

Prescient

CHENIN BLANC  
REPORT 2023

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



# ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2023

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 Francois Rautenbach, Singita Premier Wine Direct General Manager.

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 year's report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, there were 65 entries from 48 producers with 46 (71%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale – another excellent showing from what must be South Africa's strongest wine category, white or red.

Among the Top 10, three were from Swartland, two each from Agter-Paarl and Stellenbosch and one each from Breedekloof, Elgin and Paarl – whereas some varieties seem to do best and are closely associated with particular areas (e.g. Cabernet Sauvignon in Stellenbosch or Pinot Noir in the greater Hemel-en-Aarde), Chenin Blanc seems capable of high quality wherever it's planted.

Stylistically, it is interesting to note that three of the Top 10 wines (Bellevue, MAN and Painted Wolf) are unwooded while Nederburg has an unwooded component – the panel was probably inclined to favour freshness over extreme richness but equally Chenin tends to provide plenty of natural fruit density making significant intervention in the cellar unnecessary.

The work of the Old Vine Project in preserving vineyards 35 years and older and thereby protect winelands heritage also must be acknowledged once again. Acceptance of and willingness to actively support and participate in the initiative among producers seems to grow ever stronger – top wine overall was the 2022 vintage of the long-celebrated Kleine Zalze Family Reserve, this being the first time it carries the Certified Heritage Vineyard seal.

On to the Cape White Blends, defined as any blend containing a Chenin Blanc component of more than 15% and less than 85%. Entries were few, just 16 to be precise, but 13 rated 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale and the general feeling among the panel was that they collectively showed increased sophistication.

The average price of the 46 examples of Chenin Blanc to rate 90-plus is R213 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R198.50. Offering the best quality relative to price is Leyland Steen 2020 from De Wet Cellar with a rating of 90 and selling for R82 a bottle. A special mention to MAN Family Vintners which made Free-run Steen 2022 – this placed Top 10 with a rating of 93 and sells for R90 a bottle, total production amounting to an impressive 330 000 litres (this bottled in batches over time).

## TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



### Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2022

Price: R270

Total Production: 24 800 bottles Abv 13.7%

*From vineyards planted between 1977 and 1987. Inoculated in tank. Matured for eight months in 400-litre barrels, two 500-litre amphorae and concrete eggs. Complex aromatics with top notes of hay and fynbos before pear, peach and citrus with some ginger in the background. The palate has dense fruit, punchy acidity and dry finish. Intensely flavoured with plenty of energy.*



### Bellevue Eselgraf Single Vineyard 2022

Price: R95

Total Production: 4 967 bottles Abv 13.01%

*From a vineyard planted in 1976. Fermented in stainless steel tank and left on the lees for three months. Pretty aromatics of flowers, herbs, pear, peach and citrus precede a palate with lovely fruit purity and a great line of acidity before a pithy finish. Combines density and vibrancy to excellent effect.*



### Bruce Jack Heritage Collection Boer Maak 'n Plan 2022

Price: R270

Total Production: 2 480 bottles Abv 13.5%

*Fermented in older barrels using commercial and wild yeasts before maturation lasting eight months. A touch of reduction before citrus, peach, potpourri, spice and some leesy complexity on the nose while the palate has pure fruit and racy acidity, the finish nicely dry. Poised and detailed.*







## Eenzaamheid 2021

Price: R250

Total Production: 6 700 bottles Abv 13.7%

*Grapes from a vineyard planted in 1985. Matured for 11 months in 300-litre barrels. Intriguing notes of mint and other fresh herbs precede citrus and peach plus some waxy complexity. The palate is powerful – dense and thick-textured with well-integrated acidity and a gently savoury finish. Lots going on.*



## MAN Family Wines Free-run Steen 2022

Price: R90

Total Production: 440 000 bottles Abv 13.5%

*Grapes from Agter-Paarl. Fermented in stainless steel tank and left on the lees for three months. The nose is enchantingly primary with notes of hay, floral perfume, citrus and white peach while the palate is lean and tightly wound – pure fruit and fresh acidity before a pithy finish.*



## Nederburg Heritage Heroes Anchor Man Old Vine 2022

Price: R190

Total Production: 11 600 bottles Abv 12.84%

*Grapes from a Swartland vineyard planted in 1983. One portion fermented in first-, second- and third-fill 300- and 500-litre barrels, a second in stainless-steel tanks and a third in amphorae while maturation lasted nine months. A waxy, lanolin-like note precedes citrus and apple on the nose. The palate is rich and thick-textured – dense fruit and tangy acidity, the finish gently savoury.*





## Old Road Wine Co. Anemos 2022

Price: R290

Total Production: 2 484 bottles Abv 13%

*Grapes from two Paardeberg vineyards. Matured for eight months in predominantly 500-litre barrels, 20% new. The nose is complex with notes of citrus, peach, dried herbs, floral perfume and some leesy complexity while the palate is medium-bodied and tightly wound – pure and concentrated with bright acidity and a saline finish.*



## Painted Wolf The Den 2022

Price: R105

Total Production: 60 000 bottles Abv 13.48%

*90% Chenin Blanc, 10% Viognier. Spontaneously fermented in tank. Top notes of hay and dried herbs before peach and citrus on the nose while the palate has good purity and focus – lean and fresh with a long, dry finish. Plenty of zip.*



## Vrede en Lust Kogelberg 2021

Price: R220

Total Production: 5 200 bottles Abv 13.6%

*Fermented and matured for 10 months in 225- and 500-litre barrels. Attractive aromatics with top notes of flowers, dried herbs and hay before citrus, peach and apple plus some vanilla and spice. Good fruit expression and bright acidity before a salty finish. Rich but equally balanced and flavourful.*







## Wildeberg Terroirs 2022

Price: R260

Total Production: 10 157 bottles    Abv 13.5%

*Grapes from Agter-Paarl, two vineyards planted 1977. Spontaneously fermented in 600-litre barrels, approximately 25% new. The nose shows honeysuckle and herbs before citrus and peach while the palate has luscious fruit, bright acidity and a dry finish. Pure and precise.*



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

Wine	Score	Price
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2022	95	R270
Bellevue Eselgraf Single Vineyard 2022	94	R95
MAN Family Wines Free-run Steen 2022	93	R90
Painted Wolf The Den 2022	93	R105
Nederburg Heritage Heroes Anchor Man Old Vine 2022	93	R190
Vrede en Lust Kogelberg 2021	93	R220
Eenzaamheid 2021	93	R250
Bruce Jack Heritage Collection Boer Maak 'n Plan 2022	93	R270
Wildeberg Terroirs 2022	93	R260
Old Road Wine Co. Anemos 2022	93	R290
Dornier The Pirate of Cocoa Hill 2022	93	R103.20
Delheim Wild Ferment 2021	93	R190
Harry Hartman Church Swartland 2022	93	R360
Cavalli Reserve 2022	92	R185
Darling Cellars Old Bush Vines 2021	92	R220
Nicolas van der Merwe 2019 (Nico van der Merwe Wines)	92	R250
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cape Garden 2022	91	R135
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2022	91	R148
Painted Wolf Black Pack 2021	91	R170
Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2021	91	R175
Belle Rebelle Solitude 2022	91	R185
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Limited Release 2022	91	R190
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine WO Cape Town 2022	91	R190
Doolhof Single Vineyard 2022	91	R225
Ridgeback 2020	91	R225
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2020	91	R230
Kasteelberg 2022 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)	91	R240
Wildeckrans Barrel Select Reserve 2022	91	R244
Zevenwacht Z Collection 2022	91	R270
Van Wyk Family Wines 2022	91	R280
Harry Hartman Church Stellenbosch 2021	91	R360
Leyland Steen 2020 (De Wet)	90	R82
Lubanzi 2022	90	R90
Babylonstoren 2022	90	R130
Leeuwenkuil Reserve White 2020	90	R135
Rickety Bridge 2022	90	R140
Usana Swashbuckler 2022	90	R170
Knorhoek 2021	90	R180
Belle Rebelle Intrepid 2022	90	R185
Mariette 2021 (Belle Rebelle)	90	R195
Groot Phesantekraal Anna de Koning Limited Edition 2022	90	R220
Jason's Hill Arrois Cap Classique 2018	90	R220
Simonsig Langbult Steen Old Vine 2022	90	R235
Nicolas van der Merwe 2020 (Nico van der Merwe Wines)	90	R250
Beaumont Hope Marguerite 2022	90	R425
Doolhof Riviersteen 2019	90	R579



## COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Babylonstoren 2022	Simonsberg-Paarl	90
Beaumont Hope Marguerite 2022	Bot River Walker Bay	90
Belle Rebelle Intrepid 2022	Breedekloof	90
Belle Rebelle Solitude 2022	Swartland	91
<b>Bellevue Eselgraf Single Vineyard 2022</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>94</b>
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine WO Cape Town 2022	Cape Town	91
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Limited Release 2022	Coastal Region	91
Bowwood 2022 (Vondeling)	Voor-Paardeberg	86
<b>Bruce Jack Heritage Collection Boer Maak 'n Plan 2022</b>	<b>Breedekloof</b>	<b>93</b>
Cavalli Reserve 2022	Stellenbosch	92
Chamonix 2022	Franschhoek	88
Darling Cellars Old Bush Vines 2021	Darling	92
De Liefde 2022 (Mountain Ridge)	Western Cape	89
Delheim Wild Ferment 2021	Stellenbosch	93
De Wet Cellar 2023	Worcester	89
Doolhof Riviersteen 2019	Limietberg	90
Doolhof Single Vineyard 2022	Limietberg	91
Dornier The Pirate of Cocoa Hill 2022	Western Cape	93
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cape Garden 2022	Durbanville Cape Town	91
Durbanville Hills Cool Climate 2023	Durbanville Cape Town	88
<b>Eenzaamheid 2021</b>	<b>Agter-Paarl</b>	<b>93</b>
Groot Phesantekraal Anna de Koning Limited Edition 2022	Durbanville	90
Harry Hartman Church Stellenbosch 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Harry Hartman Church Swartland 2022	Swartland	93
Jason's Hill Arrois Cap Classique 2018	Breedekloof	90
Kasteelberg 2022 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)	Swartland	91
<b>Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2022</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>95</b>
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2022	Stellenbosch	91
Knorhoek 2021	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	90
Kunjani 2022	Stellenbosch	89
La Cave 2020 (Wellington Wines)	Wellington	88
Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2021	Klein Karoo	91
Leeuwenkuil Heritage 2020	Swartland	89
Leeuwenkuil Reserve White 2020	Swartland	90
Leyland Steen 2020 (De Wet)	Worcester	90
Lubanzi 2022	Swartland	90
<b>MAN Family Wines Free-run Steen 2022</b>	<b>Cape Coast</b>	<b>93</b>
Mariette 2021 (Belle Rebelle)	Breedekloof	90
Mischa Heritage Single Vineyard 2022	Paardeberg	88
<b>Nederburg Heritage Heroes Anchor Man Old Vine 2022</b>	<b>Swartland</b>	<b>93</b>
Nicolas van der Merwe 2019 (Nico van der Merwe Wines)	Stellenbosch	92
Nicolas van der Merwe 2020 (Nico van der Merwe Wines)	Stellenbosch	90

<b>Old Road Wine Co. Anemos 2022</b>	<b>Swartland</b>	<b>93</b>
Old Road Wine Co. Stone Trail Single Vineyard 2020	Franschhoek	88
Painted Wolf Black Pack 2021	Coastal Region	91
Painted Wolf Lycaon Old Vine 2021	Wellington	88
<b>Painted Wolf The Den 2022</b>	<b>Swartland</b>	<b>93</b>
Quest 2022	Breedekloof	88
Rickety Bridge 2022	Western Cape	90
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2020	Coastal Region	87
Ridgeback 2020	Paarl	91
Simonsig Langbult Steen Old Vine 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2020 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	91
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2022 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	89
Stettyn Family Vineyards Shackleton 2022	Stettyn	89
Usana Swashbuckler 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Van Wyk Family Wines 2022	Stellenbosch	91
<b>Vrede en Lust Kogelberg 2021</b>	<b>Elgin</b>	<b>93</b>
Warwick Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2022	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	88
Waterford 2020	Stellenbosch	89
<b>Wildeberg Terroirs 2022</b>	<b>Paarl</b>	<b>93</b>
Wild House 2023 (Wildeberg)	Western Cape	89
Wildekrans Barrel Select Reserve 2022	Bot River	91
Wildekrans Estate 2022	Western Cape	89
Zevenwacht Z Collection 2022	Polkadraai Hills	91





EENZAAMHEID



BELLEVUE



KLEINE ZALZE



PAINTED WOLF



MAN FAMILY WINES



BRUCE JACK



WILDEBERG



An aerial photograph of a vineyard and farm buildings. In the foreground, there are rows of grapevines in a field. A road runs diagonally across the lower left. In the middle ground, there is a large white building with a blue roof, surrounded by trees and a parking lot. To the right, there is a long, low white building. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky.

Prescient

CAPE WHITE BLEND  
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## TOP 6 TASTING NOTES



### Org De Rac Die Waghuis White 2021

Price: R199

Total Production: 6 000 bottles Abv 13.24%

*37 % Verdelho, 35% Roussanne and 28% Chenin Blanc. Fermentation of the three varietal components takes place separately, with some batches fermented in stainless steel tanks and others in oak barrels. The wine then undergoes 12 months of maturation in older 300-litre barrels. Complex aromatics with top notes of floral perfume and herbs before pear, peach and citrus with ginger and other spice in the background. The palate has a weightless intensity about it – pure fruit and zesty acidity before a dry finish.*



### Cavalli Cremello 2022

Price: R210

Total Production: 6 526 bottles Abv 13.5%

*43% Chenin Blanc, 25% Chardonnay, 21% Verdelho and 11% Viognier. Matured for six months in barrel, 23% new. A hint of flinty reduction before hay, herbs, citrus and peach on the nose while the palate has dense core of fruit and punchy acidity before a dry finish. Layers of flavour.*



### Beaumont New Baby 2020

Price: R450

Total Production: 4 266 bottles Abv 11.75%

*27.5% Chenin Blanc, 27.5% Sauvignon Blanc, 27.5% Semillon, 14% Colombar and 3.5% Chardonnay. Matured for 12 months in 400-litre barrels, 30% new. A waxy note precedes apple, peach and spice on the nose while the palate is dense and smooth textured, tangy acidity lending balance. A wine with plenty of interest.*





## Eenzaamheid Vin Blanc 2022

Price: R150

Total Production: 7 000 bottles Abv 13.5%

*60% Chenin Blanc, 30% Grenache Blanc and 10% Viognier. Spontaneously fermented and aged sur lie in stainless steel tank. Delicate aromatics of flowers, herbs and white fruit while the palate is pure and punchy before a dry finish – youthful and full of verve.*



## The Tea Leaf 2022 (Wildeberg)

Price: R137

Total Production: 6 218 bottles Abv 13.5%

*80% Chenin Blanc, 13% Grenache Gris and 7% Marsanne, the former component from Agter-Paarl, the latter two from Voor-Paardeberg. All components spontaneously fermented separately in 600-litre barrels, approximately 23% new. Subtle notes of peach, apricot and spice on the nose while the palate is lean and direct – more about texture and acidity than overt fruit, the finish intensely savoury.*



## Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2022

Price: R150

Total Production: 9 000 bottles Abv 13.5%

*37.5% Chenin, 33.5% Chardonnay, 13% Roussanne, 9% Semillon and 7% Viognier. Fermented and matured for seven months in 500-litre barrels, 10% new. Complex aromatics of hay, stone fruit, spice and some bread-like character. Rich and broad, fresh acidity lending balance – good weight but also nuance. Full of flavour, the finish long and dry.*



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

Wine	Score	Price
Org De Rac Die Waghuis White 2021	94	R199
Cavalli Cremello 2022	93	R210
The Tea Leaf 2022 (Wildeberg)	92	R137
Eenzaamheid Vin Blanc 2022	92	R150
Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2022	92	R150
Beaumont New Baby 2020	92	R450
Babylonstoren Candide 2022	91	R105
Kloovenburg Eight Feet White Blend 2022	91	R250
Tempel Kattemaai Chenin Blanc / Sémillon 2022	91	R295
Boplaas Gamka Branca 2022	90	R165
Bellingham The Founders Series Freda White Blend 2021	90	R175
Van Wyk Family Wines Olivia Grace 2020	90	R240
Vondeling Babiana 2022	90	R295



## COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Babylonstoren Candide 2022	Simonsberg-Paarl	91
<b>Beaumont New Baby 2020</b>	<b>Bot River Walker Bay</b>	<b>92</b>
Bellingham The Founders Series Freda 2021	Cape Coast	90
Boplaas Gamka Branca 2022	Western Cape	90
Bosman Family Vineyards Adama White 2021	Wellington	89
<b>Cavalli Cremello 2022</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>93</b>
Coterie by Wilderberg Chenin Blanc & Grenache Blanc 2022	Coastal Region	87
<b>Eenzaamheid Vin Blanc 2022</b>	<b>Agter-Paarl</b>	<b>92</b>
Kloovenburg Eight Feet White Blend 2022	Swartland	91
<b>Org De Rac Die Waghuis White 2021</b>	<b>Swartland</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>The Tea Leaf 2022 (Wildeberg)</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>92</b>
Van Wyk Family Wines Olivia Grace 2020	Western Cape	90
Vondeling Babiana 2022	Voor-Paardeberg	90
White Leipzig 2022 (Leipzig)	Western Cape	89
<b>Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2022</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>92</b>





CAVALLI



ORG DE RAC



BEAUMONT



EENZAAMHEID



WILDEBERG



ZEVENWACHT



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