franschhoek vineyard planted in 1936. 50% of the juice fermented spontaneously and 50% inoculated. Matured for 12 months, 80% in mainly older oak and 20% in clay pots. Citrus, peach, hay and a slight waxy note on the nose while the palate is rich and broad with layers of flavour and a grippy texture, the finish long and savoury.





Bosman
Fides Grenache Blanc 2019

R250

Total production: 9 800 bottles Abv: 13.11%

Fermented on the skins for three weeks before maturation lasting eight months in Russian oak, 25% new. Amber in colour. Marmalade, stone fruit, some waxiness and spice on the nose while the palate possesses plenty of intrigue – dense fruit and good freshness before a nicely dry finish.



Cavalli
The Foal Verdelho 2019

R230

Total production: 700 bottles Abv: 13.81%

Matured for 18 months in older oak. Cut apple, peach, some nutty character and spice on the nose. Rich and broad on the palate with tangy acidity and a wonderfully salty finish.



Painted Wolf
Roussanne 2019

R170

Total production: 3 300 bottles Abv: 13.61%

Matured for nine months in French oak, 40% new. Beguiling aromatics of citrus, peach, flowers and spice while the palate shows pure fruit, zippy acidity and a long, pithy finish. Intricate and tightly wound.





Wildeberg White 2020

R360

Total production: 2 700 bottles Abv: 13.82%

100% Semillon. Fermented and matured in new and older oak. Citrus, white peach, black currant and some waxy character on the nose while the palate has excellent depth of fruit and a smooth texture, the acidity nicely integrated. The finish, in turn, is long and gently savoury.



Altydgedacht Gewürztraminer 2020

R130

Total production: 5 686 bottles Abv: 13.23%

Fermented in tank and matured on the lees for six months. Lime, lychee, Turkish Delight and spice on the nose while the palate shows good focus – pure fruit, fresh acidity and a long, dry finish.



Mischa Roussanne 2021

R187

Total production: 1 350 bottles Abv: 13.13%

Unwooded. Heady and exotic aromatics with notes of jasmine, pear, peach and spice while the palate is clean and fresh – a dense core of fruit precedes a pithy finish.





Stellenbosch Vineyards Limited Release Verdelho 2020

R275

Total production: 2 850 bottles Abv: 14.29%

Fermented and matured for 10 months in French oak, 60% new. Pretty aromatics including pear, peach and apple plus dried herbs while the palate is clean and balanced – pure fruit, bright acidity and a saline finish.



WHITE WINES

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

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
Vergelegen Reserve Semillon 2019	93	R325
Le Belle Rebelle A Bird in the Hand Semillon 2020	92	R240
Old Road Wine Co. Grand-Mère Semillon 2018	92	R304
Painted Wolf Roussanne 2019	91	R170
Cavalli The Foal Verdelho 2019	91	R230
Bosman Fides Grenache Blanc 2019	91	R250
Wildeberg White 2020	91	R360
Altydgedacht Gewürztraminer 2020	90 (Top 10)	R130
Mischa Roussanne 2021	90 (Top 10)	R187
Stellenbosch Vineyards Limited Release Verdelho 2020	90 (Top 10)	R275
Boplaas Cape Portuguese White Blend 2021 (Verdelho)	90	R67
Groote Post Riesling 2020	90	R112
Vrede en Lust Viognier 2020	90	R140
Arbeidsgenot Grenache Blanc 2020 (Meerhof)	90	R150
Usana Luck of the Gambler Skin Contact Pinot Gris 2020	90	R165
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve Semillon 2018	90	R185
La Petite Ferme Viognier 2020	90	R190
Painted Wolf Solo Roussanne 2020	90	R190
Lowerland Witgat Viognier 2020	90	R325

WHITE WINES

COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
GRENACHE BLANC		
Arbeidsgenot 2020 (Meerhof)	Swartland	90
Bosman Fides 2019	Wellington	91
Donkiesbaai 2020	Piekenierskloof	89
Olifantsberg 2019	Breedekloof	89
ROUSSANNE		
Mischa 2021	Groenberg	90
Painted Wolf 2019	Voor Paardeberg	91
Painted Wolf Solo 2020	Voor Paardeberg	90
RIESLING		
Groote Post 2016	Darling	89
Groote Post 2017	Darling	88
Groote Post 2020	Darling	90
Lothian of Elgin Vineyard Selection 2019	Elgin	84
Oak Valley Stone & Steel 2020	Elgin	88
Vrede en Lust Artisan Range 2020	Elgin	88
Vrede en Lust Early Mist 2020	Elgin	88
SEMILLON		
Domier 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Highlands Road 2019	Elgin	89
Le Belle Rebelle A Bird in the Hand 2020	Breedekloof	92
Old Road Wine Co. Grand-Mère 2018	Franschhoek	92
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2018	Franschhoek	90
Rickety Bridge The Pilgrimage Old Vine 2018	Franschhoek	88
Thor Age of The Rebel 2019	Franschhoek	85
Vergelegen Reserve 2019	Stellenbosch	93
Wildeberg White 2020	Franschhoek	91
VERDELHO		
Arbeidsgenot 2020 (Meerhof)	Swartland	89
Boplaas Cape Portuguese White Blend 2021	Calitzdorp	90
Cavalli The Foal 2019	Stellenbosch	91
De Krans Tritonia 2020	Calitzdorp	89
Stellenbosch Vineyards Limited Release 2020	Stellenbosch	90
VIOGNIER		
Babylonstoren 2020	Simonsberg-Paarl	88
Bellingham The Bernard Series Hand-Picked 2019	Cape Coast	88
De Grendel 2021	Cape Town	88
La Petite Ferme 2020	Franschhoek	90
Lowerland Witgat 2020	Prieska	90
Mary le Bow 2019	Western Cape	88
Painted Wolf Teardrop 2020	Breedekloof	88
Ridgeback 2020	Paarl	89
Vrede en Lust 2020	Western Cape	90
OTHER		
Altydgedacht Gewürztraminer 2020	Cape Town	90
Bosman Wine Club Selection Pinot Gris 2020	Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley	88

Diemersdal Grüner Veltliner 2020	Cape Town	89
Koelenhof Koelnektar Gewürztraminer 2021	Stellenbosch	85
Koueberg Altydvygie Nouvelle 2020	Cape Agulhas	89
Mariëtte Pinot Blanc 2019 (Le Belle Rebelle)	Breedekloof	88
Stellenbosch Vineyards Limited Release Therona 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Usana Luck of the Gambler Skin Contact Pinot Gris 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Usana The Queen's Horses Pinot Gris 2020	Stellenbosch	89
Usana The Runaway Pinot Gris 2020	Stellenbosch	87

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Temple Wines.

NICHE RED VARIETIES

RED WINES

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Zorgvliet Petit Verdot 2018

R160

Total production: 3 800 bottles Abv: 14.25%

Matured for 18 months in French oak, 5% new. Red and black berries, tea leaf, earth and pencil shavings. The palate is full but balanced – plenty of fruit power but also bright acidity and firm but fine tannins, the finish long and savoury.



B Vintners Lone Wolf Cinsault 2020

R250

Total production: 1 200 bottles Abv: 13%

Grapes from a Stellenbosch vineyard planted in 1953. Cherries, plums, pomegranate, and dried herbs on the nose while the palate displays a dense core of fruit, bright acidity and nicely grippy tannins. Not short of substance and beautifully balanced.



Piekenierskloof Carel van Zyl Grenache Noir Old Vine 2019

R500

Total production: 950 bottles Abv: 13.96%

Grapes from a 1973 vineyard. Matured for 12 months in inert 500-litre oak barrels. Aromatics of red and black berries, musk, fynbos and spice while the palate has good fruit expression and powdery tannins. Well balanced with layers of flavour.





Piekenierskloof Grenache Noir 2020

R138

Total production: 2 257 bottles Abv: 13.66%

Grapes from a 1973 vineyard. Matured for 12 months in inert 500-litre oak barrels. Red and black berries, a hint of reduction and spice on the nose. The palate is juicy and fresh with nicely grippy tannins. Not insubstantial – good depth of fruit and structure.



Raats Family Cabernet Franc 2018

R650

Total production: 4 800 bottles Abv: 14%

Matured for 18 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 15% new. Red and black berries, fresh herbs, violets and some boot polish. Medium bodied with succulent fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and savoury. Presents as particularly youthful and should mature with benefit.



Stellenrust Barrel Selection Cabernet Franc 2017

R177

Total production: 1 860 bottles Abv: 14.2%

Matured for 18 months in French oak, 27% new. The nose has top notes of floral perfume and fresh herbs before red and black berries plus some earthiness. The palate is medium bodied with good purity of fruit, fresh acidity and firm but fine tannins, the finish long and dry.





Dornier Moordenaarskloof Tinta Barocca 2019

R295

Total production: 5 597 bottles Abv: 14.92%

From a Swartland vineyard planted in 1971. Matured for 17 months in French oak, 20% new. Exotic aromatics of incense, dark berries, earth, herbs, spice plus a little vanilla. The palate is rich and full – lots of dense fruit, bright acidity and firm, nicely grippy tannins.



Dornier Petit Verdot 2016

R225

Total production: 2 789 bottles Abv: 14%

Matured for 24 months in French oak, 30% new. Red and black berries, olive, undergrowth and chocolate on the nose while the palate is full but balanced – great fruit density and firm tannins before a savoury finish.



Tempel Tydsam Tempranillo 2019

R325

Total production: 2 543 bottles Abv: 14.3%

Spontaneously fermented in concrete tanks before maturation lasting 12 months in French oak barrels, approximately 35% new. Red and black berries, crushed herbs, baking spice and vanilla on the nose while the palate is plush – sweet fruit and creamy in texture. Seductive in its richness and intensity.





Zorgvliet Cabernet Franc 2018

R160

Total production: 5 000 bottles Abv: 14.51%

Matured for 18 months in French oak, 12% new. Wonderfully fragrant on the nose with notes of violets, fresh herbs, red and black berries plus turned earth and pencil shavings. The palate has good depth and structure – luscious fruit, bright acidity and smooth tannins, the finish long and dry.



RED WINES

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

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
Zorgvliet Petit Verdot 2018	94	R160
Piekenierskloof Grenache Noir 2020	92	R138
Stellenrust Barrel Selection Cabernet Franc 2017	92	R177
B Vintners Lone Wolf Cinsault 2020	92	R250
Piekenierskloof Carel van Zyl Grenache Noir Old Vine 2019	92	R500
Raats Family Cabernet Franc 2018	92	R650
Zorgvliet Cabernet Franc 2018	91	R160
Domier Petit Verdot 2016	91	R225
Domier Moordenaarskloof Tinta Barocca 2019	91	R295
Tempel Tydsam Tempranillo 2019	91	R325
Gentis Red 2018 (Cabernet Franc - Thor Vintners)	90	R90
De Krans Tinta Roriz 2019	90	R105
Old Road Wine Co. Pardonnez Moi Cinsault 2019	90	R115
Baboon Rock Grenache Rosé 2021 (La Petite Ferme)	90	R160
Domier Malbec 2017	90	R160
Raats Dolomite Cabernet Franc 2018	90	R185
Bruce Jack Ghost in the Machine Cabernet Franc 2019	90	R199
Arbeidsgenot Grenache Noir 2019 (Meerhof)	90	R200
Ridgeback Cabernet Franc 2019	90	R200
Olifantsberg Grenache Noir 2019	90	R215
Bosman Twyfeling Cinsaut 2019	90	R250
Rickety Bridge Paulinas Reserve Old Vine Cinsault 2020	90	R450
Boschendal Cabernet Franc 2018	90	TBC

RED WINES

COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
CABERNET FRANC		
Boschendal 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Bruce Jack Ghost in the Machine 2019	Western Cape	90
Gentis Red 2018 (Cabernet Franc - Thor Vintners)	Franschhoek	90
Raats Dolomite 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Raats Family 2018	Stellenbosch	92
Ridgeback 2019	Paarl	90
Stellenbosch Vineyards The Flagship 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Stellenrust Barrel Selection 2017	Stellenbosch	92
Thor Age of the Rebel The Mule Run 2018	Franschhoek	87
Vrede en Lust Artisan Range 2017	Elgin	85
Zorgvliet 2018	Banghoek	91
CINSAULT		
B Vintners Lone Wolf 2020	Stellenbosch	92
Bosman Twyfeling 2019	Wellington	90
Old Road Wine Co. Pardonnez Moi 2019	Western Cape	90
Piekenierskloof 2020	Piekenierskloof	89
Piekenierskloof Heidedal Old Vine 2019	Piekenierskloof	89
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve Old Vine 2020	Paarl	90
Stellenzicht Silcrete 2019	Paarl	89
Tempel Sorgvry 2019	Wellington	89
GRENACHE		
Arbeidsgenot 2019 (Meerhof)	Swartland	90
Baboon Rock Rosé 2021 (La Petite Ferme)	Franschhoek	90
Mischa Reserve 2020	Groenberg	89
Muratie Mr May 2019	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	89
Olifantsberg 2019	Breedekloof	90
Painted Wolf Lycaon 2019	Coastal Region	89
Piekenierskloof 2020	Piekenierskloof	92
Piekenierskloof Carel van Zyl Old Vine 2019	Piekenierskloof	92
Tempel Skemerdans 2019	Western Cape	89
Tierhoek OVP 2019	Piekenierskloof	89
Vrede en Lust Artisan Range 2018	Simonsberg-Paarl	87
Vriesenhof 2018	Piekenierskloof	87
MALBEC		
Bellevue 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Diemersfontein Carpe Diem 2020	Wellington	88
Dornier 2017	Stellenbosch	90
Mischa Reserve 2020	Groenberg	88
Paul Wallace Black Dog 2018	Elgin	88
Usana 2019	Stellenbosch	88
PETIT VERDOT		
Dornier 2016	Stellenbosch	91

La Bri Double Door 2019	Franschhoek	87
Le Bonheur Reserve 2019	Stellenbosch	88
Zorgvliet 2018	Banghoek	94
OTHER		
Allesverloren Tinta Barocca 2018	Swartland	89
Allesverloren Touriga Nacional 2018	Swartland	89
Boplaas Nel Family Reserve Touriga Nacional 2016	Stellenbosch	88
Boplaas Touriga Nacional 2019	Coastal Region	86
Bosman Nero 2018	Wellington	89
De Krans Tinta Roriz 2019	Klein Karoo	90
De Krans Touriga Nacional 2018	Klein Karoo	89
Dornier Moordenaarskloof Tinta Barocca 2019	Swartland	91
Koelenbosch Sangiovese 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Mischa Reserve Petite Sirah 2020	Groenberg	87
Piekenierskloof Tannat 2020	Piekenierskloof	89
Tempel Tydsam Tempranillo 2019	Wellington	91
The Drift Gift Horse Barbera 2017	Overberg	89
Wandering Beeste Petite Sirah 2020 (Wildeberg and Kompanje)	Coastal Region	87

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