

Prescient

PINOTAGE  
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 Ndaba Dube, Food & Beverage Operations Manager at the President Hotel in Cape Town and Spencer Fondaumiere, chairman of the South African Sommelier Association.

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

This year's Pinotage Report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient sees Agter-Paarl cellar Windmeul dominating with three wines in the Top 10. What is even more remarkable is that these three wines are positioned across the range, from entry-level to top-end, demonstrating that the winemaking team can get the best out of the variety while deploying a variety of different styles.

In fact, it was the humble standard-label 2021 (price: R70 a bottle) that rated slightly ahead of the grander Reserve 2020 (R150) and The Legend Collection 2021 (R350) – Winemag.co.za has for some time argued that New Wave Pinotage can easily co-exist alongside Old School Pinotage, that is to say there's place for lighter, fresher renditions of the variety without disregarding those more traditional examples that tend to feature highly concentrated fruit and very firm tannins.

It doesn't get more New School than the Illimis 2022 from Lucinda Heyns, which also placed Top 10. Winemaking involved 100% whole-bunch fermentation before maturation lasting just seven months in older oak. Alcohol, meanwhile, is a mere 12%. It's a gorgeous wine, despite being stylistically a million miles away from category benchmarks like Kanonkop Black Label.

If, however, you are looking for power from your Pinotage, then such examples are certainly still to be found in the Top 10, none more so than Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2020 from Koelenhof – matured for 16 months in 100% new oak and carrying an alcohol of 15.22%, it's full-on.

Pinotage is undeniably controversial but it's not going to go away any time soon – it's South Africa's sixth most planted variety on 6 661ha behind Shiraz and ahead of Chardonnay – and the best way forward is to open up rather than shut down debate about how to get the best out of the variety.

In any event, the overall quality of the line-up tasted this year was encouragingly high, a total of 64 wines from 38 producers entered with 36 (56%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

The average price of the 37 wines to rate 90-plus is R208 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R207. Offering the best quality relative to price is Koelenhof 2021 with a rating of 90 and selling for R65 a bottle.

## TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



### De Grendel Amandelboord 2022

Price: R300

Total Production: 22 644 bottles Abv 14.56%

*Matured for 12 months in French and American oak, 12% new. Enticing aromatics including notes of red and black berries, fynbos, flowers, earth and spice. The palate is medium bodied with a lovely line of acidity and nicely grippy tannins. Pure and energetic.*



### Mooiplaas 2022

Price: R155

Total Production: 11 000 bottles Abv 14%

*Matured for 12 months in French oak barrels, 10% new. Fragrant aromatics with top notes of flowers and herbs before red and black berries. Poised and elegant – lovely clarity of fruit, good freshness and powdery tannins.*



### Windmeul 2021

Price: R70

Total Production: 6 600 bottles Abv 14.54%

*From an Agter-Paarl vineyard planted in 2012. Matured for 12 months in older oak. Inviting aromatics of red and black berries, rose and fresh herbs. The palate is medium bodied and wonderfully harmonious – a dense core of fruit, zippy acidity and chalky tannins, a saline quality to the finish.*







## Diemersdal Reserve 2022

Price: R190

Total Production: 60 000 bottles Abv 14.81%

*Matured for 14 months in 225-litre barrels, 40% new. The nose has top notes of flowers and tea leaf before red and black cherry plus vanilla. The palate displays concentrated fruit, lively acidity and smooth tannins. Powerful but balanced.*



## Warwick The First Lady 2022

Price: R120

Total Production: 116 000 bottles Abv 13%

*Matured for 12 months in various types of oak, 8% new. The nose shows red and black cherry, rose and some attractive herbal character. Lean and fresh on the palate with a dry finish. An understated, rather pretty wine.*



## Windmeul Reserve 2020

Price: R150

Total Production: 2 900 bottles Abv 14.25%

*Grapes from an Agter-Paarl vineyard planted in 1997. Matured for 18 months in first- and second-fill barrels. Plum, black cherry and cassis plus vanilla and spice on the nose. Dense fruit, bright acidity and firm but not coarse tannins. A full-bodied, well-structured wine. Upright and vibrant.*





## Windmeul The Legend Collection 2021

Price: R350

Total Production: 840 bottles Abv 14.7%

*Grapes from an Agter-Paarl vineyard planted in 1997. A barrel selection – matured for 18 months in first-fill barrels. Red and black berries, vanilla and spice on the nose while the palate has good fruit concentration, bright acidity and a nicely grippy finish. A polished wine that has weight and texture without being listless.*



## Illimis 2022

Price: R248

Total Production: 1 380 bottles Abv 12%

*100% whole-bunch fermentation before maturation lasting seven months in older oak. Attractive aromatics of red berries, fynbos and flowers while the palate is light and pure with great vibrancy and a salty finish. Succulent with lemon-like acidity and fine tannins.*



## Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2020

Price: R375

Total Production: 2 300 bottles Abv 15.22%

*Grapes from a vineyard planted in 1975. Matured for 16 months in 300-litre barrels, 100% new. A top note of potpourri before red and black berries, vanilla and spice. The palate is rich and broad – sweet fruit and a creamy texture, before a gently savoury finish. Luxuriously styled.*





## Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2021

Price: R111

Total Production: 13 600 bottles    Abv 14.5%

*Matured for 16 months in barrel, 10% new. Some staves used. Top notes of flowers and herbs before red and black cherry, vanilla, earth and spice. Good fruit concentration, bright acidity and fine tannins. Well balanced, rich and round – a textbook example.*



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

Wine	Score	Price
Windmeul 2021	95	R70
Mooiplaas 2022	95	R155
De Grendel Amandelboord 2022	95	R300
Warwick The First Lady 2022	94	R120
Windmeul Reserve 2020	94	R150
Diemersdal Reserve 2022	94	R190
Windmeul The Legend Collection 2021	94	R350
Illimis 2022	93	R248
Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2020 (Koelenhof)	93	R375
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2021	92	R111
Bellingam Homestead 2020	91	R110
The Pledge Our Lekker 2021 (Le Grand Domaine)	91	R150
Dornier 2021	91	R179
Lanzerac 2020	91	R225
Aaldering Lady M 2022	91	R245
Eenzaamheid 2021	91	R250
Groot Phesantekraal Berliet 2021	91	R250
Holder Dorper 2021	91	R250
Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2021 (Koelenhof)	91	R375
Koelenhof 2021	90	R65
Blue Owl 2021 (Allée Bleue)	90	R85
Niel Joubert Estate 2018	90	R91
Spier 2021	90	R95
Wildeckrans Estate 2021	90	R115
Neethlingshof 2022	90	R135
Cape Five Reserve 2020 (Stellenview)	90	R140
Bellevue 2019	90	R140
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Promenade 2021	90	R150
Allée Bleue 2020	90	R180
Rickety Bridge 2020	90	R205
Beyerskloof Reserve 2020	90	R210
Bellevue The Reserve Collection 2019	90	R245
Neethlingshof Short Story Collection The Owl Post 2021	90	R299
Beyerskloof Winemakers Reserve 2021	90	R300
McFarlane Saturday's Child 2022	90	R350
Bruce Jack Heritage Collection Single Vineyard Flag of Truce 2021	90	R573

## COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Aaldering 2020	Stellenbosch	89
Aaldering Lady M 2022	Stellenbosch	91
Allée Bleue 2020	Piekenierskloof & Franschhoek	90
Alleé Bleue Old Vine 2020	Piekenierskloof	88
Bellevue 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Bellevue The Reserve Collection 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Bellingam Homestead 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Bellingham The Bernard Series Bushvine 2020	Coastal Region	88
Beyerskloof 2021	Western Cape	87
Beyerskloof Kriekbult 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Beyerskloof Reserve 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Beyerskloof Winemakers Reserve 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Bloemendal 2019	Durbanville	87
Blue Owl 2021 (Allée Bleue)	Franschhoek	90
Bruce Jack Heritage Collection Single Vineyard Flag of Truce 2021	Breedekloof	90
<b>Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2021</b>	<b>Breedekloof</b>	<b>92</b>
Cape Five Reserve 2020 (Stellenvue)	Coastal Region	90
DA Hanekom Familie Wyne Putfontein 2017	Stellenbosch	89
De Grendel Amandelboord 2021	Durbanville	89
<b>De Grendel Amandelboord 2022</b>	<b>Durbanville</b>	<b>95</b>
Delheim Vera Cruz 2020	Stellenbosch	88
<b>Diemersdal Reserve 2022</b>	<b>Durbanville</b>	<b>94</b>
Diemersdal The Journal 2021	Durbanville	88
Dornier 2021	Swartland	91
Du Toitskloof 2020	Western Cape	88
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Promenade 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	90
Eenzaamheid 2021	Agter-Paarl	91
Francois van Niekerk 2021	Coastal Region	89
Groot Phesantekraal 2021	Cape Town	89
Groot Phesantekraal Berliet 2021	Durbanville	91
Holder Vineyard & Wines Dorper 2021	Stellenbosch	91
<b>Illimis 2022</b>	<b>Polkadraai Hills</b>	<b>93</b>
Kaapzicht Skraalhans 2022	Bottelary Stellenbosch	89
KFK Reserve 2020 (Stellenvue)	Coastal Region	84
Koelenbosch Director's Reserve 2021 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	89
Koelenhof 2021	Stellenbosch	90
La Cave 2020 (Wellington Wines)	Wellington	88
Lanzerac 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Lanzerac Pionier Single Vineyard 2020	Jonkershoek Valley Stellenbosch	89
L'Avenir Provenance 2021	Stellenbosch	87
McFarlane Saturday's Child 2022	Walker Bay	90
Meinert Printer's Ink 2018	Stellenbosch	89

<b>Mooiplaas 2022</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>95</b>
Neethlingshof 1802 Collection 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Neethlingshof 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Neethlingshof Short Story Collection The Owl Post 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Niel Joubert Estate 2018	Paarl	90
Rickety Bridge 2020	Western Cape	90
Rickety Bridge The Crossover 2019	Franschhoek	89
Rickety Bridge The Crossover 2020	Franschhoek	86
Spier 2021	Western Cape	90
Spier 21 Gables 2018	Stellenbosch	87
<b>Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2020 (Koelenhof)</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>93</b>
Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2021 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	91
The Pledge Our Lekker 2021 (Le Grand Domaine)	Coastal Region	91
Van Loveren Christiena Trousseau 9 Barrels 2021	Robertson	89
<b>Warwick The First Lady 2022</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>94</b>
Wildeckrans Barrel Select Reserve 2020	Bot River	86
Wildeckrans Estate 2021	Bot River	90
<b>Windmeul 2021</b>	<b>Coastal Region</b>	<b>95</b>
Windmeul Reserve 2019	Paarl	89
<b>Windmeul Reserve 2020</b>	<b>Paarl</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Windmeul The Legend Collection 2021</b>	<b>Paarl</b>	<b>94</b>
Zonnebloem 2020	Stellenbosch	89



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WARWICK



BRUCE JACK



KOELENHOF



WINDMEUL



ILIMIS



DE GRENDL