



Prescient

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

During the course of 2022, Sauvignon Blanc overtook Colombard to become South Africa's second-most planted variety (after Chenin Blanc) with 9 987ha in the ground – some may look down on it due to it resulting in inherently simple wines rather too often but its relevance in the marketplace cannot be ignored.

For this year's Sauvignon Blanc Report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, there were 91 entries from 63 producers with 45 (49%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. In addition, there were 20 Sauv-Sem blends entered.

It must be said that coaxing depth and complexity out of Sauvignon Blanc is difficult. Most is fermented at relatively low temperatures in stainless steel with the intention of preserving every bit of primary fruit and the wines are in general designed to be drunk as young as possible – no surprise when these score below the crucial 90-point threshold.

Conversely, Sauvignon Blanc CAN age and tellingly, six of the wines were one year on from vintage, three were two years on and only one (Von Blonde) was from 2023.

A massive shout-out to Durbanville cellar Diemersdal which had three wines in the Top 10. Durbanville had another Top 10 in the form of the Mellish Family Vineyards while other growing areas to feature where Breedekloof, Darling, Franschhoek, Stellenbosch and one dual-origin (Von Blonde incorporating grapes from both Durbanville and West Coast). Conventional wisdom holds that the best Sauvignon Blanc comes from either maritime or high-altitude locations but looking at the Top 10, it would appear that winemaker intention is equally significant. In addition, it must be noted that two of the wines, namely that from Du Toitskloof and Kruger Family Wines are Old Vine Project certified.

It's often said that producers of Sauvignon Blanc are subject to a price barrier beyond which the market will be resistant to purchase but the average price of the 45 examples to rate 90-plus is a hardly nominal R180 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R179. Offering the best quality relative to price is Long Mountain 2023 from Thor Vintners with a rating of 90 and selling for R65 a bottle. A special mention to Constantia property Buitenverwachting which is clearly meeting the challenge of scaling – the standard-label placed Top 10 with a score of 92 and sells for R179 a bottle, total production amounting to an impressive 160 000 bottles.

Wildeberg, as producer of the Sauv-Sem blend judged best overall, wins a new 225-litre Sylvain Blanc barrel worth €992 (the equivalent of R20 050 at the time of writing) from Tonnellerie Sylvain.

# SAUVIGNON BLANC TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



## Diemersdal Reserve 2022

Price: R130

Total Production: 80 000 bottles Abv 13.78%

*12 hours of skin contact, left on the lees for five months after fermentation. Top notes of flowers and thatch before citrus, peach and apple as well as a little flinty reduction. The palate is well balanced with pure fruit matched by a great line of acidity. Nice texture and plenty of detail.*



## Diemersdal The Journal 2022

Price: R240

Total Production: 7 000 bottles Abv 13.82%

*Fermented and matured for 11 months in a combination of first- and second-fill 600-litre barrels and terracotta pots. Lemon, peach, mushroom and spice on the nose, the palate rich and thick-textured with coated acidity and a savoury finish.*



## Du Toitskloof Old Vine 2022

Price: R190

Total Production: 6 500 bottles Abv 13.13%

*From a 2.8ha block planted in 1985. Left on the skins for 24 hours. Fermented in a combination of new oak barrels and stainless-steel tank. 100 days on the lees. Blackcurrant, citrus and peach plus spice and some leesy complexity on the nose while the palate is rich and full with well-integrated acidity and some white pepper bite to the finish.*







## Kruger Family Wines Old Vines 2021

Price: R225

Total Production: 2 000 bottles Abv 13.5%

*From a 1988 Stellenbosch vineyard. Fermented and matured for nine months in older oak. Peach, citrus, blackcurrant and lots of leesy complexity on the nose. The palate is rich and thick-textured – big volume and coated acidity before a savoury finish.*



## Mellish Family Vineyards Blanc Fumé 2021

Price: R245

Total Production: 1 141 bottles Abv 12.57%

*82.5% whole-bunch pressed, 17.5% fermented on the skins for seven days. Matured for nine months in 300-litre barrels, a third new. Complex aromatics of stone fruit, blackcurrant, earth, spice and some yeasty complexity while the palate has good fruit density, bright acidity and an intensely savoury finish. Layers of flavour, the texture having an appealing pithy quality.*



## Terre Paisible Vigne d' Or 2022

Price: R145

Total Production: 4 100 bottles Abv 13%

*Matured on the lees for nine months in stainless-steel tank. A hint of flinty reduction before floral perfume, citrus, peach, blackcurrant and white pepper while the palate has a dense core of fruit, big acidity and dry finish. Nice texture to go with layers of flavour.*





## Allée Bleue Darling 2022

Price: R115

Total Production: 14 000 bottles Abv 13%

*95% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Semillon. 25% of the wine was fermented in older 400-litre barrels, the rest in stainless-steel tank. The nose shows lime, peach and blackcurrant plus floral perfume and fresh herbs. Rich and thick-textured with a big acidity and dry finish. Powerful but also great detail.*



## Diemersdal The Journal 2021

Price: R240

Total Production: 7 000 bottles Abv 13.74%

*Fermented and matured for 11 months in a combination of first- and second-fill 600-litre barrels and terracotta pots. Complex aromatics including citrus and peach plus notes of vanilla, elderflower, herbs and spice. The palate has good fruit concentration, well integrated acidity and a saline finish. Layers of flavour, the finish long and savoury.*



## Von Blonde 2023

Price: R125

Total Production: 3 600 bottles Abv 13.82%

*Grapes from Durbanville and West Coast. Fermented in stainless-steel tanks and left on the lees for four months. The nose is currently rather primary with notes of citrus and peach plus potpourri, hay and herbs while the palate is pure and zippy, the finish long and saline.*





## Buitenverwachting 2022

Price: R135

Total Production: 160 000 bottles    Abv 13.37%

*Part whole-bunch pressed, part skin contact for 10 hours. Fermented with a selection of five yeast strains. Floral perfume, lime and white peach plus some leesy complexity. Rich and round but equally not short of freshness.*





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

Wine	Score	Price
Diemersdal Reserve 2022	94	R130
Vigne d' Or 2022 (Terre Paisible)	94	R145
Du Toitskloof Old Vine 2022	94	R190
Kruger Family Wines Old Vines 2021	94	R225
Diemersdal The Journal 2022	94	R240
Mellish Family Vineyards Blanc Fumé 2021	94	R245
Allée Bleue Darling 2022	93	R115
Von Blonde 2023	93	R120
Diemersdal The Journal 2021	93	R240
Buitenverwachting 2022	92	R135
Spier Seaward 2023	92	R135
Painted Wolf Lightning 2021	92	R260
Bloemendal Suider Terras Barrel-Fermented 2017	92	R340
Groot Pheasantekraal 2023	91	R94
Nederburg The Winemasters 2023	91	R90
Durbanville Hills Cool Climate 2023	91	R90
Bellevue 2023	91	R100
Paul Cluver 2023	91	R110
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cape Mist 2022	91	R135
Quoin Rock 2021	91	R150
The Giant Periwinkle Wind Scorpion 2022	91	R160
Benguela Cove Estate 2023	91	R180
Groote Post Seasalter 2022	91	R184
Diemersdal Eight Rows 2023	91	R190
The Berrio 2022	91	R199
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2020	91	R220
Long Mountain 2023	90	R65
D'Aria 2023	90	R95
TSW 2022 (Trizanne Signature Wines)	90	R120
De Grendel 2023	90	R120
Buitenverwachting 2023	90	R135
Groot Pheasantekraal Marizanne Reserve 2023	90	R130
Diemersdal Reserve 2023	90	R130
Rickety Bridge 2022	90	R140
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2021	90	R150
Quoin Rock 2023	90	R150
Land's End Cape Agulhas 2020	90	R165
Harry Hartman Summer Stellenbosch 2022	90	R165
Buitenverwachting Hussey's Vlei 2022	90	R200
Delaire Graff Coastal Cuveé 2023	90	R245
Marianne 2022	90	R260
Wildeberg Terroirs 2022	90	R260
Terre Paisible Les Dames de '87 Old Vines 2022	90	R285
Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin 2022	90	R330
Benguela Cove Vinography 2022	90	R550

## SAUVIGNON BLANC COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
<b>Allée Bleue Darling 2022</b>	<b>Darling</b>	<b>93</b>
Beau Constantia Pierre 2022	Constantia	86
Bellevue 2023	Stellenbosch	91
Bellingham Homestead 2023	Cape Town	87
Benguela Cove Estate 2023	Walker Bay	91
Benguela Cove Lighthouse Collection 2023	Walker Bay	88
Benguela Cove Vinography 2022	Walker Bay	90
Black Oystercatcher 2023	Elim	89
Bloemendal 2022	Durbanville	87
Bloemendal Suider Terras Barrel-Fermented 2017	Cape Town	92
Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin 2022	Elgin	90
Brink Family Vineyards 2023	Coastal Region	88
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2021	Western Cape	90
<b>Buitenverwachting 2022</b>	<b>Constantia</b>	<b>92</b>
Buitenverwachting 2023	Constantia	90
Buitenverwachting Hussey's Vlei 2022	Constantia	90
DA Hanekom Familie Wyne Klipmuur 2020	Durbanville	85
D'Aria 2023	Durbanville	90
Daschbosch 2022	Western Cape	88
De Grendel 2023	Cape Town	90
De Grendel Koetshuis 2022	Western Cape	88
De Wet 2023	Worcester	89
Delaire Graff Coastal Cuveé 2023	Coastal Region	90
Diemersdal Eight Rows 2023	Cape Town	91
<b>Diemersdal Reserve 2022</b>	<b>Durbanville</b>	<b>94</b>
Diemersdal Reserve 2023	Durbanville	90
<b>Diemersdal The Journal 2021</b>	<b>Durbanville</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Diemersdal The Journal 2022</b>	<b>Durbanville</b>	<b>94</b>
Diemersdal Wild Horseshoe 2022	Durbanville	89
Diemersdal Winter Ferment 2023	Durbanville	87
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cape Mist 2022	Durbanville, Cape Town	91
Durbanville Hills Cool Climate 2023	Durbanville, Cape Town	91
Du Toitskloof 2023	Western Cape	87
<b>Du Toitskloof Old Vine 2022</b>	<b>Breedekloof</b>	<b>94</b>
First Sighting 2023 (Strandveld)	Cape Agulhas	89
Franschhoek Cellar Statue de Femme 2023	Western Cape	89
Gentis Badlands 2023 (Thor Vintners)	Coastal Region	87
Groote Post 2023	Darling	<b>86</b>
Groote Post Seasalter 2022	Darling	91
Groote Post Seasalter 2023	Darling	89
Groot Phesantekraal 2023	Cape Town	91
Groot Phesantekraal Marizanne Reserve 2022	Cape Town	90
Harry Hartman Summer Elgin 2022	Elgin	88
Harry Hartman Summer Stellenbosch 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Iona Elgin Highlands Wild Ferment 2022	Elgin	89

Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2021	Western Cape	87
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2023	Western Cape	89
Klein Roosboom Jéan 2023	Durbanville, Cape Town	86
Klein Sering 2022	Cape Town	88
Kruger Family Reserve 2023 (Stellenview)	Stellenbosch	87
<b>Kruger Family Wines Old Vines 2021</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>94</b>
Land's End Cape Agulhas 2020	Cape Agulhas	90
Land's End Cape Agulhas 2021	Cape Agulhas	89
La Vierge Original Sin 2022	Walker Bay	89
Le Grand Domaine Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2022	Stellenbosch	88
Le Pommier 2023	Banghoek	89
Llyswen 2023 (Walker Bay Vineyards)	Walker Bay	87
Long Mountain 2023	Western Cape	90
Marianne 2022	Coastal Region	90
<b>Mellish Family Vineyards Blanc Fumé 2022</b>	<b>Durbanville, Cape Town</b>	<b>94</b>
Mountain Ridge The Twins 2023	Breedekloof	89
Nederburg The Winemasters 2023	Western Cape	91
Oak Valley Fountain of Youth 2023	Elgin	89
Ouwater Sutherland Karoo 2022	Sutherland- Karoo	89
Painted Wolf Lightning 2021	Walker Bay	92
Paul Cluver 2023	Elgin	91
Quoin Rock 2021	Cape Coast	91
Quoin Rock 2023	Cape Coast	90
Rickety Bridge 2022	Western Cape	90
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2020	Western Cape	91
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2022	Western Cape	86
Rietvallei 2023	Robertson	89
Silver Myn 2023 (Zorgvliet)	Stellenbosch	87
Spier Seaward 2023	Coastal Region	92
Strandveld Pofadderbos 2022	Elim	88
Terre Paisible Les Dames de '87 Old Vines 2022	Franschhoek	90
The Berrio 2022	Elim	91
The Giant Periwinkle Wind Scorpion 2022	Cape Agulhas	91
Tokara 2023	Western Cape	89
TSW 2022 (Trizanne Signature Wines)	Cape South Coast	90
Vrede en Lust Anni Elgin 2023	Elgin	88
Vrede en Lust Artisan Range Blanc Fumé 2020	Elgin	88
<b>Vigne d' Or 2022 (Terre Paisible)</b>	<b>Franschhoek</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Von Blonde 2023</b>	<b>Coastal Region</b>	<b>93</b>
Walker Bay Vineyards 2022	Walker Bay	89
Warwick Professor Black 2023	Stellenbosch	87
Whalehaven Terroir Series 2023	Upper Hemel- en-Aarde Valley	87
Wildeberg Terroirs 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Zevenwacht 7even 2023	Stellenbosch	88
Zevenwacht Estate 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Zorgvliet Single Vineyard 2022	Banghoek	89





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– SEMILLON  
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# SAUV-SEM

## TOP 6 TASTING NOTES



Sylvain  
Best Overall

Coterie by Wildeberg  
Semillon & Sauvignon Blanc  
2022

Price: R181

Total Production: 6 717 bottles Abv 13.21%

*80% Semillon from old vines in Franschhoek and Stellenbosch and 20% Stellenbosch Sauvignon Blanc. Matured for some six months in older French oak. Some struck-match reduction before pear, peach, lime and lemon, fynbos, vanilla and spice on the nose. The palate is pure and energetic – good fruit concentration and bright acidity before a dry finish. Still rather primary, this should mature beautifully.*



Durbanville Hills  
The Tangram 2021

Price: R230

Total Production: 1 655 bottles Abv 14.17%

*88% Sauvignon Blanc, 12% Semillon. Fermentation started in tank and finished in barrel. Matured for 10 months in a combination of 300-, 500- and 600-litre barrels, partially new. Blackcurrant, peach and herbs plus leesy complexity on the nose while the palate has weight and power but also verve and detail – great fruit definition, well integrated acidity, the finish long and savoury.*



Journey's End  
Collectors Series 2022

Price: R330

Total Production: 2 650 bottles Abv 12.9%

*87% Sauvignon Blanc, 13% Semillon. Fermented and matured for 10 months in a new 2 000-litre barrel. Complex aromatics with top notes of blossom and hay before citrus, peach and blackcurrant. A thrilling tension to the palate – good fruit expression and vibrant acidity before a saline finish.*





## Quoin Rock White Blend 2022

Price: R400

Total Production: 3 500 bottles Abv 13%

*96% Sauvignon Blanc from Agulhas and Stellenbosch, 4% Semillon from Agulhas. Left on the lees for approximately six months in stainless-steel tank. Pretty aromatics of flowers, herbs, citrus and peach while the palate has great fruit density and driving acidity before a saline finish. Pure, poised and elegant.*



## Bloemendal Kanonberg Barrel-Fermented 2017

Price: R210

Total Production: 4 000 bottles Abv 12.95%

*67% Sauvignon Blanc, 33% Semillon. Fermented and matured for 11 months in 500-litre barrels, 100% new. Waxy, honeyed notes sit beside citrus, peach and herbs on the nose while the palate has good fruit integrity, tangy acidity and a long finish. Still very much intact.*



## Boschendal Suzanne 2022

Price: R250

Total Production: 4 626 bottles Abv 13%

*54% Semillon, 46% Sauvignon Blanc. Fermented and matured for six months in mostly older 500-litre French oak barrels. Blackcurrant, citrus, peach and herbs on the nose. Great fruit concentration matched by a cracking line of acidity – the texture is creamy but not at the expense of vibrancy. A powerful but equally very precise wine.*





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

Wine	Score	Price
Coterie by Wildeberg Semillon & Sauvignon Blanc 2022	95	R181
Durbanville Hills The Tangram 2021	94	R230
Journey's End Collectors Series 2022	94	R330
Quoin Rock White Blend 2022	94	R400
Bloemendal Kanonberg 2017	93	R210
Boschendal Suzanne 2022	93	R250
Tokara Director's Reserve White 2020	91	R330
Zorgvliet Simoné 2021	90	R230
Delaire Graff White Reserve 2021	90	R535
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2021	90	R540

## SAUV-SEM COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Black Oystercatcher White Pearl 2023	Elim	88
<b>Bloemendal Kanonberg Barrel-Fermented 2017</b>	<b>Cape Town</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Boschendal Suzanne 2022</b>	<b>Elgin</b>	<b>93</b>
Celestina 2022	Cape Agulhas	89
Constantia Glen Two 2021	Constantia	89
<b>Coterie by Wildeberg Semillon &amp; Sauvignon Blanc 2022</b>	<b>Coastal Region</b>	<b>95</b>
Delaire Graff White Reserve 2021	Coastal Region	90
<b>Durbanville Hills The Tangram 2021</b>	<b>Durbanville, Cape Town</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Journey's End Collectors Series 2022</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>94</b>
Klein Sering 2022	Cape Town	89
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2021	Constantia, Cape Town	90
<b>Quoin Rock White Blend 2022</b>	<b>Cape Coast</b>	<b>94</b>
Quoin Rock White Blend 2023	Cape Coast	87
Spier Creative Block 2 2022	Coastal Region	89
The Giant Periwinkle South Cape White 2022	Cape Agulhas	88
Tokara Director's Reserve White 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Trizanne Signature Wines Reserve Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2020	Elim	86
Vrede en Lust Barrique 2020	Elgin	88
Walker Bay Vineyards Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 2022	Walker Bay	88
Zorgvliet Simoné 2021	Banghoek	90

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QUOIN ROCK



WILDEBERG



DIEMERSDAL



DU TOITSKLOOF



TERRE PAISIBLE