



Prescient

SIGNATURE RED BLEND  
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 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*

# ABOUT SIGNATURE RED BLENDS

Why should South Africa be bound by the Bordeaux model when it comes to creating great blended red wine? Perhaps the Rhône is a better reference point given local growing conditions while the so-called “Cape Blend” incorporating Pinotage potentially gives us a unique selling proposition. Then, of course, there are the red blends of yesteryear – Alto Rouge, Chateau Libertas and Rustenberg Dry Red to name but three – which conformed to no particular model but are revered for their complexity and longevity.

Once again, we called for wines which were “distinctive of their originators” and instead of the usual practice of dividing them into various sub-groups according to style (Pinotage-based vs Shiraz-based being the differentiation most usually made), we tasted them as one continuous line-up – the thinking being that the fundamentals of wine appreciation such as complexity and balance should apply when it came to making quality assessments.

# KEY FINDINGS

For this year's Signature Red Blend Report, there were 61 entries from 47 producers with 2 (44%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

Looking at the Top 10, the diversity of approaches is most pleasing. Meinert Synchronicity 2017 is essentially a Bordeaux-style blend with a dash of Pinotage; Coterie by Wildeberg Grenache & Syrah 2021, Forager Red 2020 and Guardian Peak SMG 2020 are Rhône-inspired; Fairview Homtini 2018 sees Italy as a reference with Sangiovese to the fore; the Extraño 2019, also from Fairview, takes its cue from Spain and Boplaas Gamka Reserve 2020 from Portugal. As for Brampton Roxton Full-Blooded Red 2018, Beaumont Vitruvian 2017 and Nederburg Baronne 2020, these are pretty much freestyle in conception.

Do any of these transcend their roots and become authentically “South African”? It's a moot point but what is to be celebrated is the sense of adventure that the winemakers involved are clearly embracing. None of these wines make for predictable drinking.

As for the less successful wines, many appear to be overdone, the producer trying too hard to come up with something definitive – fruit too ripe, the vinification too severe. Conversely, there were other wines that were inherently modest and, presuming that they are not too expensive, are entirely legitimate as everyday drinking.

It also must be said that while unconventional thinking as to what grape varieties to blend with is generally to be applauded, some circumspection is to be advised at times – both Mourvèdre and Pinotage, for instance, don't always combine well with other varieties due to their very particular flavour profiles.

The average price of the 27 wines to rate 90-plus is R253 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R209. Offering the best quality relative to price is Charles Lang & Sons Cabernet Sauvignon Carignan Shiraz Ruby Cabernet 2020 with a rating of 90 and selling for R45 a bottle.

## TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



### Meinert Synchronicity 2017

Price: R436.54

Total Production: 6 200 bottles Abv 14%

*48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 20% Petit Verdot and 7% Pinotage. Components matured separately for 12 months in French oak, of which 35% was new, before being blended and returned to barrel for another 12 months. Red and black berries, violets, some leafiness, earth and spice on the nose while the palate shows good depth of fruit, bright acidity and firm but fine tannins, the finish long and savoury. Medium bodied and well balanced.*



### Coterie by Wildeberg Grenache & Syrah 2021

Price: R170

Total Production: 3 800 bottles Abv 14%

*67% Grenache and 33% Syrah. Matured for 10 months in French and Austrian oak, partially new. Compelling aromatics of red berries, fynbos and white pepper while the palate is light yet intensely flavoured – good fruit purity, fresh acidity and fine tannins. An elegant wine with plenty of energy.*



### Boplaas Gamka Reserve 2020

Price: R235

Total Production: 4 900 bottles Abv 14.38%

*60% Touriga Nacional, 20% Shiraz, 10% Tinta Barocca and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Grapes from Calitzdorp and Stellenbosch. Matured for 12 months in French oak, 100% new. Expressive aromatics with notes of floral perfume, fynbos, red and black berries plus spice while the palate has very good fruit expression, bright acidity and nicely grippy tannins, the finish long and dry.*





## Brampton Roxton Full-Blooded Red 2018

Price: R160

Total Production: 20 000 bottles Abv 14%

*58% Petit Verdot, 34% Shiraz and 5% Malbec. The Petit Verdot was matured for 16 months in French oak barrels, of which 20% were new, while the Shiraz and Malbec were matured for 12 months in older oak. Red and black berries plus an attractive herbal quality to the nose while the palate displays dense fruit, vibrant acidity and a creamy texture, the finish nicely dry.*



## Fairview Homtini 2018

Price: R150

Total Production: 6 600 bottles Abv 13.98%

*37% Sangiovese, 31% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot and 10% Shiraz. Matured for 16 months in 70% French and 30% American oak barrels, with 15% new French oak used. Red and black berries, rose, some leafiness and tilled earth on the nose while the palate has good fruit concentration, bright acidity and firm but fine tannins, the finish particularly dry and Italianesque.*



## Forager Red 2020

Price: R95

Total Production: 10 603 bottles Abv 14.3%

*70% Shiraz and 30% Grenache. Matured for some 10–14 months in older French and American oak barrels, part of the Grenache left in stainless steel tank. Heady aromatics of red berries, musk, fynbos, pepper and spice while the palate is pure and focused with a dense core of fruit, fresh acidity and crunchy tannins, the finish long and saline.*





## Beaumont Vitruvian 2017

Price: R450

Total Production: 2 470 bottles Abv 14.04%

*40% Mourvèdre, 27% Syrah, 19% Pinotage, 7% Tinta Barocca and 7% Cabernet Franc matured for 24 months in French oak, 25% new. A floral top note before red cherry, plum and spice on the nose while the palate is medium bodied with tannins that are resolving nicely, the finish gently savoury.*



## Fairview Extraño 2019

Price: R130

Total Production: 7 300 bottles Abv 13.91%

*86% Tempranillo, 7% Carignan, 6% Grenache and 1% Cinsault. Matured for 24 months in French and American oak, 20% new. Red and black berries, floral fragrance, some leafiness, earth and tar on the nose while the palate has a good core of fruit, bright acidity and smooth tannins, the finish nicely dry.*



## Guardian Peak SMG 2020

Price: R180

Total Production: 13 956 bottles Abv 14.13%

*60% Syrah, 30% Mourvèdre and 10% Grenache. Grapes from Stellenbosch, Breedekloof and Piekenierskloof. Matured for 18 months in older 300-litre French oak barrels. Red berries, fynbos, cured meat and white pepper on the nose while the palate is juicy and fresh with plenty of energy.*





## Nederburg Baronne 2020

Price: R85

Total Production: | 958 153 bottles    Abv 14.47%

*44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Shiraz, 8% Cabernet Franc, 3% Roobernet, 1% Grenache, 1% Malbec and 1% Petit Verdot. Fermented in stainless steel tanks and matured on oak for six months. The nose shows cherries and cassis, some leafiness and fynbos plus a hint of reduction while the palate has juicy fruit and crunchy tannins.*





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

Wine	Score	Price
Meinert Synchronicity 2017	95	R436.54
Coterie by Wildeberg Grenache & Syrah 2021	94	R170
Forager Red 2020	93	R95
Fairview Homtini 2018	93	R150
Brampton Roxton Full-Blooded Red 2018	93	R160
Boplaas Gamka Reserve 2020	93	R235
Nederburg Baronne 2020	92	R85
Fairview Extraño 2019	92	R130
Guardian Peak SMG 2020	92	R180
Beaumont Vitruvian 2017	92	R450
Alto Rouge 2020	92	R115
Nederburg The Heritage Heroes Motorcycle Marvel 2018	91	R225
DeMorgenzon Maestro Blue 2019	91	R235
Boschendal Black Angus 2018	91	R420
Rust en Vrede Estate 2018	91	R500
Charles Lang & Sons Cabernet Sauvignon Carignan Shiraz Ruby Cabernet 2020	90	R45
Tierhoek Syrah Grenache Mourvedre 2020	90	R140
Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2020	90	R140
Ridgeback Ember 2017	90	R150
Warwick Three Cape Ladies 2020	90	R180
Boschendal The Nicolas 2020	90	R199
Strandveld The Navigator 2019	90	R240
Bellingham The Bernard Series The Maverick S.M.V 2019	90	R250
Bizoe Genant Syrah Grenache Mourvedre 2020	90	R310
Mary le Bow 2019	90	R320
Wildeckrans Barrel Select Reserve Cape Blend 2020	90	R395
Stellenzicht Acheulean Red 2018	90	R875

## COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Alto 1693 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Alto Rouge 2019	Stellenbosch	88
Alto Rouge 2020	Stellenbosch	92
Anwilka 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Babylonstoren Babel 2021	Simonsberg-Paarl	89
<b>Beaumont Vitruvian 2017</b>	<b>Bot River, Walker Bay</b>	<b>92</b>
Bellingham The Bernard Series The Maverick S.M.V 2019	Paarl	90
Bellingham The Founders Series POD 2019	Coastal Region	88
Benguela Cove Light House Collection Moody Lagoon 2020	Walker Bay	89
Beyerskloof Faith 2018	Stellenbosch	86
Beyerskloof Synergy 2019	Stellenbosch	85
Beyerskloof Traildust 2019	Stellenbosch	86
Bizoe Genant Syrah Grenache Mourvèdre 2020	Western Cape	90
<b>Boplaas Gamka Reserve 2020</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>93</b>
Boschendal Black Angus 2018	Stellenbosch	91
Boschendal Nicolas 2020	Cape Coast	90
<b>Brampton Roxton Full-Blooded Red 2018</b>	<b>Cape Coast</b>	<b>93</b>
Charles Lang & Sons Cabernet Sauvignon Carignan Shiraz Ruby Cabernet 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Cocoa Hill Ruby Red 2020 (Dornier)	Western Cape	88
<b>Coterie by Wildeberg Grenache &amp; Syrah 2021</b>	<b>Coastal Region</b>	<b>94</b>
DeMorgenzon Maestro Blue 2019	Stellenbosch	91
Dornier Scarlett 2018	Stellenbosch	87
Du Toitskloof Dimension 2018	Western Cape	88
Eikendal Charsima 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Ernie Els Proprietor's Blend 2017	Stellenbosch	89
<b>Fairview Extraño 2019</b>	<b>Coastal Region</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Fairview Homtini 2018</b>	<b>Darling</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Forager Red 2020</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>93</b>
Fryer's Cove Grenache Cinsault 2021	Cape West Coast	89
Gentis Red 2019 (Thor Vintners)	Stellenbosch	88
<b>Guardian Peak SMG 2020</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>92</b>
Haut Espoir Gentle Giant 2017	Franschhoek	87
Haute Cabrière Arnim Family Reserve 2019	Western Cape	89
La Cave Cape Blend 2017 (Wellington Wines)	Wellington	89
Leipzig Heimat 2018	Western Cape	86
Mary le Bow 2019	Western Cape	90
Meerhof Shiraz Granche Noir 2020	Swartland	87
<b>Meinert Synchronicity 2017</b>	<b>Devon Valley</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Nederburg Baronne 2020</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>92</b>
Nederburg The Heritage Heroes Motorcycle Marvel 2018	Western Cape	91
Old Road Wine Co. The Spotted Hound 2020	Coastal Region	87
Org de Rac Die Waghuis 2019	Swartland	89
Piekenierskloof Heirloom Red 2020	Piekenierskloof	89
Quest Two 2020 (Du Toitskloof)	Western Cape	87

Rhebokskloof The Rhebok 2019	Paarl	88
Ridgeback Ember 2017	Paarl	90
Rust en Vrede Estate 2018	Stellenbosch	91
Spice Route Chakalaka 2019	Swartland	87
Stellenzicht Acheulean Red 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Stellenzicht Thunderstone Red 2018	Coastal Region	87
Strandveld The Navigator 2019	Elim	90
Tierhoek Syrah Grenache Mourvèdre 2020	Piekenierskloof	90
Underworld Blend 3 2021 (Strange Kompanjie)	Coastal Region	88
Visio Vintners Alliance 2020	Stellenbosch	89
Vondeling Monsonia 2017	Voor- Paardeberg	88
Vondeling Monsonia 2018	Voor- Paardeberg	88
Warwick Professor Black Pitch Black 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Warwick Three Cape Ladies 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Waterford Estate The Jem 2017	Stellenbosch	86
Wildekranz Barrel Select Reserve Cape Blend 2020	Bot River	90
Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2020	Stellenbosch	90

# 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



GUARDIAN PEAK



BEAUMONT



FAIRVIEW



BOPLAAS