

— Prescient —

FUND SERVICES

BEST WINES  
SOUTH AFRICA 2025

— WINEMAG.CO.ZA —

ALL WINES TASTED BLIND

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# INTRODUCTION

Winemag.co.za reviewed a total of 677 wines across 13 categories in its various reports sponsored by Prescient Fund Services over the course of the year. Each report was based on the outcome of a blind tasting of wines entered within the specific category.

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## JUDGING PROCEDURES

We employed a three-person tasting panel, tasting blind, labels out of sight. Ratings were done according to the 100-point system, final scores awarded based on discussion that involved retasting where necessary rather than relying solely on arithmetic averaging.

### TASTERS

Christian Eedes – Winemag.co.za editor (Panel chair)

Ndabezihle Dube – director of operations at the President Hotel, Cape Town

Spencer Fondaumiere, chairman of the South African Sommelier Association

Malu Lambert – wine writer

James Pietersen – CEO of Wine Cellar

Francois Rautenbach, wine and hospitality specialist

Jollette Steyn – Head of Sales and Imports, Wine Cellar

BEST OVERALL

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# WINERY OF THE YEAR

## Delaire Graff

It's impossible to speak of Delaire without noting its spectacular setting atop the Helshoogte Pass outside Stellenbosch. Established in the early 1980s by John and Erica Platter, founders of the eponymous wine guide, the estate has been owned by diamantaire Laurence Graff OBE since 2003, blending luxury hospitality with premium wine production. Since 2009, winemaker Morné Vrey has overseen the cellar, focusing on estate-grown Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, supplemented by carefully selected purchased fruit.

As part of this year's Prescient Fund Services Reports, Delaire Graff had one wine judged best in category, this being the Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2022 (96 points), while another four made the Top 10 in their respective categories, namely Banghoek Chardonnay 2024 (95 points), Terraced Block Chardonnay 2024 (94 points), Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 (95 points) and Botmaskop 2021 (94 points).



# BEST WHITE OVERALL BEST CHARDONNAY



## Neil Ellis Whitehall 2022

### TASTING NOTE

Fermented and matured for nine months in 228-litre barrels, 35% new. 25% MLF. Struck-match reduction, flowers, citrus, green apple, as well as hints of vanilla and nuttiness on the nose. The palate is taut and poised, the dense, pure fruit balanced by vibrant acidity. Long and pithy on the finish.

Winner of a FermTech Solutions organic fermentation kit worth approximately R10 000.



# BEST RED OVERALL BEST CABERNET SAUVIGNON



## Delaire Graff

Reserve 2022

### TASTING NOTE

Matured for 16 months in barrel, 80% new. Red and black berries with a hint of herbs, milk chocolate, vanilla, and pencil shavings on the nose. The palate shows impressive fruit depth balanced by striking freshness, making it wonderfully succulent. Tannins are tightly woven, the finish properly dry. Very classy.

Winner of a FermTech Solutions organic fermentation kit worth approximately R10 000.

BEST OF CATEGORY

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## BEST CAPE WHITE BLEND

### Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Rossouw's Heritage 2023

63% Chenin Blanc, 13% Grenache Blanc, 12% Verdelho, 12% Viognier. 50% of the wine matured for 10 months in second-fill 500-litre barrels. Complex aromatics, with a touch of reduction preceding soft citrus, stone fruit, spice, and an earthy undertone. The palate is dense and layered, with bright acidity and a gently savoury finish. Detailed and long, offering plenty of intrigue.

Winner of a set of Nachtmann glasses worth R2 500 from warewashing specialist Winterhalter.



## BEST CHENIN BLANC

### Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Courageous Barrel-Fermented 2024

Grapes from a Paarl vineyard planted in 1985. Matured for 11 months in barrel, 20% new. Attractive aromatics of honeysuckle, herbs, citrus and peach plus a touch of flinty reduction. The palate has weight but also energy – concentrated fruit and racy acidity before a pithy finish.

Winner of a set of Nachtmann glasses worth R2 500 from warewashing specialist Winterhalter.



## BEST MINORITY WHITE

### Wildeberg Amphora Semillon 2023

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.

Winner of R15 000 off a concrete egg from Cellier Wine Tanks.



## BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC

### Diemersdal The Journal 2024

97% Sauvignon Blanc, 3% Semillon. Fermented and matured for 11 months in a combination of 500- and 600-litre barrels, partially new, and terracotta pots. Engaging aromatics of flowers, herbs, citrus, peach and a hint of reduction while the palate shows excellent clarity of fruit and driving acidity before a dry finish. Elegant and sophisticated.

Winner of shipping services worth R10 000 from Aspiring Couriers.



## BEST SAUV-SEM BLEND

### Wade Bales Regional Series Constantia White 2023

61% Sauvignon Blanc and 39% Semillon, comprising seven parcels sourced from various Constantia properties. A nose of flowers, herbs, hay, citrus, and peach precedes a rich, full palate with creamy texture, layered flavour, and well-integrated acidity. Balanced, pure, and vibrant.

Winner of shipping services worth R10 000 from Aspiring Couriers.



## BEST ROSÉ

### Vriesenhof 2023

60% Grenache, 25% Mourvèdre, 15% Shiraz. 50% matured in stainless-steel tank, 50% in old 4,000-litre foudre. Berries, red apple, orange, earth and spice on the nose while the palate is well balanced – good fruit expression, coated acidity and a gently savoury finish.



## BEST CAPE BORDEAUX RED BLEND

### Cavalli Warlord 2022

71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot, 6% Malbec, 6% Petit Verdot, 6% Cabernet Franc. Matured for 18 months in 225-litre barrels, 35% new. Enticing aromatics of red and black berries, leafiness, earth, incense, vanilla, and spice. The palate shows good fruit concentration, bright acidity, and firm yet fine tannins. Succulent without sweetness, a precise wine.

Winner of shipping services worth R10 000 from Aspiring Couriers.



## BEST MINORITY RED

### Warwick Cabernet Franc 2022

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.

Winner of R15 000 off a concrete egg from Cellier Wine Tanks.



## BEST PINOTAGE

### Illimis 2024

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.

Winner of an energy audit, 12-month monitoring, and grid optimization support worth approximately R10 000 from Evolve Battery & Grid Solutions.



## BEST SHIRAZ

### Raar Carbonic Maceration 2024 (Riebeek Valley Wine Co)

Matured for 12 months in French oak barrels, 10% new. Fragrant aromatics with top notes of flowers and herbs before red and black berries. Poised and elegant – lovely clarity of fruit, good freshness and powdery tannins.

Winner of a set of Nachtmann glasses worth R2 500 from warewashing specialist Winterhalter.



## BEST SIGNATURE RED BLEND

### Koelenbosch Nineteenfortyone 2022

58 % Pinotage, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 4% Shiraz. Matured for 18 months in a combination of 70% second-fill and 30% third-fill barrels. Violets, red and black berries, subtle leafiness, pencil shavings, earth, and pepper on the nose. The palate combines density with clarity of fruit, while the acidity is bright and the tannins fine and tightly packed. A most assured wine that stands tall and finishes long.

Winner of an energy audit, 12-month monitoring, and grid optimization support worth approximately R10 000 from Evolve Battery & Grid Solutions.



# WINEMAG.CO.ZA

*Everything to do with South African fine wine.*



CAVALLI

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DELAIRE GRAFF



DIEMERSDAL



PERDEBERG



WARWICK



VRIESEHOF



ILLIMIS



WILDEBERG