

An aerial photograph of a vast vineyard at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the landscape. The vineyard rows are visible, curving across the hills. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a hazy sky. The overall mood is serene and picturesque.

10-YEAR-OLD WINE
REPORT 2022

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

INTRODUCTION

Just how well do modern-era South African wines perform as they get older? One of the most important measures of great wine is that it should be age-worthy, that is it should become more pleasurable and more interesting to drink with time in the bottle and the annual 10-Year-Old Wine Report sets out to examine precisely this.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judging panel was chaired by me and further consisted of two trusted colleagues, namely Roland Peens of Wine Business Advisors and James Pieteresen of Wine Cellar, Cape Town merchants and cellarers of fine wine. We tasted blind, ratings done according to the 100-point system. Final scores were 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 this year's tasting of wines a decade on from vintage, there were 58 wines from 31 producers compared to 78 wines from 40 producers when the 2011 vintage was reviewed last year.

The decline in submissions is somewhat puzzling. The 2012 vintage is widely considered a good to very good vintage, later and generally cooler than 2010 or 2011 and you would've thought there would've been more producers keen to strut their stuff. Of course, there is no direct commercial value for producers in participating in the sense that few will have stock to sell but demonstrating age-worthiness in a tasting such as this surely goes towards reinforcing premium credentials. In addition, plotting the way forward as an industry depends on the best possible understanding of the recent past.

Of the 58 entries, two were Cap Classique, 13 were white, 35 were red, six were Noble Late Harvest and two were Port-style (frankly incomprehensible is that not a single example of Chenin Blanc was put forward). What was pleasing is that the wines generally showed well with 72.4% of the line-up (a total of 42 wines) rating 90 points or higher on the 100-point quality scale compared to 67.9% last year.

If the 1990s and 2000s were a period that the industry spent finding itself post isolation, the 2010s are starting to look like something of a golden era.

The potential of Sauv-Sem blends to stand the test of time was once again in evidence. Tokara Director's Reserve White 2012 was best white wine overall on 95 points (the 2011 was best white last year) followed by Klein Constantia Sauvignon Blanc 2012 (which includes 11% Semillon as a component) on 94 and Constantia Uitsig Two 2012 on 93. Such wines remain a tough sell by all accounts, but it is hoped that results like this will get consumers more excited about them.

As for the reds, there was again a sense of better fruit expression and structure than previously, the panel's feeling being that this was the result of more precise viticulture and more sensitive winemaking. Most of the wines submitted were from the Bordeaux varieties and while it would be inaccurate to say that there were no "green" aromas or flavours in evidence, these generally weren't obtrusive and helped give the wines a sense of freshness and vitality.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES WHITE



Tokara Director's Reserve White 2012

Alc 14.42% RS 1.7g/l TA 6.9g/l pH 3.16

74% Sauvignon Blanc, 26% Semillon. Matured for 10 months, 400-litre barrels for the Sauvignon Blanc and 225-litre for the Semillon. All the barrels used were French oak of which around 30% was new. The nose shows some struck-match reduction before citrus, peach, blackcurrant and fennel while the palate is big but balanced – great depth of fruit and well-integrated acidity before a very long, dry finish. Plenty of wow factor!



Klein Constantia Sauvignon Blanc 2012

Alc 13.9% RS 1.95g/l TA 6.7g/l pH 3.3

89% Sauvignon Blanc, 11% Semillon. Tank fermented and left on the lees for three months. Enticing aromatics of white peach, blackcurrant, mushroom and honey while the palate shows dense fruit and vibrant acidity. Wonderfully pure and focused, this still has ages to go.



Constantia Glen Two 2012

Alc 13.5% RS 1.7g/l TA 6.9g/l pH 3.2

71% Sauvignon Blanc, 29% Semillon. Matured for six months in 600-litre barrels, 29% new. Subtle aromatics of lime, white peach, fynbos and white pepper while the palate is light and fresh with a pithy finish. Elegant and understated.



RED



Rust en Vrede Estate 2012

Alc 15.07% RS 2.2g/l TA 5.9g/l pH 3.54

56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Shiraz, 8% Merlot. Matured for 18 months in 85% French and 15% American oak barrels, 100% new. Red and black berries, an attractive leafy note, incense and oak spice on the nose while the palate is full but balanced. Layers of flavour and wonderfully fine tannins.



Usana The Fox Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

Alc 14.5% RS 2.3g/l TA 5.6g/l pH 3.58

Matured for 14 months in 225-litre French oak barrels, 20% new. Red and black berries, dried herbs, meat stock and turned earth on the nose while the palate is seamless – pure, layered and long. Great detail and still remarkably youthful.



De Grendel Rubaiyat 2012

Alc 14.5% RS 2.3g/l TA 5.76 g/l pH 3.6

50% Petit Verdot, 45.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Merlot, 0.5% Cabernet Franc. Matured for 18 months in 100% new French oak barrels. Complex aromatics of red and black berries, potpourri, cigar box and earth while the palate is full bodied but well balanced – good fruit definition matched by supple tannins.





Vergelegen G.V.B Red 2012

Alc 14.52% RS 2.1g/l TA 5.4g/l pH 3.65

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 9% Petit Verdot, 5% Cabernet Franc. Matured for 16 months in 100% new French oak barrels. Red berries, tobacco, dried herbs and oystershell on the nose while the palate is medium bodied with fresh acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and savoury. Has a lovely coolness about it.



SWEET



Durbanville Hills Rhinofields Noble Late Harvest 2012

Alc 9.59% RS 182.5g/l TA 7.7g/l pH 3.59

From Sauvignon Blanc. 40% raisin and botrytis berries. The nose shows citrus, white peach and mushroom plus a slight “green” edge. The palate is taut and focused – clean fruit and bright acidity make for a well-balanced, elegant wine.



Nederburg Private Bin Edelkeur 2012

Alc 9.65% RS 230g/l TA 10g/l pH 3.35

From Chenin Blanc. Grapes harvested between 28° and 40° Balling. Citrus, dried apricot, mushroom, herbs and spice on the nose before a palate that is complex and powerful. This has both breadth and depth together with a smart line of acidity, the finish long and savoury.



FORTIFIED



De Krans Cape Vintage Reserve 2012

Alc 18.64% RS 92.7g/l TA 5.4g/l pH 4.0

87% Touriga Nacional, 13% Tinta Barocca. Matured for 20 months in big vats. Red and black berries, some floral fragrance and dried herbs plus chocolate on the nose while the palate is deep but equally tightly wound with fine tannins, the finish nicely dry.



COMPLETE SCORES A - Z

NAME	WINE OF ORIGIN	SCORE
CAP CLASSIQUE		
Babylonstoren Sprankel 2012	Simonsberg-Paarl	91
Bon Courage Jacques Bru�re Blanc de Blancs 2012	Robertson	89
CHARDONNAY		
Babylonstoren 2012	Simonsberg-Paarl	90
Boschendal 1685 2012	Western Cape	89
Edgebaston 2012	Stellenbosch	90
NICHE WHITE VARIETY		
Bellingham The Bernard Series Whole Bunch Roussanne 2012	Paarl	90
SAUVIGNON BLANC		
Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin 2012	Elgin	88
Boschendal Reserve Collection 2012	Western Cape	91
De Grendel Koetshuis 2012	Coastal Region	90
Klein Constantia 2012	Constantia	94
Vergelegen Reserve 2012	Stellenbosch	90
SAUVIGNON BLANC-SEMILLON BLENDS		
Constantia Glen Two 2012	Constantia	93
Delaire Graff White Reserve 2012	Coastal Region	88
Tokara Director's Reserve White 2012	Stellenbosch	95
Vergelegen G.V.B White 2012	Stellenbosch	89
CABERNET FRANC		
Warwick Cabernet Franc 2012	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	87
CABERNET SAUVIGNON		
Alto Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	Stellenbosch	90
Black Elephant Vintners Amazing Grace Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	Franschhoek	91
Edgebaston Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	Stellenbosch	92
Fleur du Cap Unfiltered Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	Coastal Region	90
Nederburg II Centuries Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	Western Cape	89
Neil Ellis Vineyard Selection Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	Jonkershoek	90
Usana The Fox Cabernet Sauvignon 2012	Stellenbosch	94
Vergelegen Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2012	Stellenbosch	92
Vergelegen V 2012	Stellenbosch	89
CAPE BORDEAUX RED BLENDS		
Babylonstoren Nebukadnesar 2012	Simonsberg-Paarl	90
De Grendel Rubaiyat 2012	Coastal Region	92
Durbanville Hills The Tangram 2012	Durbanville	91
Ernie Els Signature 2012	Stellenbosch	91
Fleur du Cap Laszlo 2012	Coastal Region	92
Keet First Verse 2012	Stellenbosch	91
La Bri Affinity 2012	Franschhoek	87
Napier Red Medallion 2012	Wellington	89
Vergelegen G.V.B Red 2012	Stellenbosch	92

Warwick Trilogy 2012	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	87
Zonnebloem Lauréat 2012	Stellenbosch	90
MERLOT		
De Grendel Merlot 2012	Durbanville	91
La Bri Merlot 2012	Franschhoek	90
Nederburg Private Bin Merlot R181 2012	Western Cape	91
PINOTAGE		
Black Elephant Vintners The Back Roads Die Perdeskoen Pinotage 2012	Coastal Region	89
Durbanville Hills Rhinofields Pinotage 2012	Durbanville	90
PINOT NOIR		
David Finlayson Camino Africana Pinot Noir 2012	Stellenbosch	90
SHIRAZ		
Aaldering Shiraz 2012	Stellenbosch	91
Alto Shiraz 2012	Stellenbosch	90
Black Elephant Vintners Amistad Syrah 2012	Franschhoek	91
DeMorgenzon Reserve Syrah 2012	Stellenbosch	91
Zonnebloem Limited Edition Shiraz 2012	Stellenbosch	86
SIGNATURE RED BLENDS		
Luddite Saboteur Red 2012	Walker Bay	90
Quest Heroes Journey Two 2012	Western Cape	88
Rust en Vrede Estate 2012	Stellenbosch	94
NOBLE LATE HARVEST		
De Grendel Noble Late Harvest 2012	Durbanville	91
Durbanville Hills Rhinofields Noble Late Harvest 2012	Durbanville	93
Fleur du Cap Noble Late Harvest 2012	Western Cape	89
Nederburg Private Bin Edelkeur 2012	Western Cape	93
Nederburg Private Bin Private Bin Eminence 2012	Paarl	90
Nederburg Winemaster's Noble Late Harvest 2012	Western Cape	92
PORT-STYLE HARVEST		
Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve 2012	Western Cape	89
De Krans Cape Vintage Reserve 2012	Calitzdorp	93

CONTACT DETAILS

Editorial

Christian Eedes
christian@winemag.co.za
+27 83 454 3644
@ChristianEedes

Business Director

Jacqueline Lahoud
jax@winemag.co.za
+27 83 654 7721
@JaxLahoud