



Prescient

SHIRAZ
REPORT 2023

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

WILDEBERG

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 wine writer Malu Lambert and Ndaba Dube, Food & Beverage Operations Manager at the President Hotel.

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 80 entries from 58 producers with 37 (46%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. With some big scores among the Top 10 but more than half of the line-up failing to make the important 90-point threshold, this category currently seems to be characterised by high peaks but also low troughs when it comes to quality.

Rotundone is the chemical compound responsible for the characteristic peppery, spicy aromas and flavours in Shiraz/Syrah wines and it is thought that cooler ripening conditions favour its synthesis and/or accumulation. This would appear to be borne out by this year's Top 10 – there were three wines from Durbanville and two from Elim, the dominant influence on vines being proximity to the ocean, and one from Ceres Plateau where altitude plays a significant role. The other four best performing wines were from Franschhoek, Stellenbosch (two) and Swartland.

As for the less successful wines, these weren't so much the result of misguided winemaking but rather that they appeared rather plain and non-descript – when planted on a suitable site, Shiraz/Syrah seems to be making some of South Africa's most thrilling wines but when this is not the case, some pretty boring generic red wine is the result.

The average price of the 37 wines to rate 90-plus is R268 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R316. Offering the best quality relative to price is Du Toitskloof 2020 with a rating of 91 and selling for R82 a bottle.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Wildeberg Red 2022

Price: R403

Total Production: 6 154 bottles Abv 13.44%

90% Syrah, 10% Cabernet Franc from the 2021 vintage. Syrah underwent 30% whole-bunch fermentation before being matured in mostly older 600-litre barrels for 12 months; Cabernet Franc matured for 18 months in a new 300-litre barrel. Intensely aromatic with notes of flowers, herbs, red and black berries plus white pepper. The palate is taut and youthful – pure fruit, great energy and a super-dry finish.



De Grendel Op Die Berg Syrah 2021

Price: R310

Total Production: 12 168 bottles Abv 13.4%

Grapes from Witzenberg Mountain near Ceres. 50% whole-bunch fermentation before maturation lasting 12 months in older oak. Red berries, fynbos and white pepper on the nose. Medium-bodied yet flavour-packed – dense fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and dry.



Mellish Family Vineyards Bakenkop Syrah 2020

Price: R220

Total Production: 1 047 bottles Abv 13.2%

30% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for nine months in older 225-litre barrels. The nose is particularly fragrant with notes of red and black berries, lavender, pepper and spice. The palate has presence but also poise – good clarity of fruit, fresh acidity and powdery tannins. Layered and long.





Strandveld Syrah 2020

Price: R240

Total Production: 12 694 bottles Abv 13.37%

94% Syrah, 6% Viognier. Matured for 20 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. Compelling aromatics of red berries, fynbos, olive brine, cured meat, pepper and spice while the palate is seamless with good fruit expression, lemon-like acidity and fine tannins. Refined and detailed.



De Grendel Elim 2020

Price: R975

Total Production: 2 363 bottles (1.5L) Abv 13.1%

30% whole-bunch fermented. Matured for 13 months in older barrels. Exotic aromatics of red and black berries, rose, fynbos, cured meat and pepper while the palate has a dense core of fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins – a super-tasty drop!



Diemersdal Syrah 2022

Price: R190

Total Production: 3 100 bottles Abv 13.5%

Winner of the General Smuts Trophy at the SA Young Wine Show. Matured for 12 months in 225-litre barrels, 20% new. Very expressive on the nose with notes of red and black berries, fynbos and white pepper. The palate shows great clarity of fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and saline. Great focus and energy.





Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The High Noon 2021

Price: R150

Total Production: 2 724 bottles Abv 14.11%

Matured for 14 months in a combination of new and second-fill French plus a small portion of American oak barrels. The nose shows a meaty note before black berries and pepper while the palate is rich – dense fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins. A polished wine with both weight and texture.



Kleine Zalze Project Z Syrah 2021

Price: R590

Total Production: 971 bottles Abv 13.5%

25% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 10 months in older oak barrels and terracotta amphorae. Heady aromatics of red and black berries, floral perfume, herbs, pepper and spice while the palate has good fruit purity, zesty acidity and fine tannins. Intricate and long.



Zevenwacht Z Collection Syrah 2022

Price: R315

Total Production: 2 096 bottles Abv 13.6%

70% whole-bunch fermentation. Fermented and matured for 12 months in 1 000-litre foudre. Red and black berries, fynbos, pepper and spice on the nose while the palate displays excellent fruit concentration, vibrant acidity and fine tannins. Great flavour intensity and length.





Kasteelberg
Syrah 2021 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)

Price: R240

Total Production: 1 302 bottles Abv 14.5%

30% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured in older 300- and 500-litre barrels for nine months. Red and black berries, violets plus intense note of white pepper and spice on the nose while the palate is broad and mellow with powdery tannins, the finish gently savoury.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Wildeberg Red 2022	96	R403
Mellish Family Vineyards Bakenkop Syrah 2020	95	R220
Strandveld Syrah 2020	95	R240
De Grendel Op Die Berg Syrah 2021	95	R310
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The High Noon 2021	94	R165
Diemersdal Syrah 2022	94	R190
Zevenwacht Z Collection Syrah 2022	94	R315
De Grendel Elim 2020	94	R975/1.5L
Kleine Zalze Project Z Syrah 2021	94	R590
Kasteelberg Syrah 2021 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)	93	R240
Leeuwenkuil 2021	93	R89
Org De Rac 2021	92	R130
Zandvliet 2021	92	R139
Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2019	92	R225
Lelie van Saron Syrah 2021	92	R245
Baleia Limitados The Conglomeration Effect Syrah 2020	92	R310
Zandvliet Hill of Enon 2020	92	R464
Du Toitskloof 2020	91	R85
Glenelly Glass Collection Syrah 2020	91	R160
Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2018	91	R225
Beaumont Dangerfield Syrah 2020	91	R285
Harry Hartman Somesay 2021	91	R360
Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2018	91	R450
Zonnebloem 2020	90	R115
Brookdale Mason Road Syrah 2022	90	R135
Sunkloof Reserve 2020 (Stellenvue)	90	R155
Nederburg The Manor House 2019	90	R165
Klein Roosboom Janét 2021	90	R185
Carinus Family Vineyards Syrah 2021	90	R195
Mischa 2021	90	R214
Bellingham The Bernard Series Basket Press Limited Release Syrah 2020	90	R220
Zandvliet Kalkveld 2018	90	R249
Van Loveren Christiena Trousseau Syrah 2020	90	R275
Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2019 (Le Grand Domaine)	90	R300
Peter Falke Alani Syrah 2019	90	R400
Old Road Wine Co. Pepper Wind Limited Release Syrah 2020	90	R415
Kloovenburg Riebeekberg Syrah 2021	90	R550

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue 2020	Franschhoek	89
Allée Bleue Single Vineyard Syrah 2018	Franschhoek	86
Alto 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Babylonstoren 2020	Simonsberg-Paarl	88
Baleia Limitados The Conglomeration Effect Syrah 2020	Lower Duiwenshok River	92
Beaumont Dangerfield Syrah 2020	Bot River Walker Bay	91
Bellevue 2021	Stellenbosch	88
Bellingham Homestead 2020	Paarl	87
Bellingham The Bernard Series Basket Press Limited Release Syrah 2020	Coastal Region	90
Benguela Cove Estate Syrah 2020	Walker Bay	88
Bon Courage Inkará 2021	Robertson	89
Brookdale Mason Road Syrah 2022	Paarl	90
Carinus Family Vineyards Syrah 2021	Polkadraai Heuwels	90
Charles Lang & Sons 2022	Stellenbosch	88
De Grendel 2020	Coastal Region	89
De Grendel Elim 2020	Elim	94
De Grendel Op Die Berg Syrah 2021	Ceres Plateau	95
DeMorgenzon Reserve Syrah 2017	Stellenbosch	89
Diemersdal Syrah 2022	Cape Town	94
Dornier Siren Syrah 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Du Toitskloof 2020	Western Cape	91
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The High Noon 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	94
Eenzaamheid 2021	Agter-Paarl	88
Glenelly Glass Collection Syrah 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2019 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	90
Great Five Reserve 2019 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	89
Groote Post 2021	Darling	87
Harry Hartman Somesay 2021	Western Cape	91
Highlands Road Syrah 2020	Elgin	87
Idun Nuit Éternelle 2019	Elgin	89
Kasteelberg Syrah 2021 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)	Swartland	93
Kevin Arnold 2018 (Waterford)	Stellenbosch	89
Klein Roosboom Janét 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	90
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2018	Stellenbosch	86
Kleine Zalze Project Z Syrah 2021	Stellenbosch	94
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2020	Stellenbosch	85
Kloovenburg Riebeekberg Syrah 2021	Swartland	90
Koelenbosch 2020 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	89
Kruger Family Reserve 2018 (Stellenview)	Stellenbosch	89
Kruger Family Reserve 2019 (Stellenview)	Stellenbosch	88
Kruger Family Reserve 2020 (Stellenview)	Stellenbosch	89

Kunjani 2018	Stellenbosch	89
La Bri Syrah 2020	Franschhoek	87
Land's End Cape Agulhas 2020	Cape Agulhas	88
Land's End Cape South Coast 2020	Cape South Coast	84
Landskroon Paul de Villiers 2021	Paarl	88
Leeuwenkuil 2021	Swartland	93
Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2018	Swartland	91
Lelie van Saron Syrah 2021	Upper Hemel & Aarde Valley	92
Mellish Family Vineyards Bakenkop Syrah 2020	Durbanville Cape Town	95
Mischa 2021	Groenberg Wellington	90
Mountain Ridge 2020	Breedekloof	89
Nederburg The Manor House 2019	Western Cape	90
Niel Joubert 2019	Paarl	88
Niel Joubert Reserve 2015	Paarl	88
Old Road Wine Co. 12 Mile Syrah 2021	Swartland	89
Old Road Wine Co. Pepper Wind Limited Release Syrah 2020	Franschhoek	90
Org De Rac 2021	Coastal Region	92
PaardenKloof The Long Road 2018	Bot River	88
Peter Falke Alani Syrah 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Prelude by Bacco Syrah 2020 (Bacco Estate)	Simonsberg-Paarl	87
Quoin Rock 2017	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	89
Saxenburg Private Collection Syrah 2020	Polkadraai Hills Stellenbosch	89
Stellenview Reserve 2017	Stellenbosch	86
Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2018	Stellenbosch	91
Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2019	Stellenbosch	92
Strandveld Syrah 2020	Elim	95
Sunkloof Reserve 2020 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	90
Van Loveren Christiena Trousseau Syrah 2020	Robertson	90
Wildeberg Red 2022	Franschhoek	96
Wildeckrans Barrel Select Reserve 2020	Bot River	87
Wildeckrans Estate 2020	Bot River	89
Zandvliet 2020	Robertson	89
Zandvliet 2021	Robertson	92
Zandvliet Hill of Enon 2020	Robertson	92
Zandvliet Kalkveld 2018	Robertson	90
Zandvliet Kalkveld 2019	Robertson	89
Zevenwacht 2020	Polkadraai Hills	89
Zevenwacht Z Collection 2022	Polkadraai Hills	94
Zonnebloem 2020	Stellenbosch	90

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DIEMERSDAL



MELLISH FAMILY VINEYARDS



KASTEELBERG



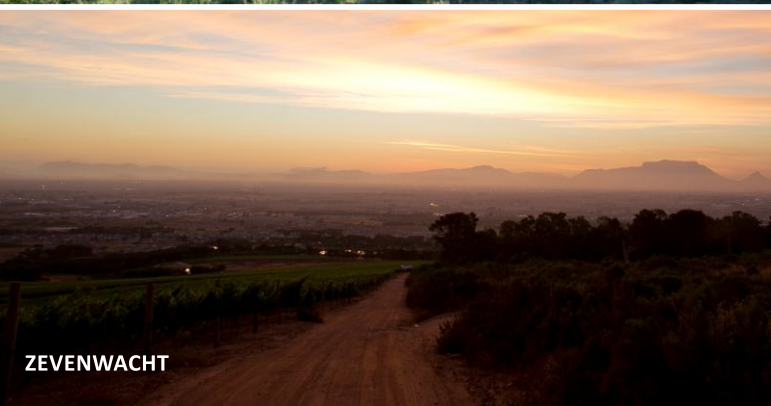
KLEINE ZALZE



STRANDVELD



DE GREDEL



ZEVENWACHT



DURBANVILLE HILLS