

Prescient
CAPE BORDEAUX
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 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 this Cape Bordeaux Red Blend Report, there were 55 entries from 42 producers with 23 (42%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

So not the best showing for this prestigious category. Why might this be? For one thing, the bulk of the entries (56%) came from 2018 and 2019 generally considered to be difficult vintages while a further 27% were from 2020 and 2021, these either too young to show their true quality or intended to be fast moving in a commercial sense and hence easy drinking, which is to say not particularly complex. The high reputation of the 2017 vintage is now well established and of the six entered from this vintage, three placed in the Top 10.

Stellenbosch looks very good yet again with seven wines from this district in the Top 10 while Heritage Heroes The Brew Master 2018 from Nedeburg combines grapes from both here and Paarl. The two other areas to be represented are Franschhoek (La Bri Affinity 2020) and Walker Bay (Benguela Cove Estate Collage 2019).

Further scrutiny of the Top 10 reveals eight producers opting for Cabernet Sauvignon as the dominant variety when conceiving their blends.

Only Allée Bleue and Ladybird Vineyards chose to deviate from this with the former leading with 38% Cabernet Franc and the latter with 47% Merlot.

The average price of the 23 wines to rate 90-plus is R391 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R333. Offering the best quality relative to price is Ladybird Vineyards The Ladybird 2018 with a rating of 93 and selling for R130 a bottle.

In closing, perhaps a note on scoring for anybody who feels that the category has been hard done by. Wines rating 88 or 89 should not be brushed aside – these are typically very good and may represent a bargain if the price is reasonable. However, they usually lack both the concentration and complexity that a score of 90 or higher implies. The Winemag.co.za panel always tries hard to ensure that 90/100 remains an important threshold and avoid score inflation.

Peter Falke Wines, as producer of the wine judged best overall, wins a new 225-litre Sélection barrel worth €900 (the equivalent of R15 300 at the time of writing) from Tonnellerie Sylvain.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Peter Falke Wines Kanoa 2017

Price: R365

Total Production: 4 183 bottles Abv 14.5%

86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Cabernet Franc. Matured for 18 months in French oak, 20% new. Complex aromatics of red and black berries, violets, earth and undergrowth plus oak spice. The palate meanwhile shows great structure – a good core of fruit, an energising line of acidity and firm but fine tannins that provide a nicely grippy finish.



Benguela Cove Estate Collage 2019

Price: R295

Total Production: 16 800 bottles Abv 14.1%

36% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Cabernet Franc, 16% Merlot, 15% Malbec and 8% Petit Verdot. Matured for 18 months in French oak, 45% new. Red and black berries, violets, an attractive herbal note and a touch of earth. Medium bodied with bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish nicely dry. Well balanced and elegant.



Dornier Donatus 2018

Price: R365

Total Production: 6 870 bottles Abv 14.5%

61.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11.5% Cabernet Franc, 11.5% Malbec, 11.5% Petit Verdot and 4% Merlot. Matured for 18 months in French oak, one-third new. Red and black berries, herbs, earth and attractive oak on the nose while the palate is full bodied with dense fruit and sleek tannins. Powerful but balanced.





Glenelly Lady May 2017

Price: R695

Total Production: 18 252 bottles Abv 14.96%

90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc and 4% Petit Verdot. Matured for 20 months in 200-litre barrels, 80% new. Red and black berries, some leafiness, pencil shavings and turned earth on the nose while the palate shows great depth of fruit, fresh acidity and firm tannins before a dry finish. Excellent structure and balance – taut and upright.



Allée Bleue L'Amour Toujours 2017

Price: R280

Total Production: 4 200 bottles Abv 14.5%

38% Cabernet Franc, 36% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot and 7% Petit Verdot. Matured for 18 months in French oak, 60% new. A brooding nose with notes of dark berries, some undergrowth, pencil shavings, boot polish and oyster shell. The palate is rich, broad and flavourful – dense fruit, bright acidity and firm tannins.



Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2019

Price: R335

Total Production: 31 719 bottles Abv 14.62%

65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Cabernet Franc, 11% Petit Verdot, 8% Merlot and 3% Malbec. Matured for 16 months in French oak, 50% new. Attractive aromatics of red and black berries, flowers and herbs plus oak spice while the palate is medium bodied with fresh acidity and fine tannins. Plenty of detail.





Delheim Grand Reserve 2018

Price: R450

Total Production: 12 400 bottles Abv 14.5%

63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12 % Cabernet Franc, 19 % Petit Verdot and 6 % Merlot. Matured for 18 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 30% new. The nose is attractively perfumed with notes of violets and some leafiness before red and black berries plus oak spice. The palate is well structured with good fruit density, bright acidity and firm tannins, the finish long and dry.



La Bri Affinity 2020

Price: R190

Total Production: 13 840 bottles Abv 13.9%

61% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 6% Petit Verdot. Matured for 18 months in French oak, 10% new. The nose is still rather primary at this stage with notes of red and black berries and vanilla before a palate that impresses with a good core of fruit and freshness – this wine has a succulence about it upfront but ends pleasingly dry.



Ladybird Vineyards The Ladybird 2018

Price: R130

Total Production: 80 700 bottles Abv 14.19%

47% Merlot, 27% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc, 11% Petit Verdot and 4% Malbec. Matured for 20 months in French oak, 10% new. Red and black berries, tobacco, vanilla and oak spice on the nose while the palate is full but balanced. Smooth textured with layers of flavour, the finish suitably savoury.





Nederburg Heritage Heroes The Brew Master 2018

Price: R225

Total Production: 4 504 bottles Abv 14.61%

55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot, 7% Malbec and 7% Cabernet Franc. Grapes from Paarl and Stellenbosch. Matured for 28 months in 300-litre French and American oak barrels, 100% new. Expressive aromatics of red and black berries, violets, herbs and pencil shavings while the palate is impressively precise – pure fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins. A luscious wine with plenty of volume.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Peter Falke Kanoa 2017	95	R365
Benguela Cove Estate Collage 2019	94	R295
Dornier Donatus 2018	94	R365
Glenelly Lady May 2017	94	R695
Ladybird Vineyards The Ladybird 2018	93	R130
La Bri Affinity 2020	93	R190
Nederburg Heritage Heroes The Brew Master 2018	93	R225
Allée Bleue L'Amour Toujours 2017	93	R280
Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2019	93	R335
Delheim Grand Reserve 2018	93	R450
Diemersdal Private Collection 2019	92	R180
Eikendal Classique 2018	92	R445
Leipzig Grand Master 2018	91	R175
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2019	91	R525
Nitida Calligraphy 2019	90	R240
Cavalli Warlord 2019	90	R260
Eikendal Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2021	90	R260
Alto Estate Blend 2018	90	R395
Ridgeback His Master's Choice Signature C 2018	90	R400
Franschhoek Cellar The Last Elephant 2019	90	R450
Idiom Bordicon Blend 2018	90	R495
Vergelegen G.V.B 2016	90	R650
Alto M.P.H.S. 2016	90	R995

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue L'Amour Toujours 2017	Banghoek	93
Alto Estate Blend 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Alto M.P.H.S. 2016	Stellenbosch	90
Backsberg John Martin 2017	Paarl	88
Beau Constantia Lucca 2018	Constantia	87
Beau Joubert The Ambassador 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Bellevue The Reserve Collection Tumara 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Benguela Cove Estate Collage 2019	Walker Bay	94
Cavalli Warlord 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Constantia Glen Three 2019	Constantia	88
Coterie by Wildeberg Cabernet Franc & Malbec 2020	Coastal Region	88
De Wet Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2020	Worcester	87
De Wet Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2021	Worcester	87
Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2019	Stellenbosch	93
Delheim Grand Reserve 2018	Stellenbosch	93
Diemersdal Private Collection 2019	Durbanville	92
Diemersdal Private Collection 2020	Durbanville	89
Dornier Donatus 2018	Stellenbosch	94
Durbanville Hills The Tangram 2018	Durbanville Cape Town	89
Eikendal Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Eikendal Classique 2019	Stellenbosch	92
Fleur du Cap Laszlo 2019	Coastal Region	88
Franschhoek Cellar The Last Elephant 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Glenelly Lady May 2017	Stellenbosch	94
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2018	Constantia Cape Town	89
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2019	Constantia Cape Town	91
Idiom Bordicon Blend 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Jason's Hill Izak Reserve 2018	Breedekloof	89
La Bri Affinity 2020	Franschhoek	93
Ladybird Vineyards The Ladybird 2018 (previously Laibach)	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	93
Leipzig Grand Master 2018	Western Cape	91
Mischa Cerno 2020	Groenberg Wellington	88
Mischa Ring Fence 2020	Groenberg	87
Nederburg Double Barrel Reserve 2020	Coastal Region	88
Nederburg Heritage Heroes The Brew Master 2018	Western Cape	93
Nitida Calligraphy 2019	Durbanville Cape Town	90
Paul Wallace Crackerjack 2019	Elgin	86
Peter Falke Kanoa 2017	Stellenbosch	95
Ridgeback His Master's Choice Signature C 2018	Paarl	90
Ridgeback Journey 2019	Paarl	88
Saxenburg Guinea Fowl Red 2020	Polkadraai Hills Stellenbosch	88

Silver Myn Argentum 2021 (Zorgvliet)	Stellenbosch	86
Stellenbosch 1679 The Legacy 2019 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	87
Stellenbosch Reserve Vanderstel 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Thor Vintners Megan Mari 2020	Franschhoek	87
Tokara Director's Reserve 2019	Stellenbosch	88
Vergelegen Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Vergelegen DNA 2016	Stellenbosch	88
Vergelegen DNA 2017	Stellenbosch	88
Vergelegen G.V.B 2016	Stellenbosch	90
Vergelegen G.V.B 2017	Stellenbosch	89
Villa Esposito Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2021 (Klawer Wine Cellars)	Olifants River	89
Zonnebloem Lauréat 2018	Stellenbosch	87
Zorgvliet Richelle 2018	Banghoek	87
Zorgvliet Richelle 2019	Banghoek	89

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