



SWEET WINE
& FORTIFIEDS
REPORT 2025

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

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ABOUT THE SWEET WINE & FORTIFIEDS REPORT 2025

Winemag.co.za produces category reports on a regular basis, this report focussing on the following sub-categories: 1) Natural Sweet; 2) Noble Late Harvest; 3) Straw Wine; 4) Hanepoot; 5) Muscadel and 6) Port-style.

This document contains key findings and tasting notes for the top wines, and scores on the 100-point quality scale for all wines entered. Upon publication, producers may purchase rating stickers, which consumers are encouraged to look for in stores.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judging panel was chaired by me and further consisted of Spencer Foundamiere, wine entrepreneur and ASI Diploma Sommelier, and Jolette Steyn-Prior of Wine Cellar, Cape Town merchants and cellarers of fine wine.

We tasted blind, labels out of sight. Ratings were done according to the 100-point system, final scores awarded on the basis of discussion that involved retasting where necessary rather than relying solely on arithmetic averaging.

*Christian Eedes
Editor, Winemag.co.za*

KEY FINDINGS

With this tasting covering a broad spectrum of sweet wine styles, it is gratifying to see scores consistently strong, with several wines reaching 93–95 points. The inevitable question follows: how does one make peace with the reality that quality is world-class, yet consumer uptake remains limited?

Muscat varieties (Muscat de Frontignan and Muscat d'Alexandrie/Hanepoot) carry deep historical roots, while South Africa's relatively recent yet acclaimed Port tradition further enriches the country's reputation for sweet and fortified wines. It is tempting to assume that these categories' place in our wine landscape is assured, yet the industry would be better served by mapping a clear path forward rather than relying on past resilience alone.

Acknowledging the niche appeal of these wines is not conceding failure but embracing deliberate positioning. Here, branding, storytelling, and targeted engagement are key. Mass adoption may never arrive, but ensuring recognition as heritage products among those who understand and appreciate such things is entirely achievable. Smaller volumes create scarcity, which can be leveraged into exclusivity and, ultimately, premiumisation. Klein Constantia's Vin de stands as a prime example.

TASTING NOTES



St Leger
2022

NATURAL SWEET



Price: R946

Total Production: 710 x 500ml bottles Abv 13.3%

100% Muscat de Frontignan. Part fermented in glass demijohn and part in new French oak barrel. Matured for 24 months. Dried peach and apricot, potpourri, caramel and spice on the nose. The palate is intricate without tipping into excess, bright acidity keeping it lively, the finish long and gently savoury.



Nederburg
The Winemasters 2024

NOBLE LATE HARVEST



Price: R170

Total Production: 38 600 x 375ml bottles Abv 8.46%

46% Muscat de Frontignan, 26% Chenin Blanc, 13% Weisser Riesling, 15% other varieties. Fermented in stainless-steel tank. Dried apricot, honey and a touch of botrytis-derived mushroom on the nose. The palate shows good concentration and texture, lifted by vibrant acidity before a dry finish. Intensely flavoured, with an appealing sweet-and-sour tension.



Joostenberg
Chenin Blanc 2024

NOBLE LATE HARVEST



Price: R236

Total Production: 9 672 x 375ml bottles Abv 13.5%

100% Chenin Blanc. Fermented and matured for eight months in older oak. The nose shows lime, lemon, mint and a touch of jasmine. The palate is light rather than lavish, with racy acidity keeping it taut. Aromatic, understated and refreshing.



Diemersdal
Sauvignon Blanc 2024

NOBLE LATE HARVEST

Price: R200

Total Production: 11 000 x 375ml bottles Abv 9.6%

100% Sauvignon Blanc. Fermented and matured for six months in stainless-steel tank. Peach, apricot and honey on the nose. Rich and smooth textured but equally full of flavour with brisk acidity and a dry finish.



Fairview
La Beryl Blanc 2024

STRAW

Price: R356

Total Production: 6 400 x 500ml bottles Abv 11.95%

65% Chenin Blanc, 35% Muscat de Frontignan. Citrus, peach, flowers and a hint of wax on the nose. The palate shows good intensity and freshness – sweet 'n sour with lively acidity before a dry finish.



Babylonstoren
Hanepoot 2024

HANEPOOT

Price: R300

Total Production: 922 x 500ml bottles Abv 15.5 %

100% Muscat d'Alexandrie. Matured for nine months in older barrels. Pretty aromatics of table grapes and floral perfume while the palate is well balanced – clean fruit, not too weighty, fresh acidity, the finish dry.





Nuy
Barbieri Idro Red Muscadel 2017

MUSCADEL



Price: R235

Total Production: 1 350 x 500ml bottles Abv 17%

100% Muscat de Frontignan. Matured for five years in barrel. The nose is pleasantly evolved, with notes of raisin, nuts, caramel, Turkish Delight and spice. The palate is nuanced, pure and fresh, finishing long and savoury. This wine promises excellent drinking for many years to come.



Klawer Cellars
White Muscadel 2023

MUSCADEL



Price: R110

Total Production: 3 294 bottles Abv 16.87%

The nose shows sultana, dried mango, subtle waxy notes and a hint of spice. The palate is opulent – rich and creamy, full of flavour, with bright acidity providing balance.



Boplaas
Cape Vintage Reserve 2019

PORT-STYLE



Price: R380

Total Production: 3 330 bottles Abv 17.91%

85% Touriga Nacional, 5% Tinta Barocca, 8% Touriga Franca, 2% Souzao. Matured for 18 months in Portuguese pipes. Black and blue berries, violets, chocolate, liquorice and earth on the nose while the palate is rich and full – dense, pure fruit and silky tannins. Very stylish.



Delaire Graff Cape Vintage 2023

PORT-STYLE

Price: R640

Total Production: 1 950 bottles Abv 19.46%

69% Touriga Nacional, 31% Tinta Barocca. Matured for 12 months in older 400-litre barrels. Immensely aromatic on the nose with notes of dark berries, violets, herbs, spice and earth. The palate is full but balanced – clean fruit and fresh acidity before a finish that's long and dry. Pure and precise.



De Krans Cape Vintage Reserve 2021

PORT-STYLE

Price: R410

Total Production: 3 360 bottles Abv 19%

71% Touriga Nacional, 23% Tinta Roriz, 6% Tinta Barocca. Matured for 20 months in vat. Dark berries, chocolate, earth and spice on the nose while the palate is powerful with dense fruit and firm tannins – impressive structure.



Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve 2022

PORT-STYLE

Price: R380

Total Production: 3 276 bottles Abv 18.1%

80% Touriga Nacional, 10% Souzao, 10% Tinta Barocca. Matured for 12 months in Portuguese pipes. Red and black berries, potpourri, fynbos make for a pretty nose while the palate is medium bodied and well balanced with good freshness, the finish nicely dry.





Lord Jackal
Cape Vintage Reserve 2024
(Jakkalsvlei)

PORT-STYLE



Price: R486

Total Production: 2 964 bottles Abv 18.58%

100% Touriga Nacional from Kasteelberg. Matured until end-2024 in tank and then a further 12 months in older 300-litre barrels. Red and black berries, herbs and spice on the nose while the palate displays good fruit expression, bright acidity and relatively fine tannins, the finish nicely dry. Well balanced and elegant for a Cape Vintage.



Boplaas
Cape Tawny N/V

PORT-STYLE



Price: R286

Total Production: 6 672 bottles Abv 17%

70% Tinta Barocca, 20% Touriga Nacional, 10% Souzao. Matured for a minimum of eight years in older large-format barrels. The nose shows dried apricot, caramel, nuts and spice while the palate displays pure fruit and vibrant acidity before a dry finish.



De Krans
Cape Tawny N/V

PORT-STYLE



Price: R260

Total Production: 10 000 bottles Abv 19%

85% Touriga Nacional, 10% Tinta Amarella, 5% Tinta Barocca. Matured in older 225-litre barrels, the final wine blended from a range of different vintages between 5 and 15 years old. Dried stone fruit, a nutty note and spice on the nose. The palate is rich, viscous and full of flavour.

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
NATURAL SWEET		
Charles Lang & Daughter Reserve Red NV	Western Cape	88
Charles Lang & Daughter Reserve Rosé NV	Western Cape	90
David Finlayson Camino Africana Dani NV	Cape Coast	90
De Wet Special Late Harvest 2024	Rooikrans	88
St Leger 2022	Constantia	93
NOBLE LATE HARVEST		
De Grendel Sauvignon Blanc 2025	Cape Town	91
Delheim Edelspatz Botrytis Riesling 2023	Stellenbosch	89
Diemersdal Sauvignon Blanc 2024	Durbanville	92
Diemersdal Sauvignon Blanc 2025	Durbanville	90
Joostenberg Chenin Blanc 2024	Paarl	92
Koelenbosch 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Nederburg The Winemasters 2024	Western Cape	92
STRAW		
Donkiesbaai Hooiwijn 2025	Piakenierskloof	91
Fairview La Beryl Blanc 2024	Paarl	92
Villa Esposto Muscat d'Alexanrie 2022	Olifants River	91
HANEPOOT		
Babylonstoren Hanepoot 2024	Simonsberg-Paarl	92
Boplaas Hanepoot 2024	Calitzdorp	90
De Wet Muscat d'Alexandrie 2024	Worcester	91
Jakkalsvlei Hanepoot 2025	Klein Karoo	91
Klawer Cellars Hanepoot 2024	Olifants River	89
MUSCADEL		
De Krans Muscat Blanc 2024	Calitzdorp	90
De Wet Red 2021	Worcester	89
De Wet White 2021	Worcester	90
Jakkalsvlei 2025	Herbertsdale	90
Klawer Cellars Red 2022	Olifants River	88
Klawer Cellars White 2023	Olifants River	92
Nuy Barbieri Idro Red 2017	Nuy	94
PORT-STYLE/FORTIFIED		
Boplaas Cape Tawny NV	Western Cape	92
Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve 2019	Calitzdorp	95
Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve 2022	Calitzdorp	93
David Finlayson Camino Africana Cape Vintage 2021	Western Cape	87
De Krans Cape Tawny NV	Western Cape	92
De Krans Cape Vintage Reserve 2021	Calitzdorp	93
De Wet Cape Ruby 2021	Worcester	90
Delaire Graff Cape Vintage 2023	Swartland	95
Fairview Sweet Red 2024	Paarl	90
Klawer Cellars Cape Vintage 2022	Olifants River	87
Koelenbosch Pinorto Cape Vintage 2023	Stellenbosch	90
Lord Jackal Private Collection Cape Vintage Reserve 2024 (Jakkalsvlei)	Western Cape	93
Pierre Jourdan Ratafia Fortified Chardonnay NV	Franschhoek	90



BABYLONSTOREN



FAIRVIEW



JOOSTENBERG



DELAIRE GRAFF



DIEMERSDAL



BOPLAAS



NEDERBURG

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