



Prescient

CABERNET SAUVIGNON
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 James Pietersen of Wine Cellar, Cape Town merchants and cellarers of fine wine, and Francois Rautenbach, Singita Premier Wine Direct General Manager. 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 Cabernet Sauvignon Report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, there were 66 entries from 50 producers with 35 (53%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

The 2021 vintage, cooler and later than usual, is turning out to be one of the best in recent times – these are just starting to reach the market and yet there were five in the Top 10 (alongside three from 2019 and two from 2020) while there were a further seven to score 90-plus.

Stellenbosch is closely associated with high-quality single-variety Cabernet Sauvignon and this was emphatically underscored by this year's results with nine of the Top 10 from this district, the only exception being Maastricht 2021, grapes from Durbanville.

The most successful wines show fruit power – South Africa's best proponents of Cabernet Sauvignon are now achieving greater ripeness and precision than ever before. The Top 10 all combine concentration with balance and character.

In chasing ripeness, there is however always the danger that growers wait too long to pick and there were a few wines that were jammy, sweet and soft.

On the other hand, there were a number of wines that seemed intended to offer no more than easy drinking. These typically show more red than black fruit character and are lighter in body – nothing essentially wrong with them other than lacking gravitas.

The average price of the 35 wines to rate 90-plus is R322 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R326. Offering the best quality relative to price is Arbeidsgenot 2022 with a rating of 90 and selling for R130 a bottle.

Kleine Zalze, as producer of the wine judged best overall, wins a 2BFermControl organic fermentation kit worth approximately R11 000.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Kleine Zalze
Family Reserve 2019 | 2BFermControl
Best Overall

Price: R450

Total Production: 7 816 bottles Abv 14.97%

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.



Glenelly
Glass Collection 2021

Price: R160

Total Production: 132 000 bottles Abv 14.26%

Matured for 12 months in 300-litre barrels, 10% new. The nose shows red and black berries, floral perfume and dried herbs while the palate shows dense fruit, fresh acidity and velvety tannins, the finish long and savoury.



Kleine Zalze
Vineyard Selection 2021

Price: R199

Total Production: 109 046 bottles Abv 15%

Matured for 20 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Cassis, violets, incense, chocolate, vanilla and spice on the nose. The palate is full-bodied and smooth textured with dense fruit, bright acidity and a dry finish. Powerful, big and bold.





Kruger Family Reserve 2020 (Stellenview)

Price: R250

Total Production: 8 500 bottles Abv 14.47%

Matured for 16 months in 250-litre barrels, 25% new. Red and black berries, violets, an attractive herbal note and vanilla on the nose while the palate has great poise – a dense core of fruit, plenty of verve and fine-grained tannins.



Alto 2019

Price: R275

Total Production: 56 400 bottles Abv 14.6%

Matured for 18 months in French oak barrels, partially new. Brooding aromatics of dark berries, violets, liquorice, earth and pencil shavings. Excellent fruit expression, bright acidity and powdery tannins. Plush in the best – solid mid-palate, the finish super-dry.



Ernie Els Major Series 2021

Price: R250

Total Production: 13 100 bottles Abv 13.95%

Matured for 18 months in 300-litre barrels, 30% new. A 10% portion spent 11 months in clay amphorae before being included in the blend. A top note of violets before cassis, olive, sea breeze and pencil shavings. Good fruit concentration, plenty of verve and firm but not coarse tannins.





Maastricht 2021

Price: R155

Total Production: 7 800 bottles Abv 14.92%

Matured for 18 months in barrel, 30% new. Cassis, violets, some herbal character, oystershell and pencil shavings on the nose. The palate is seamless – good fruit concentration, bright acidity and fine-grained tannins, the finish possessing a saline quality.



Peter Falke Kailani 2019

Price: R800

Total Production: 1 410 bottles Abv 14%

Matured for 22 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. Complex aromatics of red and black berries, flowers, herbs, incense and earth while the palate shows succulent fruit, bright acidity and fine-grained tannins, the finish long and dry.



Peter Falke PF 2021

Price: R300

Total Production: 6 656 bottles Abv 14.5%

Matured for 18 months in French oak barrels, 100% new. Red and black berries, a hint of leafiness, pencil shavings and earth on the nose. The palate shows dense fruit, bright acidity and tightly packed tannins. Full bodied with a good line of acidity and a creamy texture, the finish properly dry.





Stellenbosch
1679 2020 (Koelenhof)

Price: R425

Total Production: 3 900 bottles Abv 14.53%

Matured for 24 months in 225-litre barrels, 100% new. Charming aromatics of red and black berries, flowers, tea leaf and herbs, earth, vanilla and oak spice. Good fruit concentration, lively acidity and firm but not coarse tannins.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2019	95	R450
Glenelly Glass Collection 2021	94	R160
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2021	94	R199
Kruger Family Reserve 2020 (Stellenview)	94	R250
Maastricht 2021	93	R155
Ernie Els Major Series 2021	93	R250
Alto 2019	93	R275
Peter Falke PF 2021	93	R300
Stellenbosch 1679 2020 (Koelenhof)	93	R425
Peter Falke Signature Kailani 2019	93	R800
Neil Ellis Jonkershoek Stellenbosch 2019	93	R520
Diemersdal The Journal 2021	92	R370
Zevenwacht 2020	91	R160
Nederburg The Manor House 2020	91	R165
La Cave 2019 (Wellington)	91	R220
Boschendal Stellenbosch 2019	91	R250
Babylonstoren 2021	91	R255
Delheim 2020	91	R275
Eikendal 2021	91	R285
Strydom Rex 2020	91	R305
Strydom Rex 2018	91	R305
Spier 21 Gables 2019	91	R350
Cederberg Five Generations 2021	91	R750
Alto M.P.H.S. 2017	91	R995
Arbeidsgenot 2022	90	R130
Vondeling Barrel Selection 2021	90	R195
Dornier Equanimity 2019	90	R201
La Cave 2018 (Wellington)	90	R220
Boschendal Stellenbosch 2020	90	R250
Cavalli 2020	90	R250
Knorhoek 2020	90	R250
Knorhoek 2021	90	R250
Groot Constantia 2021	90	R290
Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2020 (Le Grand Domaine)	90	R300
Warwick The Blue Lady 2020	90	R475

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Alto 2019	Stellenbosch	93
Alto M.P.H.S. 2017	Stellenbosch	91
Arbeidsgenot 2022	Swartland	90
Babylonstoren 2021	Simonsberg-Paarl	91
Benguela Cove Estate 2021	Walker Bay	89
Bergsig Oom Prop Reserve Collection 2019	Breedekloof	87
Boschendal Stellenbosch 2019	Stellenbosch	91
Boschendal Stellenbosch 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Blaauwklippen 2020	Stellenbosch	87
Blaauwklippen 2021	Stellenbosch	86
Brink Family Vineyards 2021 (Pulpit Rock)	Swartland	89
Cape Five Reserve 2020 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	87
Cavalli 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Cederberg 2020	Cederberg	88
Cederberg Nieuwoudt Five Generations 2021	Cederberg	91
Charles Lang Sons 2021	Stellenbosch	88
Christiena Trousseau 2021 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	85
Daschbosch 2021	Breedekloof	89
David Finlayson 2021	Stellenbosch	88
Delaire Graff Reserve 2020	Banghoek	88
Delheim 2020	Stellenbosch	91
De Wet 2021	Worcester	86
Diemersdal The Journal 2021	Durbanville	92
Dornier Equanimity 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Du Toitskloof 2021	Western Cape	87
Eikendal 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Ernie Els Major Series 2021	Stellenbosch	93
Glenelly Glass Collection 2021	Stellenbosch	94
Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2020 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	90
Great Five Reserve 2019 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	88
Groot Constantia 2021	Constantia	90
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2019	Stellenbosch	95
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2021	Stellenbosch	94
Knorhoek 2020	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	90
Knorhoek 2021	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	90
Kruger Family Reserve 2020 (Stellenview)	Stellenbosch	94
La Cave 2018 (Wellington)	Wellington	90
La Cave 2019 (Wellington)	Wellington	91
Landskroon Paul de Villiers 2020	Paarl	89
La Petite Ferme 2021	Franschhoek	88
Leipzig 2019	Stellenbosch	87
Lowerland Koedoe 2020	Prieska	86
Maastricht 2021	Cape Town	93

Muratie Martin Melck 2018	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	87
Nederburg Private Bin Two Centuries 2019	Coastal Region	87
Nederburg The Manor House 2020	Coastal Region	91
Nederburg The Winemasters 2021	Western Cape	87
Neil Ellis Jonkershoek Stellenbosch 2019	Jonkershoek Valley	93
Neil Ellis Stellenbosch 2020	Stellenbosch	89
Peter Falke PF 2021	Stellenbosch	93
Peter Falke Kailani 2019	Stellenbosch	93
Pierre DuMont 2021	Western Cape	89
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2021	Franschhoek	89
Stellenbosch 1679 2020 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	93
Stellenview Reserve 2018	Stellenbosch	87
Spier 21 Gables 2019	Stellenbosch	91
Stellenzicht Tristone 2019	Stellenbosch	88
Strydom Rex 2018	Stellenbosch	91
Strydom Rex 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Vondeling Barrel Selection 2021	Voor-Paardeberg	90
Vriesenhof 2021	Stellenbosch	88
Warwick The Blue Lady 2020	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	90
Wolvenhoek Single Vineyard 2021	Wellington	87
Zevenwacht 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Zenwacht Reserve 2021	Polkadraai Hills-Banghoek	89
Zorgvliet 2020	Banghoek	88

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KOELNHOF