

Prescient

CHENIN BLANC
REPORT 2022

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2022

Winemag.co.za is set to produce a series of 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.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judging panel was chaired by me and further consisted of two trusted colleagues, namely Spencer Fondaumiere, chairman of the South African Sommelier Association and Jolette Steyn 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

For the third annual Prescient Chenin Blanc Report, 82 entries were received from 61 producers with 51 rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. Among the Top 10, two were from Breedekloof, two from Stellenbosch, one each from Agter-Paarl, Piekenierskloof and Swartland and three were multi-area blends. Chenin is, as we all know, South Africa's most planted grape, and it is amazing how well it works across a variety of production areas.

Drill down even further, however, and four of the Top 10 are single-vineyard wines, namely Bruce Jack Boer Maak 'n Plan 2020; Belle Rebelle Intrepid 2021; Piekenierskloof Bergendal Old Vine 2021 and Roodekrantz Old Bush Vine 1983 2021, grapes from Rhenosterbosrug on the Paardeberg in the Swartland.

The rest of the Top 10 are either from different blocks on the same property or different vineyards across the same district or even across multiple districts or regions. Does this refute the notion of terroir? Perhaps it shows that to be good at blending (which allows a producer to scale), then an understanding of multiple terroirs is essential.

Chenin Blanc is famously versatile, and it would be wrong to say that any one style prevailed among the top performing wines. In previous years, the panel maybe looked to reward wines that showed the greatest transparency in the sense of having undergone as little intrusive winemaking as possible, but it must be conceded that the variety is extraordinarily malleable in both vineyard and cellar –

depending on the timing of picking and the application of different winemaking techniques, a wide array of divergent but equally legitimate expressions can result.

Consider the Villiera Barrel Fermented 2021 which placed Top 10 with a rating of 95 points this year. Grapes came from three blocks on the Stellenbosch property, two trellised and one old bushvine and a small portion (approximately 1.5%) of botrytis was included in the mix. Fermentation occurred spontaneously and maturation lasted 10 months in French oak barrels, a third new. The resulting wine has an alcohol of 14.9%, residual sugar of 6.3g/l, total acidity of 8.2g/l and a pH of 3.23, a quite extraordinary analysis for a quite extraordinary wine.

Among the rest of the Top 10, you'll find a dash of old-vine Franschhoek Semillon in Tempel Kattemai 2021 while a portion of Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2021 was matured in clay amphorae in addition to oak whereas MAN Family Wines Free-Run Steen 2021 went straight into stainless steel tank. The point is anything goes when making Chenin Blanc and there's no need to be too rigid about what does and doesn't work. There's a Chenin Blanc of real excellence for every drinking occasion imaginable and just about every budget, too...

Average price of the 51 wines to rate 90-plus is R187 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R235. Offering the best quality relative to price is Mountain Ridge 2020 with a rating of 93 and selling for R75 a bottle.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Limited Release 2021

Price: R235

Total Production: 56 000 bottles Abv 13.57%

Grapes from three vineyards planted in 1971, 1982 and 1983, one in Durbanville and the other two in Bottellary. One component fermented spontaneously in foudre, concrete tank and amphorae and another in 300-litre barrels, 30% new while maturation lasted around 10 months. Compelling aromatics with top notes of floral perfume and hay before citrus and peach plus some leesy complexity. A dense core of fruit is offset by driving acidity, the finish long and dry. A very classy wine of poise and detail.



Villiera Barrel Fermented 2021

Price: R186

Total Production: 6 400 bottles Abv 14.9%

Includes 1.5% botrytis-infected grapes. Spontaneously fermented and matured for 10 months in French oak, one-third new. The nose is complex with notes of thatch and fynbos before citrus, peach, earth and spice. The palate is rich, round and intensely flavoured – excellent depth of fruit is matched by fresh acidity before a pithy finish.



Tempel Kattemaai 2021

Price: R295

Total Production: 2 619 bottles Abv 13.27%

88% Chenin Blanc from Wellington and 12% Semillon from a 1905 Franschoek vineyard. Spontaneously fermented and matured for nine months in older barrels and foudre. The nose shows top notes of hay and fynbos before pear, peach and citrus while the palate is pure and lively with a remarkably saline finish. Elegant and precise.





Belle Rebelle Intrepid 2021

Price: R240

Total Production: 1 266 bottles Abv 13.02%

Grapes from a 1985 Breedekloof vineyard. 5% skin fermentation. Matured for nine months in older oak. The nose shows hay, potpourri, honeysuckle, pear and white peach while the palate has lovely fruit definition and driving acidity before a dry finish. Pure and energetic.



Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2021

Price: R260

Total Production: 12 459 bottles Abv 13.32%

Grapes from three Stellenbosch vineyards, all over 40 years old. Matured for eight months in older 400-litre barrels and clay amphorae. The nose shows some smoky reduction before pear, peach, citrus and pineapple plus a hint of vanilla while the palate shows very good fruit concentration and fresh acidity. Direct and flavourful.



Roodekrantz Old Bush Vine 1983 2021

Price: R130

Total Production: 9 000 bottles Abv 14.23%

Grapes from a 1983 Swartland vineyard. Mostly tank fermented but a small portion of barrel matured wine added before bottling. Subtle and enticing aromatics of straw, citrus, peach and wet wool. The palate is seamless with dense fruit, well integrated acidity and a gently savoury finish. Textured and flavourful, this shows great refinement.





Bruce Jack Boer Maak 'n Plan 2020

Price: R250

Total Production: 2 000 bottles Abv 13.39%

Fermented with commercial as well as wild yeasts in older barrels before maturation lasting eight months. Some waxy character before citrus, peach, hay and earth on the nose while the palate is rich and smooth textured – a good core of fruit, tangy acidity and a savoury finish.



MAN Family Wines Free-Run Steen 2021

Price: R85

Total Production: 40 666 bottles Abv 13.31%

Grapes from Agter-Paarl, fermentation took place in stainless steel tank. Pear, peach, guava, citrus and herbs plus a little leesy complexity on the nose while the palate is wonderfully precise with pure fruit, zippy acidity and a pithy finish. Remarkably full and vivid.



Old Road Wine Co. Anemos 2020

Price: R270

Total Production: 2 000 bottles Abv 13.5%

Grapes from Stellenbosch and Durbanville, planted in 1988 and 1983 respectively. Fermented and matured in mostly older French oak barrels. Cut apple, stone fruit, earth, lanolin and spice on the nose while the palate is dense and thick textured with a savoury finish. A well balanced wine with lots going on.





Piekenierskloof Bergendal Old Vine 2021

Price: R400

Total Production: 1 100 bottles Abv 13.44%

Grapes from a 1962 vineyard. Spontaneously fermented and matured for six months in French oak barrels, 30% new. Complex aromatics with top notes of hay and herbs before citrus, peach, mushroom and vanilla while the palate shows reined-in power – excellent fruit concentration and well-integrated acidity before a finish that is long and dry.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Limited Release 2021	96	R235
Villiera Barrel Fermented 2021	95	R186
Tempel Kattemai 2021	95	R295
Roodekrantz Old Bush Vine 1983 2021	94	R130
Belle Rebelle Intrepid 2021	94	R240
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2021	94	R260
Bruce Jack Boer Maak 'n Plan 2020	93	R250
MAN Family Wines Free-Run Steen 2021	93	R85
Old Road Wine Co. Anemos 2020	93	R270
Piekenierskloof Bergendal Old Vine 2021	93	R400
Mountain Ridge 2020	93	R75
Simonsig Chenin Avec Chêne 2020	93	R215
Mariëtte 2020 (Belle Rebelle)	92	R215
Brookdale 2020	92	R295
DeMorgenzon Reserve 2020	92	R445
Perdeberg Classic Collection 2021	91	R60
Villiera 2021	91	R84
Bellingham Homestead The Old Orchards 2021	91	R95
Mason Road 2021 (Brookdale)	91	R115
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cape Garden 2021	91	R130
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Courageous Old Vine Barrel Fermented 2021	91	R135
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2021	91	R136
Malanot Bush Vine 2019	91	R150
Painted Wolf Black Pack 2021	91	R160
Delheim Wild Ferment 2020	91	R170
Kaapzicht Kliprug 2021	91	R180
Knorhoek 2020	91	R188.50
Daschbosch Mossiesdrift Steen 2021	91	R220
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine WO Cape Town 2021	91	R235
Donkiesbaai Steen 2021	91	R300
Leyland Steen 2020 (De Wet)	90	R82
Durbanville Hills Cool Climate 2021	90	R85
Painted Wolf The Den 2021	90	R95
Allée Bleue 2021	90	R100
One Formation 2020 (Boland Cellar)	90	R103
Babylonstoren 2022	90	R120
Cape Collective Epic White 2020	90	R127
Spice Route 2021	90	R130
Cavalli Filly 2021	90	R156
Painted Wolf Black Pack 2019	90	R160
Lievland Old Vine 2021	90	R170
Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2020	90	R175
Vrede en Lust Kogelberg 2019	90	R175
Ridgeback 2020	90	R180
Eenzaamheid 2020	90	R195
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2020	90	R200

Belle Rebelle Solitude 2021	90	R240
Gentis Badlands 2021 (Thor Vintners)	90	R250
Villion Henning 2021	90	R250
Moordenaarskloof 2021 (Dornier)	90	R285
Cederberg Five Generations 2021	90	R290

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue 2020	Coastal Region/ Walker Bay	89
Allée Bleue 2021	Franschhoek	90
Babylonstoren 2021	Simonsberg- Paarl	90
Badsberg 2022	Breedekloof	86
Bellingham Homestead The Old Orchards 2020	Paarl	91
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine WO Cape Town 2021	Cape Town	91
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Limited Release 2021	Coastal Region	96
Belle Rebelle Intrepid 2021	Breedekloof	94
Belle Rebelle Solitude 2021	Swartland	90
Bellevue Eselgraf Single Vineyard 2021	Swartland	89
Bosman Family Vineyards Optenhorst 2020	Wellington	86
Brookdale Single Vineyard 2020	Paarl	92
Bruce Jack Boer Maak 'n Plan 2020	Breedekloof	93
Cape Collective Epic White 2020	Western Cape	90
Cavalli Filly 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Cederberg Five Generations 2021	Cederberg	90
Daschbosch Mossiesdrift Steen 2021	Breedekloof	91
Delheim Wild Ferment 2020	Stellenbosch	91
DeMorgenzon Reserve 2020	Stellenbosch	92
De Wet 2021	Worcester	87
Donkiesbaai Steen 2021	Piekenierskloof	91
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cape Garden 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	91
Durbanville Hills Cool Climate 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	90
Eenzaamheid 2020	Agter-Paarl	90
Elementel X White Gold 2021	Upper Hemel- en-Aarde Valley	88
Endura Single Vineyard 2019 (Perdeberg)	Swartland	86
Fryer's Cove 2021	Cape West Coast	89
Gentis Badlands 2021 (Thor Vintners)	Swartland	90
Groot Phesantekraal 2022	Cape Town	88
Groot Phesantekraal Anna de Koning Limited Edition 2021	Durbanville	89
Hawksmoor St Anne 2021	Paarl	89
Jailbreak 2020 (Mountain Ridge)	Western Cape	89
Jordan Inspector Péringuey 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Kaapzicht Kliprug 2021	Bottelary Stellenbosch	91
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2021	Stellenbosch	94
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Knorhoek 2020	Stellenbosch	91
L'Avenir Single Block 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Leeuwenkuil Heritage 2018	Swartland	88
Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2020	Klein Karoo	90
Leyland Steen 2020 (De Wet)	Worcester	90

Lievland Old Vine 2021	Paarl	90
Longavi Black Summer 2021	Swartland	88
Malanot Bush Vine 2019	Stellenbosch	91
Mariëtte 2020 (Belle Rebelle)	Breedekloof	92
Mariëtte 2021 (Belle Rebelle)	Breedekloof	89
Mason Road 2021 (Brookdale)	Paarl	91
MAN Family Wines Free-Run Steen 2021	Coastal Region	93
Mimosa Reserve 2020	Robertson	87
Mischa Heritage Single Vineyard 2021	Voor-Paardeberg	89
Moordenaarskloof 2021 (Dornier)	Stellenbosch	90
Mountain Ridge 2020	Breedekloof	93
Nederburg The Heritage Heroes Anchorman 2021	Western Cape	88
Old Road Wine Co. Anemos 2020	Coastal Region	93
Old Road Wine Co. StoneTrail 2019	Franschhoek	87
Old Road Wine Co. StoneTrail 2020	Franschhoek	89
One Formation 2020 (Boland Cellar)	Paarl	90
Painted Wolf Black Pack 2019	Coastal Region	90
Painted Wolf Black Pack 2021	Coastal Region	91
Painted Wolf The Den 2021	Swartland	90
Perdeberg Classic Collection 2021	Coastal Region	91
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Courageous Old Vine Barrel Fermented 2021	Paarl	91
Perdeberg The Vineyard Collection 2021	Paarl	89
Piekenierskloof Bergendal Old Vine 2021	Piekenierskloof	93
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2020	Western Cape	90
Ridgeback 2020	Paarl	90
Roodekrantz Old Vine Vine 1983 2021	Swartland	94
Simonsig Chenin Avec Chêne 2020	Stellenbosch	93
Spice Route 2021	Swartland	90
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2019 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2020 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenbosch Reserve Hangbrug 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenbosch Vineyards Credo 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Tempel Kattemai 2021	Cape Coast	95
The Fledge & Co. Klipspringer 2019	Swartland	89
Usana Swashbuckler 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Villiera Barrel Fermented 2021	Stellenbosch	95
Villiera 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Villion Henning 2021	Bot River	90
Vrede en Lust Kogelberg 2019	Elgin	90
Waterford 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Zevenwacht Estate Old Vine 2021	Stellenbosch	88

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STELLENBOSCH



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