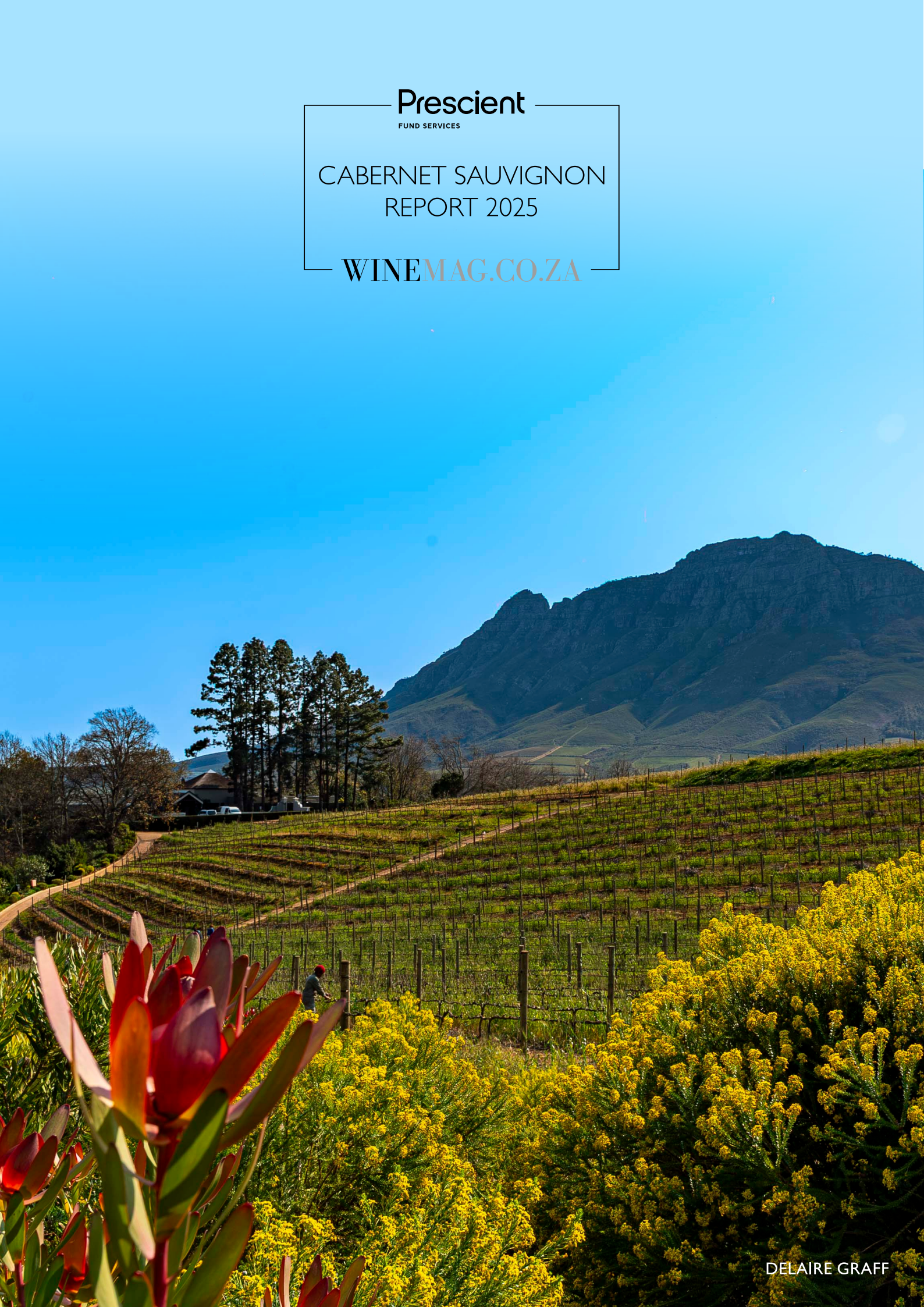


Prescient

FUND SERVICES

CABERNET SAUVIGNON  
REPORT 2025

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



# 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 James Pietersen, CEO of Wine Cellar, Cape Town merchants and cellarers of fine wine, 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 Cabernet Sauvignon Report sponsored by Prescient Fund Services, there were 60 entries from 43 producers with 32 (53%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

Across the tasting, several distinct stylistic strands emerge. Firstly, there are the soft, sweetly fruited examples – likable enough but lacking definition. Their easy-drinking nature makes them instantly accessible, yet they fall short of the variety's expected gravitas.

A second group pursues richness and power, seeking this through ripe fruit and assertive extraction. These wines can verge on the overdone, with elevated alcohols and a loss of freshness or nuance. Intended to impress, they can instead appear heavy-handed, trading vitality for sheer weight.

While Cabernet Sauvignon is often associated with power and structure, a notable number of wines show moderate body and real freshness. Here, however, another question arises: how much herbal or fynbos character is too much? When subtly integrated, these notes lend authenticity and complexity; when dominant, they hint at leafroll virus or vineyard stress.

Tannin management remains a crucial differentiator. Fine tannins are desirable in principle, yet when overly refined they risk rendering the wines facile. Similarly, polished textures designed to suggest luxury can slip into excess.

Cabernet requires a measure of grip – an edge that underwrites its longevity – without descending into astringency.

The pursuit of full ripeness presents its own challenges. While often intended to banish greenness, very late picking can lead to elevated alcohols and diminished freshness, while attempts to restore balance through tartaric adjustment risk introducing unwelcome hardness.

The finest wines, by contrast, achieve balance naturally – firm yet poised, structured yet graceful. Even where alcohol levels are elevated, they remain unobtrusive, adding richness without diminishing balance or freshness.

The average price of the 32 wines to rate 90-plus is R396 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R460. Offering the best quality relative to price is Durbanville Hills with a rating of 90 and selling for R100 a bottle.

Delaire Graff, as producer of the wine judged best overall, wins of a FermTech Solutions organic fermentation kit worth approximately R10 000.

## TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



### Delaire Graff | Best Overall Reserve 2022

Price: R1 100

Total Production: 9 546 bottles Abv 14.91%

*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.*



### Delaire Graff Reserve 2021

Price: R1 100

Total Production: 12 298 bottles Abv 14.8%

*Matured for 16 months in barrel, 80% new. Red and black berries, floral perfume, a touch of leafiness, oak spice, and vanilla on the nose. The palate shows excellent composure, with concentrated fruit, bright acidity, and fine tannins – a wine built for the long haul.*



### Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Castle of Good Hope 2023

Price: R176

Total Production: 4 020 bottles Abv 14.4%

*Matured for 14 months in barrel, partially new. Red and black berries, a pleasant leafy note, earth, a hint of vanilla and pencil shavings. The palate is elegant and well judged – pure fruit, bright acidity and fine tannins.*





## Knorhoek 2022

Price: R340

Total Production: 8 700 bottles Abv 14.43%

*Matured for 24 months in barrel, 56% new. Red and black berries, rose, tea leaf, vanilla and oak spice on the nose. Medium bodied with fresh acidity and a pleasantly austere finish. Poised, elegant, seamless.*



## Rust en Vrede Estate Vineyards 2023

Price: R450

Total Production: 58 500 bottles Abv 13.85%

*Matured for 18 months in barrel, 20% new. Red currant and cassis, potpourri, some leafiness, earth and a hint of vanilla. The palate is medium bodied with clearly defined fruit, fresh acidity and fine tannins. Elegant, balanced, and long.*



## Stellenzicht 2023

Price: R180

Total Production: 16 092 bottles Abv 13.62%

*Matured for 18 months in barrel, 30% new. Red and black berries, herbs, and vanilla on the nose. Medium-bodied with juicy fruit, moderate acidity, and a creamy texture owing to quite soft tannins. Best enjoyed in its youth.*





## Warwick The Blue Lady 2022

Price: R616

Total Production: 13 500 bottles Abv 14%

*Matured for 23 months in barrel, 39% new. Attractive aromatics of red and black berries with an herbal edge, floral perfume, earth, and oak spice. The palate is rich and full-bodied yet harmonious, showing pure fruit, fresh acidity, and fine but grippy tannins. The finish is properly dry.*



## Groot Phesantekraal 2023

Price: R186

Total Production: 14 000 bottles Abv 14%

*Matured for 14 months in 95% French and 5% American oak, 20% new. Red and black berries, flowers and herbs plus pencil shavings on the nose. Medium bodied with fresh acidity and fine tannins, the finish suitably dry.*



## La Petite Ferme 2023

Price: R250

Total Production: 2 866 bottles Abv 13%

*Matured for 13 months in 225-litre barrels, 10% new. Red and black berries, violets, tea leaf, earth and vanilla on the nose. The palate is both compact and linear with concentrated fruit, bright acidity and tightly packed tannins, the finish long and dry.*





## Zevenwacht 2022

Price: R200

Total Production: 18 800 bottles Abv 14.59%

*Matured for 14 months in barrel, 30% new. A herbal top note before cassis and pencil shavings. Full bodied with fresh acidity and firm tannins. Upright and well structured.*



## BUYING GUIDE: RETAIL PRICES FOR WINES RATED 90+

<b>Wine</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Price</b>
Delaire Graff Reserve 2022	96	R1100
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Castle of Good Hope 2023	95	R176
Knorhoek 2022	95	R340
Rust en Vrede Estate Vineyards 2023	95	R450
Delaire Graff Reserve 2021	95	R1100
Stellenzicht 2023	94	R180
Warwick The Blue Lady 2022	94	R616
Groot Phesantekraal 2023	93	R186
Zevenwacht 2022	93	R200
La Petite Ferme 2023	93	R250
The Pledge Our Stellie 2022 (Le Grand Domaine)	92	R180
Cavalli 2022	92	R295
Koelenbosch 2022 (Koelenhof)	91	R120
Nederburg The Manor House 2022	91	R195
Zorgvliet 2022	91	R225
Dornier Equanimity 2021	91	R228
Stellenzicht Tristone 2023	91	R235
Babylonstoren 2022	91	R295
Ernie Els Major Series 2023	91	R300
Strydom Rex 2021	91	R320
Diemersdal The Journal 2023	91	R390
Flagstone Music Room 2022	91	R395
Nederburg Private Bin R163 2021	91	R590
Durbanville Hills 2024	90	R100
Tokara 2022	90	R155
Stellenbosch Reserve Ou Hoofgebou 2023	90	R200
Kruger Family Reserve 2022 (Stellenview)	90	R285
Zevenwacht Z Collection Reserve 2022	90	R365
Tokara Reserve Collection 2022	90	R420
Vriesenhof Reserve 2023	90	R450
Wade Bales Regional Series Stellenbosch 2021	90	R490
Tokara Simonsberg 2021	90	R1850



## COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Alto 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Babylonstoren 2022	Simonsberg-Paarl	91
Blaauwklippen 2022	Stellenbosch	87
Cavalli 2022	Stellenbosch	92
Charles Lang & Sons 2025	Western Cape	88
Christina 2022(Van Loveren)	Robertson	87
Christina 2023 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	87
De Wet 2024	Worcester	88
<b>Delaire Graff Reserve 2021</b>	<b>Banghoek</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Delaire Graff Reserve 2022</b>	<b>Banghoek</b>	<b>96</b>
Diemersdal The Journal 2023	Durbanville	91
Dornier Equanimity 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Durbanville Hills 2024	Durbanville, Cape Town	90
<b>Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Castle of Good Hope 2023</b>	<b>Durbanville, Cape Town</b>	<b>95</b>
Ernie Els Major Series 2023	Stellenbosch	91
Flagstone Music Room 2022	Coastal Region	91
Gabriel & Gysbert Kwartskop 2024	Bonnievale	87
Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2022 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	87
<b>Groot Phesantekraal 2023</b>	<b>Cape Town</b>	<b>93</b>
Groot Phesantekraal 1897 2023	Cape Town	89
Guardian Peak 2023	Western Cape	89
Jakkalsvlei Barrel Selected 2023	Western Cape	87
Joostenberg Philip Albert 2022	Paarl	88
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2020	Stellenbosch	89
Knorhoek 2021	Simonsberg-Stellenbosch	89
<b>Knorhoek 2022</b>	<b>Simonsberg-Stellenbosch</b>	<b>95</b>
Koelenbosch 2022 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	91
Kruger Family Reserve 2022 (Stellenview)	Stellenbosch	90
<b>La Petite Ferme 2023</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>93</b>
Mont Rochelle 2023	Franschhoek	89
Nederburg Private Bin R163 2021	Paarl	91
Nederburg Private Bin Two Centuries 2021	Coastal Region	87
Nederburg The Manor House 2022	Coastal Region	91
Nederburg The Winemasters 2023	Western Cape	86
PaardenKloof Fynboshuis 2021	Bot River	89
<b>Rust en Vrede Estate Vineyards 2023</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>95</b>
Spier 21 Gables 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Spier Seaward 2023	Western Cape	89
Stellenbosch 1679 2022 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	89
Stellenbosch Reserve Ou Hoofgebou 2023	Stellenbosch	90
<b>Stellenzicht 2023</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>94</b>
Stellenzicht Tristone 2023	Stellenbosch	91
Strydom Rex 2021	Stellenbosch	91

The Pledge Our Stellie 2021 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	87
The Pledge Our Stellie 2022 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	92
Tokara 2022	Western Cape	90
Tokara Reserve Collection 2022	Stellenbosch	90
Tokara Simonsberg 2021	Simonsberg- Stellenbosch	90
Vergelegen Reserve 2022	Stellenbosch	89
Vriesenhof 2023	Stellenbosch	90
Vriesenhof Reserve 2023	Stellenbosch	90
VRL 2024 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	87
Wade Bales Regional Series Stellenbosch 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Warwick The Blue Lady 2021	Simonsberg- Stellenbosch	89
<b>Warwick The Blue Lady 2022</b>	<b>Simonsberg- Stellenbosch</b>	<b>94</b>
Windmeul 2023	Coastal Region	87
Winshaw The Fox 2023	Stellenbosch	86
<b>Zevenwacht 2022</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>93</b>
Zevenwacht Z Collection Reserve 2022	Polkaaidraai Hills & Banghoek	90
Zorgvliet 2022	Banghoek	91



KNORHOEK



STELLENZICHT



GROOT PHESANTEKRAAL



WARWICK



DURBANVILLE HILLS



ZEVENWACHT



RUST EN VREDE

# 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