Prescient

TOP 20 WINES
SOUTH AFRICA 2021

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

ALL WINES TASTED BLIND

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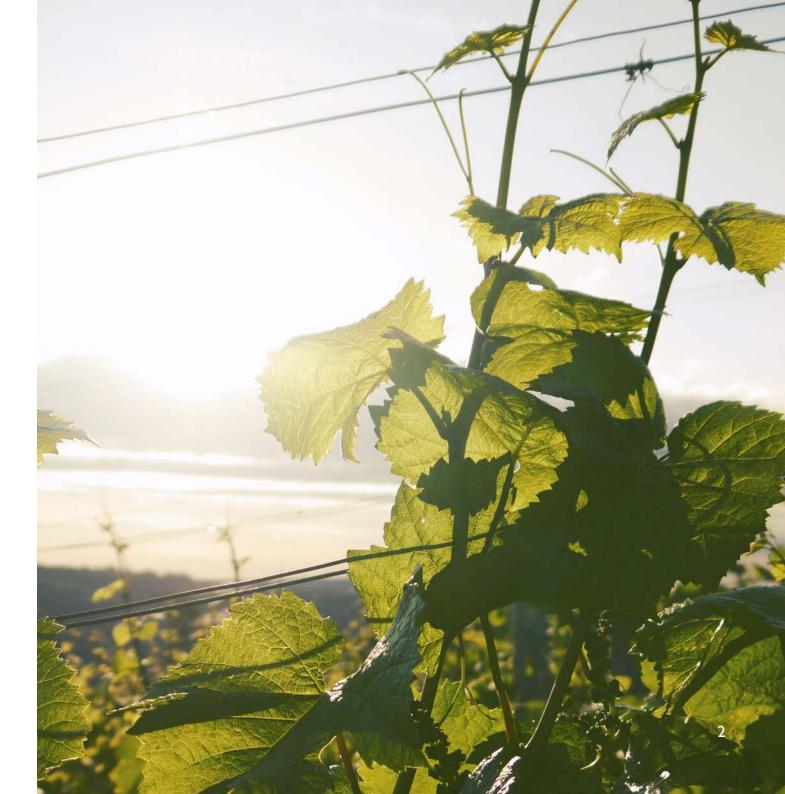
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INTRODUCTION

Winemag.co.za reviewed a total of 990 wines across 20 categories in its various reports sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient over the course of the year. Each report was based on the outcome of a blind tasting of wines entered within the specific category.

A Top 10 was then announced with the release of each successive report. Now the individual best wine per category can be revealed.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

We employed a three-person tasting panel, tasting 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.

TASTERS

Christian Eedes – Winemag.co.za editor (Panel chair)

Ndaba Dube – Food & Beverage Operations Manager, President Hotel, Cape Town

Malu Lambert – Wine Writer

Roland Peens - Wine Business Advisor

James Pietersen – CEO of Wine Cellar

Jolette Steyn – Head of Sales and Imports, Wine Cellar

Cathy van Zyl – Master of Wine

BEST OVERALL

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BEST WHITE OVERALL BEST CHENIN BLANC



Cavalli Filly 2020

ABOUT CAVALLI

This Stellenbosch property, incorporating horse stud, restaurant, function venue, art gallery and gardens, is owned by the family of the late Jerome Smith, founder of pharmaceutical company Cipla Medpro. Out of a total of 110ha, approximately 30ha are planted to vineyard and Craig Barnard has been winemaker here since late-2014.

TASTING NOTE

Fermented and matured for 10 months in a combination of new, second- and third-fill barrels. Wonderfully complex aromatics of pear, white peach, lime, hay and dried herbs plus 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.





BEST RED OVERALL BEST CAPE BORDEAUX RED BLEND



DeMorgenzon Maestro Red 2017

ABOUT DEMORGENZON

This Stellenbosch property is owned by prominent business figures and philanthropists Wendy and Hylton Appelbaum. Alastair Rimmer, previously of Kleine Zalze, recently took over as CEO and winemaker.

TASTING NOTE

36% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Cabernet Franc, 10% Petit Verdot and 5% Malbec. Matured for 18 months in a combination of 300-litre barrels of which 20% were new and 3000-litre foudre. Compelling aromatics of red and black berries, fresh herbs, violets, sea breeze and pencil shavings while the palate has extraordinary poise and structure — lovely fruit purity, fresh acidity and fine tannins. Plenty of detail.

Winner of a Tonnellerie Sylvain barrel for best in category.



WINERY OF THE YEAR

Vergelegen

One of the great historic properties of the Cape, this has been owned by global mining company Anglo America since 1987. With the celebrated André van Rensburg as winemaker, the wines were highly acclaimed in the early-2000s but then faded from prominence somewhat. It has to be said, however, that a drawn-out re-planting programme to rid the vineyards of leaf-roll virus was undertaken and with this now complete, Vergelegen's glory days seem to be back!

The property had two wines judged best in category, these being the Sauvignon Blanc 2021 and Reserve Semillon 2019 while another four wines made the Top 10 in their respective categories, namely the G.V.B White 2019, Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2019, Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2015 and Reserve Merlot 2016.





BEST CAP CLASSIQUE

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BEST CAP CLASSIQUE



Miss Molly Blanc de Blancs 2015 (Môreson)

ABOUT MISS MOLLY

Miss Molly is a stand-alone brand from Franschhoek cellar Môreson, the focus very much on high-quality, low-cost bubbly. The range is named after a much-loved Wiemaraner belonging to the owners.

TASTING NOTE

100% Chardonnay. Matured for 66 months on the lees. Subtle aromatics including blossom, citrus, peach and apple, a hint of reduction and vanilla – comes across as remarkably primary. The palate has lovely weight but also plenty of vibrant acidity and a fine mousse, the finish suitably dry.



BEST WHITE WINES

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BEST CAPE WHITE BLEND



The Tea Leaf 2020 (Strange Kompanjie)

ABOUT STRANGE KOMPANJIE

Strange Kompanjie is the experimental arm of Wildeberg, the local venture owned by UK wine company Boutinot. "Weird labels, unusual cultivars, something different from the mainstream".

TASTING NOTE

44% Chenin Blanc from a Paarl vineyard planted in 1977, 42% Crouchen Blanc from a Franshhoek 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.

BEST CHARDONNAY



Constantia Uitsig Reserve 2020

ABOUT CONSTANTIA UITSIG

This property with 17ha under vineyard is owned by a private investment company. Danna de Jongh made this wine, but she subsequently emigrated to Austria, and has been replaced by Daniel Keulder, previously of Nitida in Durbanville.

TASTING NOTE

Fermented and matured in 600-litre barrels, 10% new. The nose shows a hint of struck-match reduction before citrus, red apple and fynbos as well as a touch of vanilla. Extraordinary depth to the palate - super-concentrated fruit, big acidity and a dry finish.





BEST NICHE WHITE VARIETY



Vergelegen Reserve Semillon 2019

ABOUT VERGELEGEN

Prescient Winery of the Year 2021.

TASTING NOTE

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.

BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC UNWOODED



Vergelegen Sauvignon Blanc 2021

ABOUT VERGELEGEN

Prescient Winery of the Year 2021.

TASTING NOTE

Includes 5% Semillon. Multiple parcels vinified separately in various neutral vessels. Compelling aromatics of peach, tangerine, elderflower and fynbos while the palate has a dense core of fruit matched by bright acidity, the finish long and saline. Pure, precise and full of character.





BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC WOODED



Carmen Stevens 2019

ABOUT CARMEN STEVENS WINES

Carmen Stevens graduated from Elsenburg Agricultural Training Institute in 1995, the first ever person of colour to qualify as a winemaker in South Africa. She established her own label in 2011, maiden vintage in 2014. Labels feature a tiger as drawn by eldest daughter Caitlin when aged six.

TASTING NOTE

W.O. Cape Town. 2% portion fermented in 100% new oak. A leesy note before citrus, peach, blackcurrant and fennel on the nose while the palate shows impressive weight and texture to go with a great line of acidity, the finish long and savoury — lots going on and really satisfying to drink.

BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC-SEMILLON BLEND



Wade Bales Regional Series Constantia White 2019

ABOUT WADE BALES

Wade Bales is owner of the long-established, Constantia-based Wade Bales Wine Co. offering a club and online sales. He also operates as a négociant bottling exclusive, limited-release wines – the Regional Series arising out of his conviction that each of SA's wine regions need a signature wine to best promote themselves.

TASTING NOTE

Sauvignon Blanc and 16% Semillon. Grapes from Buitenverwachting, Constantia Glen, Constantia Uitsig, Groot Constantia, Klein Constantia, Silvermist, Steenberg, Beau Constantia and Nova Zonnestraal. Some flinty reduction before white peach and blackcurrant plus sea breeze. Massive fruit concentration offset by bright acidity, the finish possessing a particular pithy quality. Stacks of flavour to go with impressive structure.

Winner of a Tonnellerie Sylvain barrel for best in category.



BEST RED WINES

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BEST CABERNET SAUVIGNON



Rust en Vrede Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2018

ABOUT RUST EN VREDE

Acquired by famed Springbok rugby player Jannie Engelbrecht in 1977, this Stellenbosch property is today run by his son Jean. Situated on the Helderberg on a north facing slope, the terroir is ideally suited to full-bodied reds, Cabernet Sauvignon being a particular focus.

TASTING NOTE

From a block planted in 2000 to two clones, namely 46C and CS163. Matured for 22 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 50% new. Red and black berries, violets, some leafiness and pencil shavings on the nose. The palate has wonderful intensity and structure – great purity of fruit, lovely freshness and firm but fine tannins, the finish long and dry. A wine with plenty of energy and detail for all its depth.

BEST MERLOT



De Grendel 2019

ABOUT DE GRENDEL

Tygeberg Hills property De Grendel was acquired in 1891 by David Graaff, later to be knighted by King George V, becoming first Baronet of De Grendel. Today, great-grandson De Villiers oversees the running of this 800-ha property, much of which is given over to conservation but is also home to a dairy herd and stud. The renowned Charles Hopkins has been in the cellar since 2005, recently joined by Morgan Steyn.

TASTING NOTE

Matured for 13 months in French oak barrels, one-third new. Red and black berries, crushed herbs, oystershell and earth on the nose. The palate is full bodied but balanced – concentrated fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins. Shows great focus.





BEST NICHE RED VARIETY



Zorgvliet Petit Verdot 2018

ABOUT ZORGVLIET

This Banghoek property was acquired in 2002 by Mac van der Merwe after reviving and then selling President Steyn gold mine and it remains in the family.

Bernard le Roux has been winemaker here since 2013.

TASTING NOTE

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.

BEST PINOTAGE



Môreson The Widow Maker 2019

ABOUT MÔRESON

Môreson is owned by the Friedman family, the highly decorated Clayton Reabow now acting as general manager and Marozanne Grobbelaar installed as winemaker from May 2020. Môreson is situated in Franschhoek, and though it has long championed the valley, grapes for this wine have always come from Stellenbosch, the 2019 the final release as the vineyard is no more.

TASTING NOTE

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.





BEST PINOT NOIR



Bosman Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Pinot Noir 2020

ABOUT BOSMAN FAMILY VINEYARDS

The Bosman family have been vine growers in Wellington for eight generations and today run a vine nursery supplying growers across the country while also making wine under their own label. In order to have access to high-quality plant material, a vine garden was established in Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley in 2006 along with some commercial vineyard and hence this wine.

TASTING NOTE

10% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 10 months in French oak, 10% new. Aromatics are complex and enticing — a hint of smoky reduction before red cherry, musk, rose, herbs and cured meat. The palate, meanwhile, is pure and precise — good depth of fruit, racy acidity and fine tannins.

BEST SHIRAZ



Zandvliet Hill of Enon 2019

ABOUT ZANDVLIET

ANB Investments is the owner of the ClemenGold citrus trademark and purchased Robertson property Zandvliet in 2015 to expand its holdings in the Western Cape, the Zandvliet wine brand sold to dynamic wine operation Van Loveren in October 2019. Jacques Cilliers continues as winemaker, a position he has held since 2011.

TASTING NOTE

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.





BEST SIGNATURE RED BLEND



Mary le Bow Red 2018

ABOUT MARY LE BOW

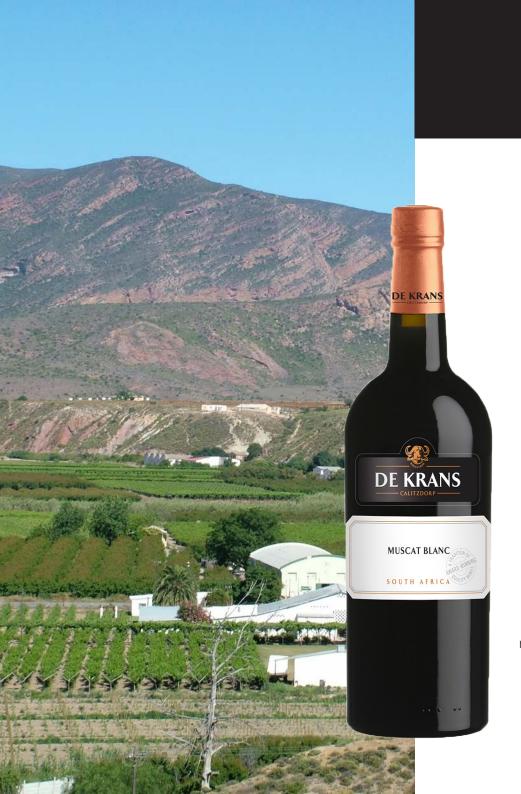
Mary le Bow is an occasional release, the wine made by the accomplished Bruce lack in conjunction with the Frater family who have a farm outside Ashton.

TASTING NOTE

43% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Malbec, 14% Shiraz and 14% Petit Verdot. Grapes from Ashton and Robertson. Matured for 16 months in mostly French oak, 30% new. A hint of flinty reduction before red and black berries, dried herbs, earth and attractive oak on the nose while the palate shows great fruit purity to go with fresh acidity and nicely grippy tannins. Excellent depth and length.

BEST SWEET WINE & FORTIFIEDS

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BEST MUSCADEL



De Krans Muscat Blanc 2020

ABOUT DE KRANS

Situated in the Klein Karoo town of Calitzdorp, De Krans has belonged to the Nel family since 1890. Today co-owner Boets Nel oversees winemaking while brother Stroebel manages the vineyards. Well-known for the high quality of their Port-style wines, this Muscadel is also a very fine example of what can be achieved via fortification.

TASTING NOTE

100% Muscat de Frontignan, grapes from a 1976 vineyard. Potpourri and rooibos tea on the nose before a palate shows great purity and clarity – weighty but not too much so, lovely creamy texture but also fresh acidity, the finish long and dry. Totally seductive.

BEST NOBLE LATE HARVEST



Boschendal Vin D'Or 2018

ABOUT BOSCHENDAL

The Boschendal wine brand is owned by producer-wholesaler DGB. The estate, situated between Stellenbosch and Franschhoek, is one of the most beautiful in the winelands but the production team source grapes from across the Cape for the various wines in this range.

TASTING NOTE

50% Riesling and 50% Viognier. Orange, peach, a touch of mushroom plus some delicate spice on the nose. Great fruit density and bright acidity before a finish that is long and dry. Subtle and elegant.



BEST PORT-STYLE



Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve Port 2009

ABOUT BOPLAAS

Boplaas's winemaking heritage dates back to 1880, when Daniel Nel, great-great-grandfather of current owner Carel, exported his first consignment of brandy to England although the first wines of the modern era from this Calitzdorp cellar were from the 1982 vintage. Nel and family have a well-established reputation for making excellent Port-style wine but their table wines and potstill brandies should not be overlooked either.

TASTING NOTE

70% Touriga Nacional, 20% Touriga Franca, 5% Tinta Barocca and 5% Souzau. Matured for 18 months in Portuguese "pipes". Complex aromatics of black and blue berries, incense, dried herbs and spice. The palate is powerful yet wonderfully harmonious – super-dense and hugely tannic, the finish extremely long and dry. Still very little evolution in evidence.





BEST STRAW WINE



Villa Esposto Muscat D'Alexandrie 2019

ABOUT VILLA ESPOSTO

Klawer Cellars in the Olifants River ward is primarily a bulk wine producer, receiving grapes from more than 2 000ha of vineyard belonging to over 80 growers. Villa Esposto, however, is its top-end label, the winemaking team getting to work with grapes from some of the region's most remarkable sites.

TASTING NOTE

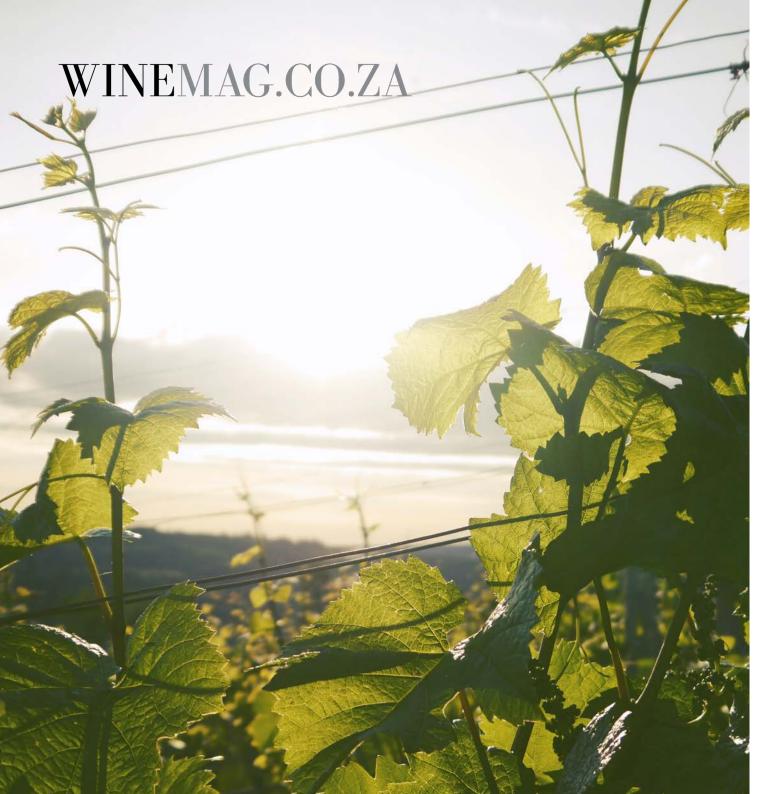
100% Muscat D'Alexandrie. Grapes from a 1969 vineyard farmed by Basie van Lill on Skurfberg. Bunches dried on straw mats for two weeks until they reach a Balling of 40° or higher. Lovely aromatics of citrus, flowers, herbs and spice. The palate is rich and thick textured with concentrated fruit matched by vibrant acidity before a savoury finish. Layers and layers of flavour.



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TOP 20 WINES AVAILABLE ONLINE AT DRYDOCKLIQUOR.CO.ZA





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