

Prescient

FUND SERVICES

PINOTAGE
REPORT 2025

WINE**MAG.CO.ZA**

ILLIMIS

ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2025

Winemag.co.za will release a series of category reports throughout the year with Prescient Fund Services as sponsor. Each report is 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.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judging panel was chaired by me and further consisted of two trusted colleagues, Ndaba Dube, director of operations at the President Hotel in Cape Town, and Francois Rautenbach, wine and hospitality specialist.

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

For this year's Pinotage Report sponsored by financial services company Prescient Fund Services, there were 48 entries from 32 producers with 25 (52%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

Pinotage may be marking its centenary this year, but it remains a category fraught with challenges. The panel tasted just under 50 wines and, tellingly, could only identify six that genuinely stirred excitement – falling short of the intended Top 10.

Finesse remains elusive for the variety, and rather than working with this reality, too many producers continue to push extraction and oak, resulting in wines that are coarse and clumsy. Pinotage's historical vulnerability to technical faults is also still apparent. Its naturally high pH leaves it prone to oxidation, and too many examples appeared malty, excessively earthy, and simply fatigued.

Winemag.co.za has no intention of prescribing a singular stylistic path – it is still very much a work in progress in a global context – but it does seem that some fresh thinking needs to be brought to bear.

The average price of the 25 wines to rate 90-plus is R305 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R345. Offering the best quality relative to price is Charles Lang & Sons 2023 with a rating of 93 and selling for R65 a bottle.

Illimis, as producer of the wine judged best overall, wins an energy audit, 12-month monitoring, and grid optimization support worth approximately R10 000 from Evolve Battery & Grid Solutions.

TOP SIX TASTING NOTES



Illimis
2024

Price: R305

Total production: 5 940 bottles Abv 13.5%

80% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for seven months in older 225-litre barrels. A wonderfully fragrant nose with notes of dark cherry, pomegranate, violets and herbs. The palate has a striking coherence about it – light-bodied but equally pure and poised, the finish crunchy. Impresses with its energy and precision.



Allée Bleue
2023

Price: R225

Total production: 6 000 bottles Abv 14.2%

Grapes from Bottelary, Stellenbosch. Matured for 16 months in barrel, 55% new. Floral perfume, plums, red and black cherry, vanilla, oak spice and touch of earth on the nose while the palate is well structured – good fruit clarity, fresh acidity and firm but not coarse tannins.



Hasher Family
Batrachella 2023

Price: R590

Total production: 3 262 bottles Abv 13.34%

Matured for 11 months in 228-litre barrels, 10% new. Red and black berries, flowers, herbs and earth on the nose. Succulent fruit, lemon-like acidity and tannins that are perhaps slightly unyielding now but suggest this will reward time in bottle. A wine of quiet power.





Springfontein Terroir Selection 2022

Price: R275

Total production: 10 755 bottles Abv 13.5%

Matured for 20 months, 30% in second- and 70% in third-fill barrels. Exuberant aromatics of cranberry, raspberry, fynbos, pomegranate, earth, and spice. The palate is elegant and finely detailed, with excellent fruit clarity, bright acidity, and powdery tannins.



Charles Lang & Sons 2023

Price: R65

Total production: 26 000 bottles Abv 14%

Grapes from Paarl. Matured for 12 months in third- and fourth-fill barrels. Precociously primary and pretty on the nose with notes of flowers, herbs and red berries. The palate is wonderfully approachable with lots of clean, sweet fruit offset by fresh acidity and powdery tannins. Great fun.



Warwick The Black Lady 2023

Price: R610

Total production: 9 253 bottles Abv 14%

Matured for 14 months in barrel, 13% new. Appealing if somewhat restrained daromatics of flowers, herbs, and cherry. The palate may be subtle in flavour but impresses with its purity, balance, and beautifully supple texture. Medium-bodied and fresh with a nicely dry finish.



BUYING GUIDE: RETAIL PRICES FOR WINES RATED 90+

Wine	Score	Price
Illimis 2024	95	R305
Allée Bleue 2023	94	R225
Springfontein Terroir Selection 2022	94	R275
Hasher Fasmily Batrachella 2023	94	R590
Charles Lang & Sons 2023	93	R 65
Warwick The Black Lady 2023	92	R610
Warwick The First Lady 2024	91	R130
Cape Five Reserve 2022 (Stellenview)	91	R170
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Resolve 2021	91	R190
Meinert Printer's Ink 2020	91	R230
Bellingham The Bernard Series Bush Vine 2022	91	R280
Diemersdal The Journal 2023	91	R390
Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2022 (Koelenhof)	91	R400
Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2023 (Koelenhof)	91	R400
Bruce Jack Heritage Flag of Truce 2022	91	R573
Fairview Primo 2021	91	R645
Windmeul 2023	90	R 85
Spice Route 2024	90	R140
Kaapzicht Skraalhans 2024	90	R165
Maastricht 2023	90	R185
Meinert Printer's Ink 2019	90	R230
Mellish Family Vineyards Klipmyn 2024	90	R245
Groot Phesantekraal Berliet 2023	90	R275
Beaumont Jackals River 2023	90	R320
Springfontein DareDevils' Drums Blushes Inverse 2022	90	R495

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue 2023	Stellenbosch	94
Bellevue The Reserve Collection 2021	Stellenbosch	88
Beaumont Jackals River 2023	Bot River, Walker Bay	90
Bellingham Homestead 2021	Stellenbosch	88
Bellingham The Bernard Series Bush Vine 2021	Coastal Region	88
Bellingham The Bernard Series Bush Vine 2022	Coastal Region	91
Beyerskloof 2023	Western Cape	89
Beyerskloof Kriekbult 2022	Stellenbosch	88
Beyerskloof Reserve 2023	Stellenbosch	88
Bruce Jack Heritage Collection Flag of Truce 2022	Breedekloof	90
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2023	Breedekloof	89
Cape Five Reserve 2022 (Stellenvue)	Coastal Region	91
Carlo 2023	Stellenbosch	88
Chamonix Greywacke 2021	Franschhoek	85
Charles Lang & Sons 2023	Western Cape	93
Croydon Covenant 2023	Stellenbosch	89
De Grendel Amandelboord 2023	Durbanville	89
Diemersdal Reserve 2023	Durbanville	89
Diemersdal The Journal 2022	Durbanville	88
Diemersdal The Journal 2023	Durbanville	91
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Promenade 2023	Durbanville, Cape Town	87
Fairview Primo 2021	Paarl	91
Flagstone Truth Tree 2021	Coastal Region	89
Flagstone Writer's Block 2021	Swartland	86
Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2022 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	89
Groot Phesantekraal 2023	Cape Town	89
Groot Phesantekraal Berliet 2023	Cape Town	90
Hasher Fasmily Batrachella 2023	Upper Hemel- en-Aarde Valley	94
Illimis 2024	Polkadraai Hills, Stellenbosch	95
Kaapzicht Skraalhans 2024	Bottelary, Stellenbosch	90
KFK 2022 (Stellenvue)	Coastal Region	89
Koelenbosch Director's Reserve 2023 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	89
Maastricht 2023	Cape Town	90
Meinert Printer's Ink 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Meinert Printer's Ink 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Mellish Family Vineyards Klipmyn 2024	Durbanville, Cape Town	90
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Resolve 2021	Coastal Region	91
Spice Route 2024	Coastal Region	90
Springfontein DareDevils' Drums Blushes Inverse 2022	Springfontein Rim	90
Springfontein Terroir Selection 2022	Springfontein Rim	94

Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2022 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	91
Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2023 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	91
Tokara Limited Release 2022	Stellenbosch	87
Christina Trousseau 9 Barrels 2022 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	87
Warwick The Black Lady 2023	Simonsberg, Stellenbosch	92
Warwick The First Lady 2024	Western Cape	91
Windmeul 2023	Coastal Region	90
Windmeul Reserve 2022	Paarl	87

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



SPRINGFONTEIN



ALLÉE BLEUE



ILLIMIS



WARWICK



HASHER FAMILY