

Prescient

FUND SERVICES

CHARDONNAY
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 wine writer Malu Lambert and James Pietersen, CEO of Wine Cellar, Cape Town merchants and cellarers of fine wine.

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 Chardonnay Report sponsored by Prescient Fund Services, there were 76 entries from 56 producers with 49 (64%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

Looking at the line-up as a whole, distinct stylistic threads emerge. A sub-set of younger releases presents as clean, fresh, and approachable. Their purity and brightness are immediately appealing, yet in some cases this clarity verges on simplicity, lacking the structural depth or complexity to sustain prolonged interest. These wines deliver immediate pleasure but may leave the taster wanting a little more weight or dimension.

A second group strives for opulence and richness, embracing ripe fruit and creamy textures, but this ambition carries risk. Some wines in this category show signs of premature oxidation or undue evolution. While their tactile appeal is undeniable, there is a fine line between generosity and listlessness, and a few flirt with the latter, suggesting tempered expectations regarding cellaring.

The most compelling wines combine precision, tension, and nuance. They demonstrate taut, linear structures married to aromatic and flavour detail. Energetic and finely tuned, their fruit and acidity are in perfect balance, offering both clarity and intrigue. These wines reward immediate attention while promising longevity, exemplifying the highest expression of contemporary South African white winemaking.

The average price of the 49 wines to rate 90-plus is R355 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R575. Offering the best quality relative to price is Durbanville Hills with a rating of 92 and selling for R100 a bottle.

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

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Neil Ellis | Best Overall Whitehall 2022

Price: R370

Total Production: 18 290 bottles Abv 13%

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.



Neil Ellis Whitehall 2023

Price: R370

Total Production: 12 000 bottles Abv 12%

Fermented and matured for 10 months in 228-litre barrels, 33% new. 20% MLF. Flinty reduction, lemon, oatmeal and a hint of wet wool on the nose while the palate displays excellent fruit concentration and creamy texture, this balanced by vibrant acidity, the finish resolutely dry. A wine of reined-in power.



Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin 2023

Price: R570

Total Production: 8 688 bottles Abv 13.5%

Matured for 11 months in barrel, 27% new. No MLF. Complex and engaging aromatics of struck-match reduction, flowers, herbs, lime, lemon, peach, and a hint of vanilla. The palate is precise, detailed and harmonious – pure fruit and fresh acidity before a persistent finish.





De laire Graff Banghoek 2024

Price: R420

Total Production: 12 782 bottles Abv 13.53%

Fermented and matured for 10 months in 225-litre barrels, 40% new. No MLF. The nose shows pear, peach, apple, citrus, floral perfume and some flinty reduction. The palate is elegant with a lovely energy about it – pure fruit and racy acidity before a pithy finish.



Groot Constantia 2024

Price: R400

Total Production: 22 500 bottles Abv 13.73%

Matured for 10 months in barrel, 35% new. Partial MLF. Citrus, oatmeal and some leesy complexity on the nose while the palate is balanced, complex and long. Dense fruit matched by lively acidity, the finish long and savoury. Rich and round with a creamy texture.



Blaauwklippen 2024

Price: R216

Total Production: 9 000 bottles, 100 magnums, 15 Jeroboams Abv 13.7%

Matured for just under 12 months in 228-litre barrels, 22% new. No MLF. Subtle aromatics of pear, peach and citrus, flowers, herbs and some flinty reduction. The palate is elegant and refined – good fruit expression, racy acidity and a pithy finish.





Creation Glenn's 2024

Price: R976

Total Production: 1 955 bottles Abv 13%

Entirely spontaneously fermented. Matured for 11 months in barrel, 30% new. Full MLF. Apple, lemon, a hint of vanilla and some leesy complexity on the nose. The palate shows concentrated fruit and tangy acidity before a savoury finish. A seamless wine that presents as particularly youthful.



Creation The Art of 2024

Price: R976

Total Production: 4 700 bottles Abv 13%

From the same block as Glenn's, 50% spontaneous fermentation. Matured for 11 months in barrel, 30% new. Full MLF. Delicate notes of citrus, apple and peach on the nose while the palate combines fruit purity with texture, the acidity well integrated, the finish savoury.



Delaire Graff Terraced Block 2024

Price: R1 276

Total Production: 4 944 bottles Abv 13.7%

Matured for 10 months in 225-litre barrels, 40% new. No MLF. A hint of reduction before pear, peach, and citrus. The palate appears lean and fresh, the acidity bright and the finish pithy. Pure and vital, with good fruit clarity and just enough weight to avoid being angular.





La Motte Reserve Collection 2024

Price: R180

Total Production: 30 000 bottles Abv 12.83%

90% underwent malolactic fermentation and matured for 12 months in 300-litre barrels, while the remaining 10% was fermented in stainless steel without MLF. Lemon, orange, a touch of pineapple, and leesy complexity on the nose. The palate is big and bold, showing luscious fruit and a creamy texture, while tangy acidity provides balance. The finish is long and gently savoury.



HONOURABLE MENTION

Because final ratings are determined by averaging the scores of three judges, decimal places come into play. As a result, the following wine fell just short of the Top 10 on 94 points:



Creation Ridge 2024 | Price: R410

BUYING GUIDE: RETAIL PRICES FOR WINES RATED 90+

Wine	Score	Price
Neil Ellis Whitehall 2022 (Best Overall)	96	R370
Neil Ellis Whitehall 2023	96	R370
Groot Constantia 2024	95	R400
Delaire Graff Banghoek 2024	95	R420
Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin 2023	95	R570
La Motte Reserve Collection 2024	94	R180
Blaauwklippen 2024	94	R216
Creation Glenn's 2024	94	R976
Creation The Art of 2024	94	R976
Delaire Graff Terraced Block 2024	94	R1276
Creation Ridge 2024	94	R410
Zevenwacht Estate 2024	93	R180
Jakkalsvlei Lord Jackal 2024	93	R250
Oak Valley Groenlandberg 2024	93	R300
Eikendal 2023	93	R315
Babylonstoren 2024	93	R425
Stellenzicht Acheulean 2024	93	R450
Creation Glenn's 2023	93	R990
Lerin 2017 (Nooitgedacht)	93	On request.
Durbanville Hills 2024	92	R100
Paul Cluver Village 2024	92	R160
Dr Goodvine Mother's little Helper 2024	92	R230
Avontuur Disa Gorge 2024	92	R350
Vergelegen Reserve 2024	92	R350
Tokara Limited Release 2022	92	R385
Van Loveren Calcrete 2025	91	R110
Fleur du Cap Unfiltered 2024	91	R185
Vriesenhof 2024	91	R250
La Petite Ferme Barrel Fermented 2024	91	R325
Journey's End Destination 2024	91	R440
Stellenzicht Thunderstone 2024	90	R115
Oak Valley Beneath the Clouds 2024	90	R150
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cableway 2024	90	R150
Spier Seaward 2024	90	R150
Glenelly Glass Collection 2023	90	R160
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2024	90	R163
Allée Bleue Isabeau 2023	90	R210
Cape of Good Hope Serruria 2024 (Anthonij Rupert Wyne)	90	R250
Chamonix Greywacke 2023	90	R250
Cavalli 2024	90	R260
Whalehaven Terroir Series Sandstone Strata 2022	90	R270
Vrede en Lust Marguerite 2024	90	R275
Constantia Uitsig Reserve 2024	90	R295

Whalehaven Terroir Series Sandstone Strata 2024	90	R300
De Grendel Op die Berg 2024	90	R350
Paul Cluver Estate 2023	90	R360
Tokara Reserve Collection 2024	90	R385
Chamonix Reserve 2023	90	R485
Quoin Rock 2022	90	R495

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Allée Bleue Isabeau 2023	Franschhoek	90
Avontuur Disa Gorge 2024	Stellenbosch	92
Babylonstoren 2024	Simonsberg-Paarl	93
Bartinney Hourglass 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Blaauwklippen 2024	Stellenbosch	94
Boschendal Appellation Series Elgin 2023	Elgin	95
Breëland 2024	Slanghoek	89
Cape of Good Hope Serruria 2024 (Anthonij Rupert Wyne)	Elandskloof	91
Cavalli 2024	Stellenbosch	90
Chamonix Greywacke 2022	Franschhoek	89
Chamonix Greywacke 2023	Cape Coast	90
Chamonix Reserve 2023	Elgin	90
Chamonix Unoaked 2025	Franshoek	88
Charles Lang & Daugher Chardonnay NV	Western Cape	89
Christina 2025 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	89
Constantia Uitsig Reserve 2024	Constantia	90
Creation The Art of 2024	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge, Walker Bay	94
Creation Glenn's 2023	Walker Bay	93
Creation Glenn's 2024	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge	94
Creation Ridge 2024	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge, Walker Bay	94
De Grendel Op die Berg 2024	Ceres Plateau	91
De Wet Single Vineyard Wine 2024	Klein Karoo	89
Delaire Graff Estate Banghoek 2024	Banghoek	95
Delaire Graff Estate Terraced Block 2024	Banghoek	94
Diemersdal Reserve 2024	Durbanville	89
Dr Goodvine Mother's little Helper 2024	Lower Duiwenshok River	92
Durbanville Hills 2024	Durbanville, Cape Town	92
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cableway 2024	Durbanville, Cape Town	90
Eikendal 2023	Stellenbosch	93
Fleur du Cap Unfiltered 2024	Stellenbosch	91
Gabriel & Gysbert Ijsland 2023	Bonnievale	87
Glenelly Glass Collection Unwooded 2023	Stellenbosch	90
Groot Constantia 2024	Constantia, Cape Town	95
Groote Post Pinch of Salt 2024	Darling	88
Haute Cabrière Réserve 2023	Franschhoek	88
Haute Collection 2023 (Haute Cabrière)	Franschhoek	89
Jakkalsvlei Lord Jackal Private Collection 2024	Klein Karoo	93
Jordan Timepiece 2024	Stellenbosch	88

Journey's End Destination 2024	Stellenbosch	91
Kershaw Clonal Selection 2022	Elgin	89
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2024	Western Cape	90
La Bri 2024	Franschhoek	89
La Motte Reserve Collection 2024	Franschhoek	94
La Petite Ferme Barrel Fermented 2024	Franschhoek	91
Lerin 2017 (Nooitgedacht)	Stellenbosch	93
Lothian of Elgin 2023	Elgin	89
Nederburg The Manor House 2023	Western Cape	88
Nederburg The Winemasters 2024	Western Cape	87
Neil Ellis Whitehall 2022	Elgin	96
Neil Ellis Whitehall 2023	Elgin	96
Oak Valley Beneath the Clouds 2024	Elgin	91
Oak Valley Groenlandberg 2024	Elgin	93
Org de Rac 2025	Swartland	85
Paul Cluver Estate 2023	Elgin	90
Paul Cluver Seven Flags 2023	Elgin	88
Paul Cluver Village 2024	Elgin	92
Quoin Rock 2022	Cape Coast	90
Quoin Rock 2023	Cape Coast	89
Spier Seaward 2024	Coastal Region	90
Stellenzicht Acheulean 2024	Stellenbosch	93
Stellenzicht Thunderstone 2024	Stellenbosch	90
The Pledge Our Barrels 2023 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	87
The Pledge Our Barrels 2024 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	87
Tokara Limited Release 2022	Stellenbosch	92
Tokara Reserve Collection 2024	Stellenbosch	90
Van Loveren Calcrete 2025	Robertson	91
Vergelegen Reserve 2024	Stellenbosch	92
Vrede en Lust Marguerite 2024	Elgin	91
Vriesenhof 2024	Stellenbosch	91
Warwick The White Lady 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Whalehaven Terroir Series Sandstone Strata 2022	Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley	90
Whalehaven Terroir Series Sandstone Strata 2024	Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley	91
Wildeberg Terroirs 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Winshaw Gold Dust to Grapes 2024	Stellenbosch	88
Zandvliet 2024	Robertson	89
Zevenwacht Estate 2024	Polkadraai Hills	93



LA MOTTE



CREATION



DELAIRE GRAFF



GROOT CONSTANTIA



BLAAUWKLIPPEN



BOSCHENDAL

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