

MINORITY
REPORT 2025

— WINE **MAG.CO.ZA** —

Niche White and Red Varieties

ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2025

Winemag.co.za will release a series of category reports throughout the year, each report 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 (wines ranked by quality relative to price) and scores on the 100-point quality scale for all wines entered. Upon publication, producers can purchase both Top 10 and regular rating stickers – consumers are encouraged to look out for these in the retail environment.

INTRODUCTION

The Minority Report highlights wines made from grape varieties with total plantings of 5,000 hectares or less. South Africa's eight most widely grown varieties – Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Colombar, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Pinotage, Chardonnay, and Merlot – each exceed this threshold, together covering 81.4% of the national vineyard – this is a chance for the lesser-known varieties to shine!

JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judging panel was chaired by me and further consisted of two trusted colleagues, namely Ndaba Dube, director of operations at the President Hotel in Cape Town and wine writer Malu Lambert. Ratings were done according to the 100-point system, with final scores determined through discussion and retasting when necessary, rather than relying solely on arithmetic averages.

Christian Eedes
Editor, Winemag.co.za

KEY FINDINGS

This year's report saw 45 white wine entries and 58 red wine entries – a total of 103 wines from 54 producers. Of these, 31 whites (67%) and 40 reds (69%) scored 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

Notably, white wines performed significantly better than last year when only 37% of the 46 entries achieved 90-plus ratings. One would expect that for producers working with more obscure varieties, maintaining a minimum level of quality would be crucial for commercial viability. Conversely, many of these varieties are still relatively new in the South African context and many producers may still be feeling their way with them.

Semillon was the largest white wine sub-category, with 11 entries, and delivered an impressive showing – 10 wines scored 90 or higher among them being best white wine overall, the Wildeberg Amphora 2023 which earned a rating of 94. While it's a variety which tends to be much more appreciated by wine insiders than the casual drinker, its quality speaks for itself. If you know, you know...

When it comes to red wines, Cabernet Franc was the largest sub-category, with 10 entries – six of which scored 90 or higher. South Africa's definitive expression of the variety is arguably still taking shape, with some producers favouring a richer, more structured style akin to Bordeaux, while others pursue a lighter, more aromatic approach inspired by the Loire. Notably, the top red wine overall was a Cabernet Franc: the 2022 from Stellenbosch producer Warwick – bold yet undeniably compelling, it achieved a rating of 95.

The producers of the Best Overall White and Best Overall Red wines each receive R15,000 off a concrete egg from Cellier Wine Tanks.

BEST WHITE TASTING NOTES



Wildeberg Amphora Semillon 2023

Price: R479

Total Production: 915 bottles Abv 12%

From a Franschhoek vineyard planted in 1905. Spontaneously fermented and matured for nine months in a 750L clay amphora. Complex yet subtle aromas of citrus, peach, blackcurrant, hay, and some flinty reduction. The palate is linear, seamless, and unshowy – good fruit concentration and well-integrated acidity before a long finish.



Bruce Jack Ghost in the Machine Skin Contact Clairette Blanche 2024

Price: R209

Total Production: 8 000 bottles Abv 12%

88% Clairette Blanche, 12% Riesling. Fermented on the skins for six days in stainless steel tank before being transferred to old 228L barrels. Engaging aromatics of citrus, peach, potpourri, and spice. Lovely fruit expression, bright acidity and finish that is saline and slightly grippy in texture. Layered and long.



BEST RED TASTING NOTES



Warwick Cabernet Franc 2022

Price: R675

Total Production: 4 140 bottles Abv 14.5%

Matured for 23 months in barrel, 40% new. Dark berries, violets, a subtle herbal note, and pencil shavings on the nose. The palate is full bodied but beautifully balanced with succulent fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish long and dry.



Beaumont Far Side Mourvèdre 2021

Price: R425

Total Production: 3 069 bottles Abv 12.23%

30% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 18 months in old oak. Red and black berries, lavender, fynbos, and smoked meat on the nose. The palate shows both intensity of flavour and balance – dense fruit matched by bright acidity before a super-dry finish thanks to pleasantly firm tannins.



Boplaas Touriga Nacional 2023

Price: R125

Total Production: 7 000 bottles Abv 14.5%

Matured for 10 months in old oak. Red, black, and blue berries, violets and spice on the nose. The palate makes a big impression being rich yet balanced. Good fruit weight, fresh acidity and nicely grippy tannins.



BEST RED TASTING NOTES



Dornier Malbec 2022

Price: R195

Total Production: 2 934 bottles Abv 14%

Matured for 24 months in barrel, 30% new. Dark berries, tea leaf, violets and crushed herbs, spice and pencil shavings on the nose. The palate is medium bodied, pure and poised – succulent fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins.



Fairview Stok By Paaltjie Grenache 2023

Price: R289

Total Production: 3 250 bottles Abv 13.07%

20% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for nine months in old oak. Pretty aromatics of red and black berries, flowers, fynbos and spice. The palate is medium bodied and rather taut at this stage – pure fruit, fresh acidity, and a saline finish.



Kleinood Tamboerskloof Mourvèdre (meevaller) 2023

Price: R435

Total Production: 1 368 bottles Abv 12.73%

40% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 16 months in second-fill 500L barrels. Complex aromatics of red and black berries, floral perfume, herbs, earth and raw meat while the palate displays concentrated fruit, vibrant acidity and tightly knit tannins, leading to a finish that's dry and persistent.



NICHE WHITE VARIETIES

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

Wine	Score	Price
Wildeberg Amphora Semillon 2023	94	R479
Bruce Jack Ghost in the Machine Skin Contact Clairette Blanche 2024	93	R209
Bruce Jack Off the Charts Clairette Blanche 2024	93	R125
Boplaas Alvarinho 2024	93	R135
Haute Collection Amphora Semillon 2023 (Haute Cabrière)	93	R475
Rickety Bridge The Pilgirmage Old Vine Semillon 2021	93	R600
Perdeberg The Vineyard Collection Grenache Blanc 2024	92	R100
Oak Valley Stone and Steel Riesling 2024	92	R120
Org De Rac Roussanne 2022	92	R175
Dornier Semillon 2022	92	R235
Vrede en Lust Barrique Semillon 2022	92	R235
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve Semillon 2023	92	R250
Opstal The Barber Semillon 2023	92	R300
Kleinood Tamboerskloof Grenache Blanc (inkommer) 2023	92	R330
Wildeberg White Semillon 2023	92	R445
Benguela Cove Catalina Semillon 2022	92	R660
Vrede en Lust Early Mist Riesling 2024	91	R140
Piekenierskloof Grenache Blanc 2024	91	R150
Flagstone Word of Mouth Viognier 2023	91	R163
De Grendel Viognier 2024	91	R170
Vondeling Club Collection Grenache Blanc 2023	91	R195
Painted Wolf Solo Roussanne 2023	91	R220
Bellingham The Bernard Series Motherblock Alberino 2024	91	R250
Ken Forrester Barrel Selection Roussanne 2024	91	R380
Holden Manz Semillon 2022	91	R385
Cape Point Vineyards Sauvignon Gris 2023	91	R420
Meinert The German Job Riesling 2024	90	R135
Dornier Pinot Grigio 2024	90	R155
Raar Grenache Blanc 2024 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co.)	90	R185
Vrede en Lust Viognier 2024	90	R195
Opstal The Barber Verdelho 2023	90	R300

NICHE RED VARIETIES

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

Wine	Score	Price
Warwick Cabernet Franc 2022	95	R675
Boplaas Touriga Nacional 2023	94	R125
Beaumont Far Side Mourvèdre 2021	94	R425
Dornier Malbec 2022	93	R195
Fairview Stok By Paaltjie Grenache 2023	93	R289
Kleinood Tamboerskloof Mourvedre (meevaller) 2023 (Kleinood)	93	R435
Stellenrust Old Bush Vine Cinsaut 2022	93	R190
Klein Amoskuil Bok Amok Bush Vine Grenache 2023	93	R225
Von The Thief Durif 2023	93	R330
Donkiesbaai Cinsault 2023	93	R370
Koelenbosch Sangiovese 2023	92	R100
Bruce Jack Ghost in the Machine Cabernet Franc 2024	92	R240
Zorgvliet Petit Verdot 2022	92	R240
Haute Cabriere Pinot Noir Reserve 2021	92	R300
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection Stream of Consciousness 2024	91	R150
The Fledge & Co. Souzao 2024	91	R160
Piekenierskloof Grenache Noir 2023	91	R180
Boplaas Touriga Nacional Nel Family Reserve 2020	91	R215
Eenzaamheid Grenache Noir 2023	91	R240
Zorgvliet Cabernet Franc 2022	91	R240
De Meye Stellenbosch Cabernet Franc 2021	91	R250
Painted Black Tip Mourvèdre 2022	91	R300
Donkiesbaai Grenache Noir 2023	91	R370
Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin Pinot Noir 2023	91	R550
Hasher Family Wines Cyriel Cabernet Franc 2023	91	R595
Nederburg The Winemasters Grenache Carignan Rosé 2024	90	R95
Fairview Grenache Noir 2023	90	R115
Stellenbosch Reserve Stadsaal Cinsault 2023	90	R200
Flagstone Fiona Pinot Noir 2022	90	R209
Morgenster Tosca Sangiovese & Cabernet Franc Blend 2021	90	R215
Painted Wolf Darius Carignan 2023	90	R220
Stellenrust Barrel Selection Cabernet Franc 2021	90	R235
Dornier Tempranillo Reserve 2021	90	R275
Wildeberg Terroirs Cinsault 2023	90	R285
Blaauwklippen Malbec 2022	90	R290
Ken Forrester The Misfits Cinsault 2022	90	R295
Paardenkloof The Kiss Pinot Noir 2015	90	R320
Dornier Moordenaarskloof Tinta Barocca 2021	90	R335
Cirrus Pinot Noir 2022	90	R375
Von The Tandem Tannat Cinsault 2024	90	R380

NICHE WHITE VARIETIES

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
GRENACHE BLANC		
Donkiesbaai 2024	Piekenierskloof	89
Kleynood Tamboerskloof (inkommer) 2023	Piekenierskloof	92
Perdeberg The Vineyard Collection 2024	Coastal Region	92
Piekenierskloof 2024	Piekenierskloof	91
Raar 2024 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co.)	Swartland	90
Vondeling Club Collection 2023	Voor-Paardeberg	91
RIESLING		
Bruyère Legkaart 2022	Elgin	89
Oak Valley Stone and Steel 2024	Elgin	92
Lothian of Elgin 2023	Elgin	89
Meinert The German Job 2024	Elgin	90
The Fledge & Co. 2022	Constantia	87
Vrede en Lust Early Mist 2024	Elgin	91
ROUSSANNE		
Ken Forrester Barrel Selection 2024	Stellenbosch	91
Meier Family Wines Twee 2024	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	87
Org De Rac 2022	Swartland	92
Painted Wolf Solo 2023	Voor-Paardeberg	91
SEMILLON		
Benguela Cove Catalina 2022	Walker Bay	92
Dornier 2022	Stellenbosch	92
Haute Collection Amphora 2023 (Haute Cabrière)	Franschhoek	93
Holden Manz 2022	Franschhoek	91
Opstal The Barber 2023	Slanghoek	92
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2023	Franschhoek	92
Rickety Bridge The Pilgrimage Old Vine 2021	Franschhoek	93
Thor Vintners Lara 2024	Franschhoek	89
Vrede en Lust Barrique 2022	Elgin	92
Wildeberg Amphora 2023	Franschhoek	94
Wildeberg White 2023	Franschhoek	92
VIOGNIER		
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2020	Breedekloof	88
De Grendel 2024	Cape Town	91
Eagles' Nest 2022	Constantia	89
Flagstone Word of Mouth 2023	Stellenbosch	91
La Petite Ferme 2024	Franschhoek	89
Mary le Bow 2020 (Bruce Jack)	Western Cape	88
Painted Wolf Teardrop 2024	Breedekloof	88
Vrede en Lust 2024	Western Cape	90
OTHER		
Bellingham The Bernard Series Motherblock Alberino 2024	Cape Town	91
Boplaas Alvarinho 2024	Calitzdorp	93

Bruce Jack Ghost in the Machine Skin Contact Clairette Blanche 2024	Western Cape	93
Bruce Jack Off the Charts Clairette Blanche 2024	Western Cape	93
Cape Point Vineyards Sauvignon Gris 2023	Cape Town	91
Dornier Pinot Grigio 2024	Wellington	90
Koelenhof Koelnektar Irsay Olivér 2024	Western Cape	87
Lothian of Elgin Grüner Veltliner 2024	Elgin	86
Opstal The Barber Verdelho 2023	Western Cape	90
Raar Palomino 2024 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co.)	Swartland	88

NICHE RED VARIETIES

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
BLENDS		
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection Stream of Consciousness 2024	Western Cape	91
Fairview Extraño 2022	Western Cape	87
Morgenster Tosca Sangiovese & Cabernet Franc Blend 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Von The Tandem Tannat Cinsault 2024	Swartland	90
CABERNET FRANC		
Bellevue Reserve 2023	Bottelary Stellenbosch	88
Bruce Jack Ghost in the Machine 2023	Western Cape	92
De Meyer Stellenbosch 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Hasher Family Wines Cyriel 2022	Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley	91
Morgenster 2022	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenrust Barrel Selection 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Thor Vintners Dag Droom 2022	Franschhoek	89
Thor Vintners Yellow Batch 2022	Stellenbosch	89
Warwick 2022	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	95
Zorgvliet 2022	Banghoek	91
CINSAULT		
Brampton 2022	Cape Coast	89
Bruce Jack Off the Charts 2023	Swartland	87
Donkiesbaai 2022	Piekenierskloof	93
Ken Forrester The Misfits 2022	Piekenierskloof	90
Perdeberg The Vineyard Collection 2024	Paarl	89
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve Old Vine 2023	Paarl	89
Stellenbosch Reserve Stadsaal 2023	Stellenbosch	90
Stellenrust Old Bush Vine 2022	Stellenbosch	93
Wildeberg Terroirs 2023	Wellington	90
GRENACHE		
Donkiesbaai 2023	Piekenierskloof	91
Eenzaamheid 2023	Agter-Paarl	91
Fairview 2023	Paarl	90
Fairview Stok By Paaltjie 2023	Paarl	93
Ken Forrest Misfits 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Klein Amoskuil Bok Amok Bush Vine 2023	Swartland	93
Perdeberg 2023	Paarl	89
Piekenierskloof 2023	Piekenierskloof	91
MALBEC		
Blaauwklippen 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Dornier 2022	Stellenbosch	93
Vrede en Lust 2022	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	89
MOURVÈDRE		
Beaumont Far Side 2021	Bot River Walker Bay	94

Klein Amoskuil Tarentaal Kwaal Bush Vine 2023	Swartland	89
Kleinood Tamboerskloof (meevaller) 2023 (Kleinood)	Stellenbosch	93
Painted Black Tip 2020	Swartland	89
Painted Black Tip 2022	Swartland	91
PINOT NOIR		
Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin 2023	Elgin	91
Cirrus 2022	Ceres Plateau	90
Flagstone Fiona 2022	Darling	90
Haute Cabriere Reserve 2020	Franschhoek	92
Haute Collection 2022 (Haute Cabrière)	Franschhoek	89
Paardenkloof Ataquia Heart Song 2019	Bot River	86
Paardenkloof Ataquia Heart Song 2020	Bot River	89
Paardenkloof The Kiss 2015	Bot River	90
Thor Vintners Côtes-du-noir 2022	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge	89
ROSÉ		
Nederburg The Winemasters Grenache Carignan Rosé 2024	Western Cape	90
OTHER		
Boplaas Touriga Nacional 2023	Western Cape	94
Boplaas Nel Family Reserve Touriga Nacional 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Dornier Moordenaarskloof Tinta Barocca 2021	Swartland	90
Dornier Tempranillo Reserve 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Koelenbosch Sangiovese 2023 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	92
Painted Wolf Darius Cargnan 2023	Wellington	90
The Fledge & Co. Souzao 2024	Klein Karoo	91
Von The Thief Durif 2023	Swartland	93
Zorgvliet Petit Verdot 2022	Banghoek	92



WILDEBERG



BEAUMONT



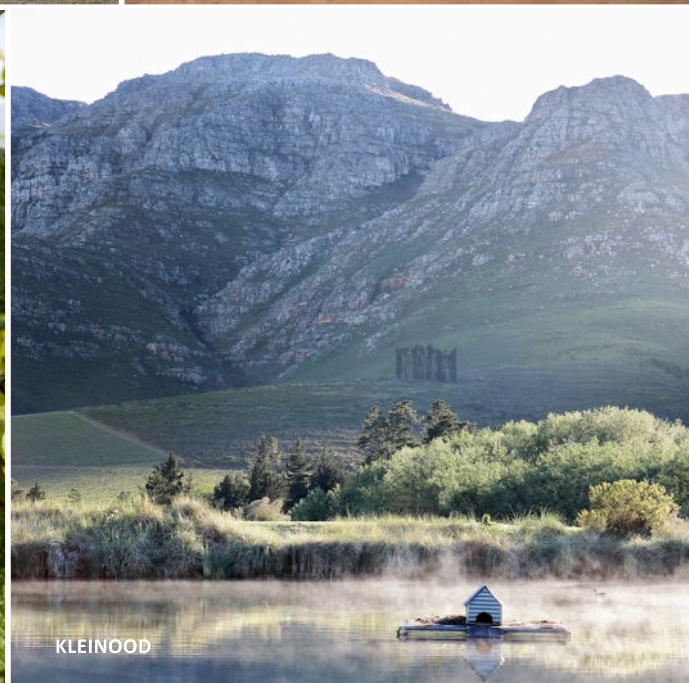
BOPLAAS



FAIRVIEW



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KLEINOOD

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