

Prescient

BEST WINES
SOUTH AFRICA 2023

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

ALL WINES TASTED BLIND

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INTRODUCTION

Winemag.co.za reviewed a total of 677 wines across 12 categories in its various reports sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient over the course of the year. Each report was based on the outcome of a blind tasting of wines entered within the specific category.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

We employed a three-person tasting panel, tasting blind, labels out of sight. Ratings were done according to the 100-point system, final scores awarded based on discussion that involved retasting where necessary rather than relying solely on arithmetic averaging.

TASTERS

Christian Eedes – Winemag.co.za editor (Panel chair)

Ndabezinhle Dube – Food & Beverage Operations Manager at the President Hotel, Cape Town

Spencer Fondaumiere, chairman of the South African Sommelier Association

Malu Lambert – Wine Writer

James Pietersen – CEO of Wine Cellar

Francois Rautenbach, Singita Premier Wine Direct General Manager

Jolette Steyn – Head of Sales and Imports, Wine Cellar

BEST OVERALL

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WINERY OF THE YEAR

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WINERY OF
THE YEAR
2023

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Wildeberg

The Wildeberg brand belongs to Boutinot, the UK wine company originally founded by prominent industry figure Paul Boutinot, but which was bought out by management in 2013. Needing a home for its SA operations, Boutinot acquired a 140ha lifestyle farm in Franschhoek in 2016 which has now taken on the Wildeberg name. JD Rossouw, previously of DGB, was appointed winemaker in September 2017 while 10ha of vineyard consisting of Chardonnay, Semillon, Petite Sirah and Syrah was planted in 2018, a 350-tonne capacity cellar becoming operational ahead of harvest 2022 (Rossouw has a mandate to identify great sites across the Western Cape).

This is the second time in a row that Wildeberg wins the title of Prescient Winery of the Year. The winery was judged to have produced both the best white and best red overall (see below) while one other was best in category, this being the Terroirs Cinsault 2022 with a rating of 94.

Another three made the Top 10 in their respective categories, namely Coterie by Wildeberg Grenache & Syrah 2022 (93 points), The Tea Leaf 2022 (92 points) and Wildeberg Terroirs Chenin Blanc 2022 (93 points).



BEST WHITE OVERALL
BEST SAUV-SEM BLEND



Coterie by Wildeberg

Semillon & Sauvignon Blanc 2022

TASTING NOTE

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 – pure fruit and bright acidity before a dry finish. Still rather primary, this should mature beautifully.



BEST RED OVERALL

BEST SHIRAZ



Wildeberg

Red 2022

TASTING NOTE

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.

BEST OF CATEGORY

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BEST CAPE WHITE BLEND

Org De Rac Die Waghuis White 2021

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.



BEST CHARDONNAY

Vriesenhof 2021

Matured in French oak barrels for 13 month, 10% new. Some flinty reduction before lemon and a hint of vanilla. The palate is pure and focused – excellent depth of fruit matched by driving acidity, the finish possessing a wonderfully pithy quality. Layers of flavour and great length.



Winner of a 2BFermControl organic fermentation kit.

BEST CHENIN BLANC

Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2022

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.



BEST MINORITY WHITE

Thor Vintners Lara Semillon 2022

Grapes from Franschhoek property Glenwood. Fermented and matured for eight months in 1000-litre stainless steel containers (built in the form of barrels) with ceramic and fire-toasted staves. Complex aromatics of lemon, white peach, elderflower, hay, oatmeal and spice while the palate shows good fruit purity and fresh acidity – pleasingly smooth in texture with a finish that is long and strikingly dry.



BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC

Mellish Family Vineyards Blanc Fumé 2021

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.



BEST CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2019

Matured for 18 months in 300-litre barrels, 80% new. Attractive aromatics of red and black berries, violets, some leafiness and earth. The palate is pure and focused with plenty of flavour intensity, bright acidity and firm but not coarse tannins. Excellent clarity and poise.

Winner of a 2BFermControl organic fermentation kit.



BEST CAPE BORDEAUX RED BLEND

Delaire Graff Botmaskop 2021

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.

Winner of a new 225-litre Sylvain Grande Reserve barrel from Tonnellerie Sylvain.



BEST MINORITY RED

Wildeberg Terroirs Cinsault 2022

Grapes from a Wellington vineyard planted in 1974. 30% whole-bunch fermentation before maturation lasting nine months in 600-litre barrels. Enticing aromatics of red currant, raspberry, fynbos and spice. The palate, meanwhile, is light and fresh but still possesses plenty of flavour intensity. Delicate and yet full of detail.



BEST PINOTAGE

Mooiplaas 2022

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.

Winner of a new 225-litre Sylvain 225L Grande Reserve barrel from Tonnellerie Sylvain.



BEST SIGNATURE RED BLEND

Fairview Goats Do Roam Red 2021

51% Shiraz, 15% Mourvèdre, 14% Grenache, 12% Cinsault, 5% Tempranillo and 3% Durif. Matured in a combination of tanks and barrels. A perfumed nose of red and black berries, lavender, fynbos and pepper. Pure fruit, bright acidity and powdery tannins – fleshy with lots of drive.



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Everything to do with South African fine wine.

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DELAIRE GRAFF



FAIRVIEW



ORG DE RAC



KLEINE ZALZE



WILDEBERG

