

Prescient

SHIRAZ
REPORT 2024

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



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 Ndaba Dube, director of operations 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

For this year's Shiraz Report sponsored by multinational financial services company Prescient, there were 65 entries from 51 producers with 37 (57%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. The 2021 vintage again lived up to its high reputation with five wines in the Top 10 and a further 11 scoring 90-plus.

Among the Top 10, a wide range of wine growing areas is represented with three from Swartland, two each from Durbanville and Stellenbosch, one each from Elim and Robertson and the last designated as "Coastal Region".

Regarding style, the panel was inclined to favour wines of elegance over power. The average alcohol of the Top 10 is a moderate 13.6% and just about all of them were made using at least partial whole-bunch fermentation. When done successfully, earlier picking and including stems in the fermentation results in wines of perfume and purity with finer tannins.

More full-bodied wines with higher alcohols are not in principle out of order but very often these wines present as clumsy, which is to say sweet, lacking in structure and short of freshness.

Conversely, applying whole-bunch fermentation as a technique has its own set of challenges. If the stems are green rather than brown (i.e. not sufficiently lignified) then the end wine can take on excessively herbal, even minty quality and the tannins also become rather coarse and rustic.

The average price of the 37 wines to rate 90-plus is R279 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R328. Offering the best quality relative to price is De Wet 2023 with a rating of 90 and selling for R73 a bottle.

Riebeek Valley Wine Co, as producer of the wine judged best overall, wins a set of Spiegelau glasses worth R4,000 from warewashing specialist Winterhalter.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2019

Price: R460

Total Production: 2 693 bottles Abv 13%

Partial whole-bunch fermentation before maturation in old barrels lasting 18 months. Pretty aromatics of flowers, red and black berries, fynbos and white pepper. The palate is medium bodied with lovely fruit expression, lemon-like acidity and powdery tannins.



Raar Carbonic Maceration 2023 | Best Overall (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)

Price: R179

Total Production: 2 320 bottles and 52 magnums Abv 14%

100% whole-bunch fermentation. Maturation in older 500-litre barrels. Complex and enticing aromatics of red and black berries, pomegranate, violets, fynbos and pepper on the nose. The palate shows good depth of fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins. Layers of flavour and a long finish.



Vinevenom Spektra 2021

Price: R280

Total Production: 852 bottles Abv 14.29%

100% whole-bunch fermented before maturation lasting 18 months in older 228-litre barrels. Red and black berries, flowers, fynbos and white pepper on the nose. The palate is pure and focused. Medium bodied, flavourful and fresh. Succulent on entry, the finish dry and extremely long.





Cape Five Reserve 2021 (Stellenview)

Price: R155

Total Production: 9 000 bottles Abv 13.91%

Matured in barrel. Gorgeous aromatics of red and black berries, violets, fynbos and pepper. The palate is pure and focused – medium-bodied with fresh acidity and a finish that's long and dry.



Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection Syrah 2021

Price: R210

Total Production: 83 600 bottles Abv 14%

Winemaking involved whole bunch fermentation as well as re-addition of mature stems into the fermentation tank. Maturation lasted 18 months in 300-litre barrels, 30% new. Red and black berries, lilies, liquorice and pepper on the nose. Succulent fruit on entry, the finish nicely dry – full bodied yet fresh and the tannins powdery in texture.



Mellish Bakenkop Syrah 2021

Price: R245

Total Production: 1 194 bottles Abv 13.47%

35% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for nine months in old 225-litre barrels. Heady aromatics of red and black berries, lavender and white pepper. The palate is dense and tightly wound – pure fruit, fresh acidity and crunchy tannins.





Zoetendal The Signatura 2022

Price: R550

Total Production: 2 000 bottles Abv 12.6%

40% crushed in a 7,000 litre tank, while 60% placed as whole bunches on top. Matured for 12 months in older barrels. Beguiling aromatics with notes of red berries, floral perfume, cured meat and white pepper. Light bodied yet intensely flavoured with well-integrated acidity, fine tannins and an umami quality to the finish.



Diemersdal Syrah Reserve 2023

Price: R210

Total Production: 4 500 bottles Abv 13.36%

100% whole-bunch fermented before 12 months of maturation in barrel, 20% new. Heady aromatics of red and black berries, pomegranate, violets, fynbos and white pepper on the nose. The palate shows extraordinarily dense fruit, bright acidity and powdery tannins, the finish super-dry.



Zandvliet Hill of Enon Small Berry Pick 2021

Price: R488

Total Production: 3 879 bottles Abv 13.88%

30% whole-bunch fermentation before maturation lasting 24 months in older 500-litre barrels. The nose shows red and black berries, floral perfume, pepper and a slight smoky note. The palate is pure and vital – dense fruit, fresh acidity and powdery tannins, the finish long and dry.





Nicolas van der Merwe Syrah 2019

Price: R500

Total Production: 4 500 bottles Abv 13.4%

Matured for 18 months in 225-litre barrels, 10% new. Red and black berries, orange, cured meat and spice on the nose. Good fruit concentration, lemon-like acidity and powdery tannins. Layers of flavour, the finish long and gently savoury.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Raar Carbonic Maceration 2023 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)	96 – Best Overall	R179
Vinevenom Spektra 2021	96	R280
Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2019	96	R460
Cape Five Reserve 2021 (Stellenview)	95	R155
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection Syrah 2021	95	R210
Mellish Bakenkop Syrah 2021	95	R245
Zoetendal The Signatura 2022	95	R550
Diemersdal Syrah Reserve 2023	94	R210
Zandvliet Hill of Enon Small Berry Pick 2021	94	R488
Nicolas van der Merwe Syrah 2019	93	R500
Eagles' Nest 2022	93	R385
Waterford Kevin Arnold 2019	92	R335
Org De Rac 2022	91	R140
Leeuwenkuil Reserve Red 2021	91	R150
Sunkloof Reserve 2021 (Stellenview)	91	R154
Glenelly Glass Collection Syrah 2021	91	R165
Stellenbosch Reserve Kruithuis 2021	91	R190
Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2019	91	R225
Strandveld Syrah 2021	91	R255
Gentis Badlands 2022 (Thor Vintners)	91	R270
La Petite Ferme Shiraz 2021	91	R270
Spider Pig The Red Hog Syrah 2022	91	R295
Rust en Vrede Estate Vineyards Syrah 2021	91	R430
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve Syrah 2020	91	R472
De Wet 2023	90	R73
KFK Reserve 2021 (Stellenview)	90	R150
Meraki 2021	90	R155
Zevenwacht Syrah 2021	90	R175
Boschendal 1685 2020	90	R190
Dornier Siren Syrah 2019	90	R215
Backsberg Pumphouse 2022	90	R220
Strydom Rock Star Syrah 2022	90	R235
Zandvliet Kalkveld 2021	90	R259
Tamboerskloof Syrah 2019 (Kleynood)	90	R310
Painted Wolf Scarlet Syrah 2020	90	R360
David Nieuwoudt Ghost Corner Syrah 2021 (Cederberg)	90	R395
Simonsig Merindol Syrah 2020	90	R570

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue 2020	Franschhoek	84
Alto 2019	Stellenbosch	86
Arbeidsgenot 2022	Swartland	87
Babylonstoren 2021	Simonsberg-Paarl	87
Backsberg Pumphouse 2022	Coastal Region	90
Bellevue 2022	Stellenbosch	88
Bellingham The Bernard Series Basket Press Syrah 2020	Coastal Region	89
Boschendal 1685 2020	Cape Coast	90
Cape Five Reserve 2021 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	95
Cederberg 2020	Cederberg	88
Christiena Trousseau 2021 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	89
David Nieuwoudt Ghost Corner Syrah 2021 (Cederberg)	Elim	90
De Grendel 2021	Coastal Region	89
De Wet 2023	Worcester	90
Diemersdal Syrah Reserve 2023	Durbanville	94
Dornier Siren Syrah 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Du Toitskloof 2021	Western Cape	88
Eagles' Nest 2022	Constantia	93
Flagstone Dark Horse 2019	Western Cape	89
Gentis Badlands 2022 (Thor Vintners)	Swartland	91
Glenelly Glass Collection Syrah 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Great Five Reserve 2021 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	89
Guardian Peak 2022	Western Cape	88
Holden Manz Syrah 2020	Franschhoek	89
Holden Manz Syrah Reserve 2018	Franschhoek	89
Kasteelberg Syrah 2023 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)	Swartland	89
KFK Reserve 2021 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	90
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve Syrah 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection Syrah 2021	Stellenbosch	95
Kruger Family Reserve 2020 (Stellenview)	Stellenbosch	89
La Petite Ferme Shiraz 2021	Franschhoek	91
Land's End Cape South Coast 2020	Cape South Coast	89
Land's End Syrah 2020	Cape Agulhas	89
Leeuwenkuil Heritage Syrah 2019	Swartland	96
Leeuwenkuil Reserve Red 2021	Swartland	91
Mellish Bakenkop Syrah 2021	Durbanville	95
Meraki 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Mountain Ridge 2020	Breedekloof	87
Nicolas van der Merwe Syrah 2019	Stellenbosch	93
Old Road Wine Co. 12 Mile Syrah 2022	Swartland	88
Org De Rac 2022	Swartland	91
Painted Wolf Scarlet Syrah 2020	Swartland	90
Quoin Rock 2018	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	86

Quoin Rock 2020	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	86
Raar Carbonic Maceration 2023 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)	Swartland	96
Rust en Vrede Estate Vineyards Syrah 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Simonsig Merindol Syrah 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Spider Pig The Red Hog Syrah 2022	Stellenbosch	91
Stellenbosch Reserve Kruithuis 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2019	Stellenbosch	91
Strandveld Serbian Connection Syrah 2021	Elim	88
Strandveld Syrah 2021	Elim	91
Strydom Rock Star Syrah 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Sunkloof Reserve 2021 (Stellenvue)	Coastal Region	91
Tamboerskloof Syrah 2019 (Kleinood)	Stellenbosch	90
The Fledge & Co. Syrah 2020	Western Cape	87
Van Wyk Syrah 2021	Elgin	86
Vinevenom Spektra 2021	Swartland	96
Vrede en Lust Lady J Syrah 2020	Simonsberg-Paarl	89
Waterford Kevin Arnold 2019	Stellenbosch	92
Zandvliet Estate 2022	Robertson	89
Zandvliet Hill of Enon Small Berry Pick 2021	Robertson	94
Zandvliet Kalkveld 2021	Robertson	90
Zevenwacht Syrah 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Zoetendal The Signatura 2022	Elim	95

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



DIEMERSDAL



MELLISH FAMILY VINEYARDS



KLEINE ZALZE



STELLENVIEW