

Prescient

CHENIN BLANC
REPORT 2024

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



FLAGSTONE

ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2024

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 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

For this year's Chenin Blanc Report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, there were 75 entries from 58 producers with 49 (65%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

Chenin Blanc's ability to produce high-quality wine across a wide variety of terroirs is borne out by the fact that nine different production areas feature in the Top 10: two from Stellenbosch and one each from Agter Paarl, Cederberg, Durbanville (designated as "Cape Town"), Franschhoek, Klein Karoo, Piekenierskloof, Swartland and West Coast.

As has been noted many times, the issue with Chenin Blanc is not basic quality but rather a very high degree of stylistic divergence, the variety capable of an extraordinarily wide array of different but legitimate expressions.

Perhaps because of Chenin's former role as a "workhorse" grape that made approachable but inherently simple wines, many producers still seem hell-bent on applying all sorts of cellar techniques to achieve extra complexity in their wines, some a bit rustic as a result while others appeared overdone.

The variety is not as neutral as Chardonnay, especially when it comes off old vines, and the best wines seem to be those that see the fruit treated most carefully and gently in the cellar.

The average price of the 49 wines to rate 90-plus is R221 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R246. Offering the best quality relative to price is Leyland Single Vineyard 2023 from Worcester cellar De Wet with a rating of 90 and selling for R90 a bottle.

Also part of the tasting was a selection of Cape White Blends, wines needing to have a Chenin Blanc component of more than 15% and less than 85% in order to be eligible. Only 17 entries were received but 15 of these rated 90-plus. Flavour profiles and structures are typically unfamiliar and therefore quite intellectually challenging, but it can be argued that this is precisely where the reward of this sub-category lies.

Flagstone, as producer of the Chenin Blanc judged best overall, wins a set of Spiegelau glasses worth R4,000 from warewashing specialist Winterhalter, as does Kloovenburg as producer of the best Cape White Blend.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Flagstone Paradigm 2023 | Best Overall

Price: R286

Total Production: 4 750 bottles Abv 13.5%

Grapes from an Agter-Paarl vineyard planted in 1979. 52% fermented in stainless steel tank, 48% in oak barrels, of which 65% were new, maturation lasting some six months. Pear, peach, citrus and hay on the nose. The palate is elegant and refined – pure fruit, fresh acidity and super-dry finish. Intricate and wonderfully poised.



Le Sueur 2023

Price: R125

Total Production: 800 bottles Abv 13.73%

60% of grapes from a Meiringspoort vineyard on shale and 40% from Outeniqua mountain on ferricrete and sandstone, former component vinified in foudre and latter in stainless steel tank. Expressive aromatics with top notes of blossom, herbs and fynbos before citrus and white peach. The palate has good fruit weight and well-integrated acidity, while the finish is long and dry.



Villiera Barrel Fermented 2023

Price: R215

Total Production: 6 139 bottles Abv 13.27%

Includes 1.5% botrytis-infected grapes. Spontaneously fermented and matured in barrel, 40% new. Marmalade and lanolin on the nose. The palate is thick textured with a sweet 'n sour quality reminiscent of Vouvray Demi Sec. Rich and round with a nicely dry finish. Residual sugar: 6.4g/l.





Cederberg Nieuwoudt Five Generations 2023

Price: R360

Total Production: 13 000 bottles Abv 13.32%

91% fermented and matured in 400-litre barrels, 15% new, and 9% in concrete egg, maturation lasting 10 months. The nose shows some flinty reduction before citrus, peach and hay while the palate has good fruit weight and plenty of drive – full of flavour and well balanced.



Donkiesbaai Steen 2023

Price: R340

Total Production: 31 200 bottles Abv 14.22%

Grapes from two vineyards, the one planted in 1986 and the other in 1988. 85% matured in 500-litre barrels, partially new, and 15% in concrete egg. Hay, honeysuckle, pear, peach and citrus on the nose. The palate has great clarity of fruit, bright acidity and a saline finish. Pure and poised.



Fryer's Cove 2023

Price: R150

Total Production: 10 650 bottles Abv 13.5%

The majority fermented in stainless steel tanks, the remainder in old 300-litre barrels, maturation lasting four months. Expressive aromatics of hay, herbs, citrus and peach while the palate is vivid and vital – pure fruit and zesty acidity before a pithy finish.





Knorhoek 2023

Price: R200

Total Production: 8 600 bottles Abv 13%

Grapes from a block planted in 1980. Fermented and matured for some 10 months in a combination of stainless steel tank, concrete egg, foudre, and 500-litre barrels of which 35% were new. A hint of reduction before pear, peach and citrus. The palate is seamless – good fruit expression and tangy acidity before a dry finish. Well balanced with lots going on.



Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Cape Town 2023

Price: R235

Total Production: 7 200 bottles Abv 13.5%

Grapes from a Durbanville vineyard planted in 1983. First pick fermented in 2,500-litre foudre, second pick in a combination of first- and second-fill 300-litre barrels, maturation lasting 10 months. The nose shows a hint of flinty reduction before hay, floral perfume, citrus and peach. The palate is precise – good fruit weight, well integrated acidity and a dry finish.



Cape of Good Hope Riebeeksrivier 2023

Price: R150

Total Production: 20 749 bottles Abv 13.5%

Grapes from two untrellised vineyards planted in 1988 and 2013 on shale. 55% fermented in stainless steel tank, 45% in 500-litre barrels (9% new), maturation lasting seven months. Pretty aromatics with top notes of flowers, hay and herbs before citrus and peach. The palate is light-bodied and taut – pure fruit plays off against fresh acidity, the finish long and pithy.





Old Road Wine Co. Stone Trail 2023

Price: R400

Total Production: 2 028 bottles Abv 13%

Grapes from a vineyard planted in 1982. Matured for nine months in mostly older barrels. Citrus, stone fruit, fynbos and a hint of leesy complexity on the nose. The palate has excellent fruit expression and great balance – concentrated, lively and long.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Le Sueur 2023	95	R125
Villiera Barrel Fermented 2023	95	R215
Flagstone Paradigm 2023 – Best Overall	95 – Best Overall	R286
Fryer's Cove 2023	94	R150
Knorhoek 2023	94	R200
Donkiesbaai Steen 2023	94	R340
Cederberg Nieuwoudt Five Generations 2023	94	R360
Cape of Good Hope Riebeeksrivier 2023	93	R150
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Cape Town 2023	93	R235
Old Road Wine Co. StoneTrail 2023	93	R400
Dornier The Pirate of Cocoa Hill 2023	93	R115
Leeuwenkuil Reserve 2023	92	R150
Perdeberg The Dryland Collection Courageous Barrel-Fermented 2023	92	R150
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2023	92	R155
Stellenbosch Reserve Hangbrug 2023	92	R160
Romans Rivier Grand Reserve 2022 (Mountain Ridge)	92	R220
Mellish Bakenkop 2023	92	R245
Org De Rac 2023	91	R120
Allée Bleue 2023	91	R125
Eerste Hoop 2022	91	R150
The Pledge Our Old Vines 2023 (Le Grand Domaine)	91	R150
Cavalli 2023	91	R200
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2023	91	R250
Spider Pig King Neptune 2023	91	R258
Meinert 6Chen 2019	91	R280
Tempel Kattemaai 2023	91	R295
Kaapzicht 1947 2023	91	R730
Leyland Single Vineyard 2023 (De Wet)	90	R90
MAN Family Wines Free-run Steen 2023	90	R95
Pierre DuMont 2023	90	R100
Guardian Peak 2023	90	R110
Carmen Stevens 2023	90	R130
Flagstone Tributary 2022	90	R150
Kaapzicht Sonsteen 2023	90	R150
Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2022	90	R175
Lubanzi 2023	90	R180
Quest Old Vine 2022	90	R190
Bosman Family Vineyards Adama White 2023	90	R200
Daschbosch Mossiesdrift Steen 2023	90	R220
Delheim Wild Ferment 2023	90	R225
Bellevue The Reserve Collection Eselgraf 2023	90	R240
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2022 (Koelenhof)	90	R240
Simonsig Langbult Steen Old Vine 2023	90	R245
Perdeberg Endura Single Vineyard 2022	90	R250
Schultz Family Wine Skeleton Bay 2022	90	R250

Strydom Danièle 2022	90	R250
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2022	90	R284
Moordenaarskloof 2022 (Dornier)	90	R315
Warwick Old Vine 2022	90	R550

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue 2023	Franschhoek & Jonkershoek	91
Babylonstoren 2024	Simonsberg-Paarl	88
BC 2024 (Brandvlei)	Worcester	89
Bellevue The Reserve Collection Eselgraf 2023	Stellenbosch	90
Bellingham Homestead The Old Orchards 2023	Coastal Region	89
Bellingham The Bernard Series Old Vine Cape Town 2023	Cape Town	93
Bosman Family Vineyards Adama White 2023	Wellington	90
Cape of Good Hope Riebeeksrivier 2023	Riebeeksrivier	93
Carmen Stevens 2023	Paarl	90
Cavalli 2023	Stellenbosch	91
Cederberg Nieuwoudt Five Generations 2023	Cederberg	94
Daschbosch Mossiesdrift Steen 2023	Breedekloof	90
David Finlayson Camino Africana Old Vine 2022	Stellenbosch	87
De Wet 2024	Worcester	88
Delheim Wild Ferment 2023	Stellenbosch	90
Donkiesbaai Steen 2023	Piekenierskloof	94
Dornier The Pirate of Cocoa Hill 2023	Western Cape	93
Eerste Hoop 2022	Theewater	91
Flagstone Paradigm 2023	Agter Paarl	95
Flagstone Tributary 2022	Coastal Region	90
Fryer's Cove 2023	Cape West Coast	94
Ghost in the Machine Skin Contact 2023 (Bruce Jack)	Breedekloof & Swartland	89
Guardian Peak 2023	Western Cape	90
Kaapzicht 1947 2023	Bottelary, Stellenbosch	91
Kaapzicht Kliprug 2023	Bottelary, Stellenbosch	89
Kaapzicht Sonsteen 2023	Bottelary, Stellenbosch	90
Kasteelberg 2023 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)	Swartland	89
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2023	Stellenbosch	92
Kleinood Tamboerskloof (buurman) 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Knorhoek 2022	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	89
Knorhoek 2023	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	94
Le Sueur 2023	Klein Karoo	95
Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2021	Klein Karoo	89
Le Sueur Kluisenaar 2022	Klein Karoo	90
Leeuwenkuil Heritage 2020	Swartland	87
Leeuwenkuil Reserve 2023	Swartland	92
Leyland Single Vineyard 2023 (De Wet)	Worcester	90
Lubanzi 2023	Swartland	90

MAN Family Wines Free-run Steen 2023	Cape Coast	90
Meinert 6Chen 2019	Swartland	91
Mellish Bakenkop 2023	Durbanville	92
Mooiplaas Houmoed 2022	Stellenbosch	88
Moordenaarskloof 2022 (Dornier)	Stellenbosch	90
Mountain Ridge The Twins 2023	Breedekloof	89
Mulderbosch Steen Op Hout 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Muratie Laurens Campher 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Old Road Wine Co. StoneTrail Single Vineyard 2023	Franschhoek	93
Org De Rac 2023	Swartland	91
Painted Wolf Black Pack 2023	Coastal Region	88
Painted Wolf Lycaon Old Vine 2023	Wellington	85
Perdeberg Endura Single Vineyard 2022	Paardeberg	90
Perdeberg The Dryland Collection Courageous Barrel-Fermented 2023	Paarl	92
Pierre DuMont 2023	Western Cape	90
Quest Old Vine 2022	Breedekloof	90
Retief Reserve 2022(Van Loveren)	Robertson	89
Rickety Bridge 2024	Franschhoek	88
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2023	Coastal Region	91
Romans Rivier Grand Reserve 2022 (Mountain Ridge)	Breedekloof	92
Schultz Family Wine Skeleton Bay 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Simonsig Langbult Steen Old Vine 2023	Stellenbosch	90
Spider Pig King Neptune 2023	Coastal Region	91
Stand Alone 2023 (Salt Rock)	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2020 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2022 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	90
Stellenbosch 1679 Bush Vine 2023 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	87
Stellenbosch Reserve Hangbrug 2023	Stellenbosch	92
Strydom Danièle 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Tempel Kattemaai 2023	Wellington	91
The Pledge Our Old Vines 2023 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	91
Villiera Barrel Fermented 2023	Stellenbosch	95
Vrede en Lust Kogelberg 2023	Elim	88
Wade Bales Breedekloof 2022	Breedekloof	89
Warwick Old Vine 2022	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	90
Zoetendal 2021	Coastal Region	89



BELLINGHAM



KNORHOEK



LE SUEUR



FRYER'S COVE



VILLIERA



KLEINE ZALZE

Prescient

CAPE WHITE BLEND
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TOP 3 TASTING NOTES



Cape of Good Hope Riebeeksrivier Caroline 2021

Price: R195

Total Production: 6 026 bottles Abv 13.5%

38% Marsanne, 20% Roussanne, 18% Chenin Blanc, 17% Piquepoul Blanc and 7% Viognier. 65% fermented in stainless steel tank, 35% in a combination of old 300-litre barrels and foudre, maturation lasting 12 months. Citrus, peach, herbs and lanonlin on the nose. The palate shows great clarity and complexity – pure and racy but equally plenty of detail, the finish long and pithy.



JAN 2023 (Zevenwacht)

Price: R185

Total Production: 9 060 bottles Abv 13.65%

52% Chenin Blanc, 28% Chardonnay, 13% Viognier and 7% Roussanne. Fermented and matured for eight months in 500-litre barrels. Pear, peach, citrus, herbs and spice on the nose while the palate is glossy – rich and thick textured, tangy acidity lending balance, the finish gently savoury.



Kloovenburg Eight Feet White 2023 | Best Overall

Price: R250

Total Production: 5 300 bottles Abv 12.93%

44% Grenache Blanc, 34% Chenin Blanc, 11% Roussanne and 11% Verdelho. Fermented and matured for seven months in cement tanks. Complex aromatics including some reduction before peach and orange, fynbos, nougat, fresh bread, earth and spice. The palate is dense and layered – pure fruit and bright acidity before a finish that's long and pithy.



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

Wine	Score	Price
JAN 2023 (Zevenwacht)	93	R185
Cape of Good Hope Riebeeksrivier Caroline 2021	93	R195
Kloovenburg Eight Feet White 2023	93 – Best Overall	R250
Nabygelegen Lady Anna 2023	91	R115
Cavalli Reserve White 2023	91	R280
Schenkfontein Stofjas 2022	91	R575
Schenkfontein Stofjas 2023	91	R575
Alvi's Drift Reserve CVC 2022	90	R155
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Rossouw's Heritage 2021	90	R170
The Fledge & Co. Vagabond 2022	90	R200
Org De Rac Die Waghuis White 2022	90	R215
Holden Manz Proprietors' White Blend 2022	90	R220
Muratie Laurens Campher 2022	90	R250
Strydom Siblings 2023	90	R280
Bellingham The Founder's Series Freda 2022	90	R390

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

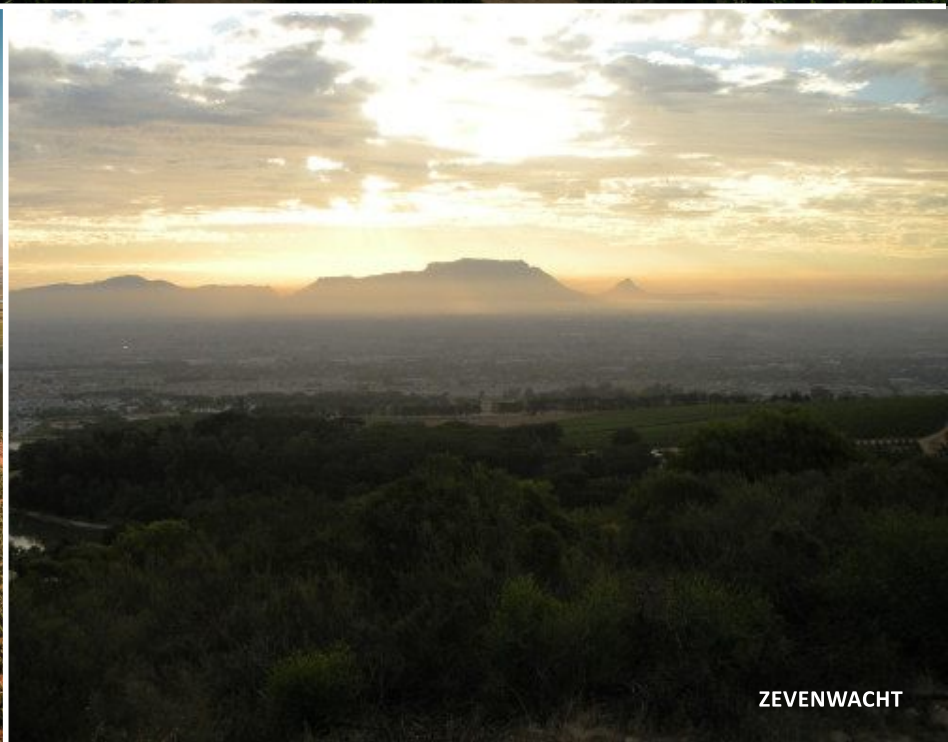
Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Alvi's Drift Reserve CVC 2022	Scherpenheuvel	90
Babylonstoren Candide 2023	Simonsberg-Paarl	88
Bellingham The Founder's Series Freda 2022	Coastal Region	90
Boplaas Gamka Branca Reserve 2022	Western Cape	88
Cape of Good Hope Riebeeeksrivier Caroline 2021	Riebeeeksrivier	93
Cavalli Reserve White 2023	Stellenbosch	91
Holden Manz Proprietors' White Blend 2022	Western Cape	90
JAN 2023 (Zevenwacht)	Stellenbosch	93
Kloovenburg Eight Feet White	Swartland	93
Muratie Laurens Campher 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Nabygelegen Lady Anna 2023	Coastal Region	91
Org De Rac Die Waghuis White 2022	Swartland	90
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Rossouw's Heritage 2021	Western Cape	90
Schenkfontein Stofjas 2022	Swartland	91
Schenkfontein Stofjas 2023	Swartland	91
Strydom Siblings 2023	Stellenbosch	90
The Fledge & Co. Vagabond 2022	Western Cape	90



CAPE OF GOOD HOPE | RIEBEEKSRIVIER



KLOOVENBURG



ZEVENWACHT

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