

Prescient

SHIRAZ
REPORT 2021

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



Du Toitskloof Wines.

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*

KEY FINDINGS

Twenty years ago, much was made of the Shiraz/Syrah dichotomy, two names for the same grape variety but the former associated with Australia and the latter with the Rhône region of France, wines labelled as Shiraz supposedly richer, riper and more full-bodied than those labelled as Syrah.

Today the picture is more complicated, Shiraz proving extremely versatile in the Cape with good examples not limited to any specific growing region. In addition, it responds well to a wine variety of winemaking approaches so that there are many contrasting but equally legitimate renditions for the consumer to choose from

For this year's category report, there were 96 entries from 75 producers with 50 (52%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. The district with the most wines represented was Stellenbosch with 26 but there were wines from as far afield Sondagskloof (Brunia) and Sutherland Karoo (Mount Sutherland) and almost everything in between.

Looking specifically at the Top 10, four wines come from Stellenbosch, two from Swartland, one each from Elim and Robertson and two are multi-site blends. As for stylistics, alcohols vary from a relatively light 13.13% in the case of Harry Hartman Somesay Syrah 2020 to a potent 15.05% in the case of Rust en Vrede Single Vineyard 2017 while oaking regimes extend from none at all (Leeuwenkuil Shiraz 2020) to significant (DeMorgenzon Reserve Syrah 2017 spending 10 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 30% new before a further 10 months in 3 000-litre foudre, for instance).

The amount of whole-bunch fermentation (intact rather than destemmed bunches included in the fermenter) is another important determinant of the final outcome and again some winemakers are more enthusiastic about applying this technique than others.

The point of all this is to say that South African Syrah can no longer be neatly pigeonholed. Expect everything from delicate, very fine to ultra-glossy, rich wines and the Shiraz/Syrah distinction is no longer really a clue to what's inside the bottle.

Price also differs drastically. The average for the Top 10 is R376 a bottle but ranges from R75 for Du Toitskloof 2018 to R1 100 for Rust en Vrede Single Vineyard Syrah 2017 and the trick becomes to match each wine to the appropriated drinking occasion – readers of the report are urged to go beyond the scores and read the tasting notes!

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Harry Hartman Somesay Syrah 2020

R295

Total production: 2 648 bottles Abv: 13.13%

Grapes from Cederberg and Stellenbosch. 50% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 11 months in a combination of second- and third-fill 225-litre barrels plus a 1000-litre foudre. Extraordinarily fragrant on the nose with notes of violets, red currant, raspberry and pomegranate, fresh herbs and white pepper. The palate is supremely elegant with lovely fruit expression, bright acidity and powdery tannins, the finish long and saline.



Zandvliet Hill of Enon 2019

R402

Total production: 3 855 bottles Abv: 14.25%

30% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured in older French and American oak barrels for 18 months. Complex aromatics including red and black berries, musk, a slight meaty note, pepper and spice while the palate is rich but balanced with a dense core of fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins. A wine of both presence and intricacy.



De Grendel Elim 2019

R900 per Magnum

Total production: 2 280 magnums Abv: 13.96%

30% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 13 months in older oak. The nose is inviting with notes of red and black berries, fynbos, olive brine and white pepper while the palate has intensity of flavour without being weighty and is also wonderfully harmonious – pure and fresh with fine tannins.





Du Toitskloof 2018

R75

Total production: 85 000 bottles Abv: 14%

Grapes from Breedekloof and Swartland. Fermented and matured for 12 months using a mixture of barrels and staves. Pretty overtones of flowers and fynbos before red berries and white pepper on the nose before a palate that's light-bodied with appealing fruit expression, bright acidity and powdery tannins – succeeds handsomely on account of its modesty.



Leeuwenkuil 2020

R95

Total production: 250 000 bottles Abv: 13.5%

Fermented and matured in stainless steel tank. Seductively perfumed with notes of red berries, flowers, herbs and white pepper while the palate is light and energetic - striking purity of fruit, fresh acidity and a super-dry finish.



Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2018

R400

Total production: 2 500 bottles Abv: 13.3%

Grapes from two vineyards on schist. Matured for 12 months in older oak. Red and black berries, fynbos, flowers and pepper on the nose while the palate has excellent fruit concentration, bright acidity and firm but not astringent tannins. No shortage of energy for all its density.





Rust en Vrede Single Vineyard Syrah 2017

R1100

Total production: 2 875 bottles Abv: 15.05%

100% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 16 months in 500-litre French oak barrels, 50% new. Compelling aromatics of black berries, olive, lavender, dried herbs and pepper while the palate is full-bodied and intensely flavoured – plenty of fruit power, bright acidity and nicely grippy tannins.



DeMorgenzon Reserve Syrah 2017

R430

Total production: 5 800 bottles and 160 magnums Abv: 14.5%

Small percentage whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 10 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 30% new before a further 10 months in 3 000-litre foudre. Black berries and herbs plus subtle undertones of earth and tar. The palate is rich and luscious – good depth of fruit, bright acidity and tannins that are firm in the best sense.



Kruger Family Reserve 2017 (Stellenview Premium Wines)

R205

Total production: 15 000 bottles Abv: 14.15%

Matured for 18 months in mostly French oak, 30% new. Red and black berries, fynbos and pepper on the nose while the palate shows concentrated fruit, lemon-like acidity and powdery tannins. Well balanced with a nice tension about it.





Rust en Vrede Estate Vineyards Syrah 2019

R320

Total production: 40 050 bottles Abv: 14.02%

15% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 18 months in 500-litre French oak barrels, 16% new. Top notes of floral perfume and fynbos before red and black berries plus pepper on the nose. The palate is concentrated and fresh with crunchy tannins. Lovely fruit definition, poise and length.



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

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
Harry Hartman Somesay Syrah 2020	95	R295
Zandvliet Hill of Enon 2019	95	R402
Du Toitskloof 2018	94	R75
Leeuwenkuil 2020	94	R95
Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2018	94	R400
De Grendel Elim 2019 1.5L	94	R900
Rust en Vrede Single Vineyard Syrah 2017	94	R1 100
Kruger Family Reserve 2017 (Stellenview Premium Wines)	93	R205
Rust en Vrede Estate Vineyards Syrah 2019	93	R320
DeMorgenzon Reserve Syrah 2017	93	R430
Strandveld Syrah 2019	93	R200
Nederburg 2019	92	R100
Meerhof 2019	92	R105
Zevenwacht Syrah 2019	92	R130
Stellenbosch Reserve Kruithuis Syrah 2019	92	R160
Domier Siren Syrah 2017	92	R185
Julien Schaal Walker Bay Syrah 2020	92	R190
Kleinood Tamboerskloof Syrah 2017	92	R229
Goudini 2019	91	R65
Land's End Cape South Coast Syrah 2018	91	R95
Diemersdal 2020	91	R105
Benguela Cove Lighthouse Collection Syrah 2020	91	R150
Groote Post 2019	91	R165
Stellenbosch Vineyards Credo 2018	91	R165
Villion Syrah Syrah 2019	91	R170
Dunstone 2018	91	R175
De Grendel 2019	91	R200
Bon Courage Inkará 2019	91	R215
Beaumont Dangerfield Syrah 2018	91	R235
Old Road Wine Co. 12 Mile Syrah 2018	91	R232.50
Brunia Syrah 2019	91	R250
Mount Sutherland Syrah 2018	91	R480
Old Road Wine Co. The Anvil 2019	90	R87
Glenelly Glass Collection Syrah 2018	90	R135
Blaauwklippen 2019	90	R145
Allesverloren 2018	90	R160
Raka Biography 2019	90	R160
Sutherland Syrah 2017	90	R170
Allée Bleue 2019	90	R185
Jordan The Prospector Syrah 2018	90	R190
La Motte Syrah 2018	90	R190

Van Loveren Christina 2018	90	R195
Thelema 2017	90	R200
Stark-Condé Stellenbosch Syrah 2017	90	R220
Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2018	90	R225
Arbeidsgenot 2020 (Meerhof)	90	R250
De Grendel Op Die Berg Syrah 2019	90	R300
Tokara Reserve Collection Syrah 2018	90	R350
Old Road Wine Co. Pepper Wind Limited Release 2018	90	R360
Kershaw Clonal Selection Elgin 2017	90	R520

COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
Allée Bleue 2019	Franschhoek	90
Allée Bleue Single Vineyard 2015	Franschhoek	89
Allesverloren 2018	Swartland	90
Alto 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Arbeidsgenot 2020 (Meerhof)	Swartland	90
Beaumont Dangerfield Syrah 2018	Bot River Walker Bay	91
Bellingham Homestead 2019	Paarl	89
Bellingham The Bernard Series Basket Press Syrah 2018	Coastal Region	89
Benguela Cove Estate Syrah 2019	Walker Bay	88
Benguela Cove Lighthouse Collection Syrah 2020	Walker Bay	91
Blaauwklippen 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Black Beauty 2020 (Cavalli)	Stellenbosch	88
Bon Courage Inkará 2019	Robertson	91
Boschendal 1685 2019	Cape Coast	89
Bruce Jack Clean Slate 2017	Overberg	88
Bruce Jack Clean Slate 2018	Overberg	89
Brunia Syrah 2019	Sondagskloof	91
Croydon Vineyards Covenant 2019	Stellenbosch	89
De Grendel 2019	Coastal Region	91
De Grendel Elim 2019	Elim	94
De Grendel Op Die Berg Syrah 2019	Ceres Plateau	90
De Wet 2020	Worcester	86
DeMorgenzon Reserve Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	93
Diemersdal 2020	Coastal Region	91
Dornier Siren Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	92
Du Toitskloof 2018	Western Cape	94
Dunstone 2018	Wellington	91
Dunstone Reserve 2017	Wellington	86
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve High Noon 2019	Durbanville Cape Town	89
Flagstone Dark Horse 2017	Western Cape	88
Forager Red 2019 (African Pride Wines)	Western Cape	89
Franschhoek Cellar Baker Station 2019	Western Cape	89
Glenelly Glass Collection Syrah 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Goudini 2019	Goudini	91
Groote Post 2019	Darling	91
Harry Hartman Somesay Syrah 2020	Western Cape	95
Jordan The Prospector Syrah 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Julien Schaal Walker Bay Syrah 2020	Walker Bay	92
Kershaw Clonal Selection Elgin Syrah 2017	Elgin	90
Kershaw GPS Series Klein River Syrah 2018	Klein River	88
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2017	Stellenbosch	89
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Kleinood Tamboerskloof 2017	Stellenbosch	92
Kruger Family Reserve 2017 (Stellenview Premium Wines)	Stellenbosch	93
La Bri Syrah 2018	Franschhoek	89

La Cave 2018 (Wellington Wines)	Wellington	87
La Motte Syrah 2018	Franschhoek	90
Land's End Cape Agulhas Syrah 2018	Cape Agulhas	87
Land's End Cape South Coast Syrah 2018	Cape South Coast	91
Landskroon Paul de Villiers 2019	Paarl	85
Leeuwenkuil 2020	Swartland	94
Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2018	Swartland	94
MAN Family Wines Skaapveld Syrah 2019	Coastal Region	88
Meerhof 2019	Swartland	92
Middelvlei 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Mischa 2020	Groenberg Wellington	88
Mount Sutherland Syrah 2018	Sutherland Karoo	91
Nederburg 2019	Western Cape	92
Nederburg The Manor House 2018	Western Cape	87
Neil Ellis Groenekloof Syrah 2019	Groenkloof	87
Old Road Wine Co. 12 Mile Syrah 2018	Coastal Region	91
Old Road Wine Co. Pepper Wind Syrah Limited Release 2018	Franschhoek	90
Old Road Wine Co. The Anvil 2019	Western Cape	91
Oude Denneboom Black Harrier 2019	Paarl	88
Painted Wolf The Den 2019	Coastal Region	84
Paserene Dark Syrah 2018	Western Cape	87
Peter Falke Alani 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Raka Biography 2019	Klein River	90
Rhebokskloof 2019	Paarl	88
Rhebokskloof Black Marble Hill Syrah 2018	Paarl	87
Ridgeback 2016	Paarl	89
Ridgeland 2017 (Elgin Vintners)	Elgin	88
Romansrivier Vino Rood 2018	Breedekloof	87
Ronnie Melck Syrah Family Selection 2017 (Muratie)	Stellenbosch	86
Rust en Vrede Estate Vineyards Syrah 2019	Stellenbosch	93
Rust en Vrede Single Vineyard Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	94
Simelia Delucius Syrah 2019	Wellington	87
Simonsig Mr Berrio 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Stark-Condé Stellenbosch Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	90
Stellenbosch Reserve Kruithuis 2019	Stellenbosch	92
Stellenbosch Vineyards Credo 2018	Stellenbosch	91
Stellenvue Family Reserve Shiraz 2017	Stellenbosch	88
Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Strandveld Syrah 2019	Elim	93
Sutherland Syrah 2017	Elgin	90
Thelema 2017	Stellenbosch	90
Thomgrove 2020	Swartland	88
Tokara Reserve Collection Syrah 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Van Loveren Christina 2018	Robertson	90
Vigne d' Or 2020	Western Cape	81
Villion Syrah 2019	Cape South Coast	91
Woestkloof Owner's Blend Syrah 2019 (Simelia)	Wellington	88
Zandvliet 2017	Robertson	87

Zandvliet Hill of Enon 2019	Robertson	95
Zandvliet Kalkveld 2017	Robertson	88
Zevenwacht Syrah 2019	Stellenbosch	92

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De Grendel.



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