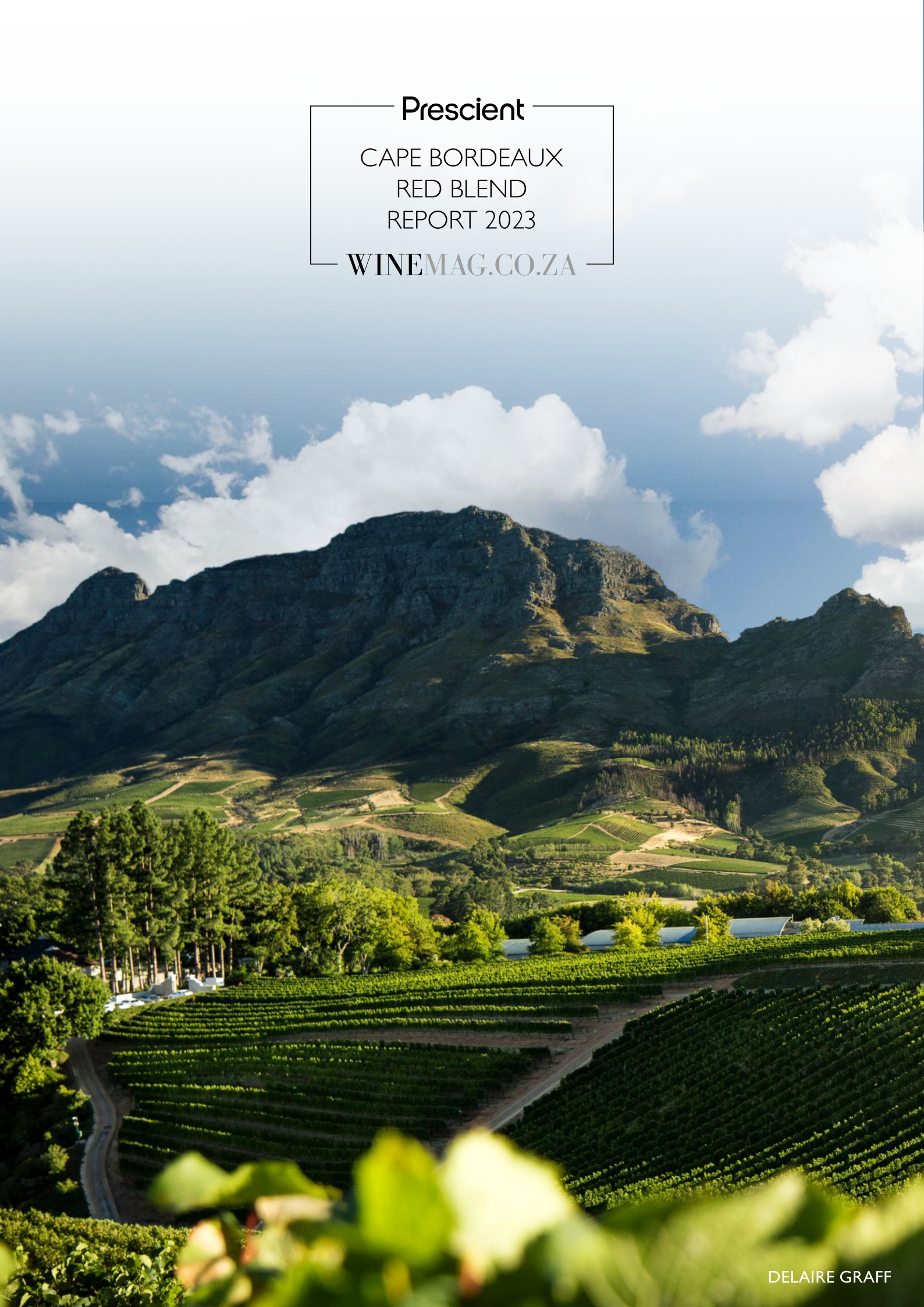


Prescient

CAPE BORDEAUX
RED BLEND
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 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

The Cape Bordeaux Red Blend is a relatively recent phenomenon, Paarl winery Welgemeend producing the first in 1979. The authority that Bordeaux holds in the world at large makes an obvious reference point and the reason that these wines came into being locally may be seen as an attempt to leverage that authority in a South African context. After Welgemeend, came Rubicon from Meerlust in 1980, Paul Sauer from Kanonkop a year after and the category has grown ever more prestigious since then.

For this year's report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, there were 59 entries from 49 producers with 34 (58%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale, a much-improved performance compared to last year where just 42% of the 55 entries made the crucial 90-point threshold. Part of the explanation for this is that last year the line-up was dominated by wines from 2018 and 2019 which were generally considered to be challenging vintages while this year, there were more wines from 2020 and 2021, both of which are more positively regarded.

Among the Top 10, Stellenbosch was yet again the dominant growing area with seven wines from this district, although it might be said that Idiom and Journey's End, both on the Somerset West end of the Helderberg, can only loosely be considered as "Stellenbosch". Other areas represented are Constantia with two wines and Simonsberg-Paarl.

What else does the Top 10 tell us? Eight of the wines see Cabernet Sauvignon as the lead variety, with only Allée Bleue and Constantia Glen breaking this pattern, the former having 43% Cabernet Franc and the latter 65% Merlot as their respective main components. Alcohols, meanwhile, range from 13.8% (Vrede en Lust Boet Erasmus 2019) to 14.9% (Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2021).

The average price of the 34 wines to rate 90-plus is R382 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R401. Offering the best quality relative to price is Zonnebloem Lauréat 2020 with a rating of 93 and selling for R175 a bottle.

Delaire Graff, as producer of the wine judged best overall, wins a new 225-litre Sylvain Grande Reserve barrel worth €1 005 (the equivalent of R20 050 at the time of writing) from Tonnellerie Sylvain.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Allée Bleue L'Amour Toujours 2018

Price: R300

Total Production: 8 250 bottles Abv 14.49%

43% Cabernet Franc, 34% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot and 4% Petit Verdot. Matured for 18 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. Red and black berries, a hint of undergrowth, oystershell and pencil shavings on the nose while the palate is compact and balanced with dense fruit, bright acidity and smooth tannins, the finish long and dry. Elegant rather than showy.



Constantia Glen Three 2020

Price: R360

Total Production: 33 000 bottles Abv 14.5%

65% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc. Matured for 18 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. Complex aromatics of red and black berries, violets, herbs, chocolate and pencil shavings. Good fruit concentration and bright acidity to go with firm but not coarse tannins, the finish long and dry. Precisely made.



Sylvain Best Overall

Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2021

Price: R405

Total Production: 37 500 bottles Abv 14.9%

54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Cabernet Franc, 11% Petit Verdot and 8% Merlot. Matured for 16 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Very fragrant on the nose with notes of dark berries, violets and herbs as well as hints of earth, vanilla and pencil shavings. Great structure and balance – lovely fruit purity, fresh acidity and fine tannins. Succulent on entry, long and dry on the finish.





Journey's End Cape Doctor The Red 2018

Price: R330

Total Production: 6 960 bottles Abv 14.5%

55.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot, 5.5% Malbec, 5.5% Cabernet Franc and 5.5% Petit Verdot. Matured for 22 months, the Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in new oak barrels and the rest in second-fill. Red and black berries, undergrowth, earth and spice on the nose. The palate is rich and full with good fruit density, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and dry.



Vrede en Lust Boet Erasmus 2019

Price: R280

Total Production: 19 012 bottles under cork and 20 532 under screwcap Abv 13.8%

51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot, 9% Petit Verdot and 9% Malbec. Matured for 18 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. Red and black berries, dried herbs and vanilla on the nose while the palate is medium bodied with fresh acidity and fine tannins. Layers of flavour ensure plenty of interest.



Zorgvliet Richelle 2019

Price: R440

Total Production: 6 600 bottles Abv 14.27%

56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Cabernet Franc, 8% Merlot and 8% Petit Verdot. Individual components matured for 16 months in 225-litre barrels, before blending and being returned to barrel for another four months, 64% new oak used. Dark berries, some leafiness, earth and boot polish on the nose while the palate shows good fruit definition, fresh acidity and firm tannins. Powerful but vital and balanced at the same time. Admirably dry on the finish.





Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2020

Price: R540

Total Production: 26 600 bottles Abv 14.02%

49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 34% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot. Matured for 15 months in French oak, 75% new. Some reduction before red and black berries, tea leaf and vanilla on the nose while the palate is juicy and round with bright acidity and fine tannins. Full but balanced, the finish long and dry.



Harry Hartman Coracle 2020

Price: R575

Total Production: 3 100 bottles Abv 13.9%

40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 20% Petit Verdot and 19% Cabernet Franc. Matured for 11 months in French oak. Attractive aromatics of red and black berries, violets, tea leaf, vanilla and pencil shavings. Good fruit definition, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and dry. Medium bodied and rather elegant.



Idiom Bordicon “B” Blend 2018

Price: R600

Total Production: 6 000 bottles Abv 14%

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, 10% Merlot, 5% Malbec and 5% Petit Verdot. Matured for 14 months in 225-litre French oak barrels, 45% new. Dark berries, incense, pencil shavings, vanilla and spice on the nose. A wine of big volume and power – sweet fruit, bright acidity and velvety tannins.





Zonnebloem Lauréat 2020

Price: R175

Total Production: 22 000 bottles Abv 14.26%

45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot and 14% Petit Verdot. Matured for 14 months in a combination of 70% French, 20% Hungarian and 10% American oak. The nose shows red and black berries, violets, some leafiness, pencils shavings and oak spice. The palate, meanwhile, has good structure with pure fruit, fresh acidity and nicely grippy tannins.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Allée Bleue L'Amour Toujours 2018	95	R300
Constantia Glen Three 2020	95	R360
Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2021	95 – Best Overall	R405
Vrede en Lust Boet Erasmus 2019	94	R280
Journey's End Cape Doctor The Red 2018	94	R330
Zorgvliet Richelle 2019	94	R440
Zonnebloem Lauréat 2020	93	R175
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2020	93	R540
Harry Hartman Coracle 2020	93	R575
Idiom Bordicon "B" Blend 2018	93	R600
Alto Estate Blend 2018	93	R450
Dornier CMD 2016	92	R761
Rietvallei Estéanna 2019	91	R400
De Grendel Rubaiyat 2018	91	R440
Babylonstoren Nebukadnesar 2021	91	R650
Coterie by Wildeberg Cabernet Franc & Malbec 2021	90	R181
Landskroon Paul de Villiers Reserve 2020	90	R190
Diemersdal Private Collection 2021	90	R190
Amperbo Infinitum 2021	90	R210
Spier Creative Block 5 2020	90	R215
Walker Bay Vineyards Amesteca 2021	90	R220
Nederburg Heritage Heroes The Brew Master 2020	90	R225
Thor Vintners Megan Mari 2020	90	R230
Jason's Hill Izak Reserve 2018	90	R240
Benguela Cove Estate Collage 2021	90	R295
Neethlingshof Short Story Collection The Caracal 2020	90	R299
Mulderbosch Estate Blend 2021	90	R350
La Petite Ferme Verdict 2018	90	R368
Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2020	90	R405
Vriesenhof Kallista 2021	90	R500
Stellenbosch 1679 The Legacy 2020	90	R525
Marianne Desirade 2019	90	R530
Delheim Grand Reserve 2020	90	R550
Harry Hartman Mosi 2020	90	R575

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue L'Amour Toujours 2018	Banghoek	95
Alto Estate Blend 2018	Stellenbosch	93
Amperbo Infinitum 2021	Bottelary, Stellenbosch	90
Babylonstoren Nebukadnesar 2021	Simonsberg- Paarl	91
Backsberg John Martin 2017	Paarl	88
Beau Constantia Lucca 2019	Constantia	89
Bellevue The Reserve Collection Tumara 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Benguela Cove Estate Collage 2021	Walker Bay	90
Cavalli Warlord 2020	Stellenbosch	87
Constantia Glen Three 2020	Constantia	95
Coterie by Wildeberg Cabernet Franc & Malbec 2021	Coastal Region	90
David Finlayson CAB et al. 2021	Coastal Region	88
De Grendel Rubaiyat 2018	Coastal Region	91
Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2021	Stellenbosch	95
Delheim Grand Reserve 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Diemersdal Private Collection 2021	Durbanville	90
Dornier Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Dornier CMD 2016	Stellenbosch	92
Ernie Els Signature 2017	Stellenbosch	88
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2019	Constantia, Cape Town	93
Harry Hartman Coracle 2020	Stellenbosch	93
Harry Hartman Mosi 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Idiom Bordicon "B" Blend 2018	Stellenbosch	93
Jason's Hill Izak Reserve 2018	Breedekloof	90
Journey's End Cape Doctor The Red 2018	Stellenbosch	94
Klein Roosboom My Way Barrel Selection 2020	Durbanville, Cape Town	86
Landskroon Paul de Villiers Reserve 2020	Paarl	90
La Petite Ferme Verdict 2018	Franschhoek	90
Le Pommier Mac 2022	Banghoek	88
Marianne Desirade 2019	Coastal Region	90
Mulderbosch Estate Blend 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Mulderbosch Faithful Hound 2021	Stellenbosch	88
Nederburg Double Barrel Reserve 2021	Western Cape	87
Nederburg Heritage Heroes The Brew Master 2020	Coastal Region	90
Nederburg The Winemasters Edelrood 2021	Western Cape	88
Neethlingshof Short Story Collection The Caracal 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Overgaauw Tria Corda 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Peter Falke Kanoa 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Quest One 2020	Western Cape	89
Quoin Rock Red Blend 2017	Simonsberg- Stellenbosch	89
Ridgeback His Master's Choice Signature C 2019	Paarl	87
Ridgeback Journey 2020	Paarl	89

Rietvallei Estéanna 2019	Robertson	91
Spier Creative Block 5 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Steenkamp 2018 (Groenland)	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenbosch 1679 The Legacy 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenbosch 1679 The Legacy 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Thor Vintners Megan Mari 2020	Franschhoek	90
Thor Vintners Megan Mari 2021	Franschhoek	89
Vrede en Lust Boet Erasmus 2019	Simonsberg-Paarl	94
Vriesenhof Kallista 2020	Stellenbosch	89
Vriesenhof Kallista 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Walker Bay Vineyards Amesteca 2021	Walker Bay	90
Waterford Antigo 2020	Stellenbosch	89
Warwick Trilogy 2020	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	89
Zevenwacht Z Collection 2021	Polkadraai Hills-Banghoek	89
Zonnebloem Lauréat 2020	Stellenbosch	93
Zorgvliet Richelle 2019	Banghoek	94

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



VREDE EN LUST



ALLÉE BLEUE



DELAIRE GRAFF



CONSTANTIA GLEN



JOURNEY'S END