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Pinotage | Signature Red Blend | Sweet Wine & Fortifieds

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PINOTAGE  
REPORT 2026

WINEMAG.CO.ZA



DIEMERSDAL

# ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2026

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.

The tasting programme is further supported by partners Aspiring Couriers and Getwine.

## JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judging panel was chaired by me and further consisted of two trusted colleagues, wine entrepreneur and ASI Diploma Sommelier Spencer Foundamiere, and wine writer Malu Lambert.

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

The tasting for this year's Pinotage Report sponsored by Prescient Fund Services identifies an emerging paradox in the category: stylistic diversity is expanding, quality is improving, yet value (understood as quality relative to price) is becoming increasingly unpredictable. Across 30 wines scoring 90+ and a focused Top 10, pricing patterns show a market that is no longer tightly linked to score.

## 1. Top 10 delivers stronger value than the wider 90+ group

The clearest finding is an inversion between the Top 10 and the full 90+ cohort. The Top 10 wines average R196 per bottle, while the broader group of 30 wines scoring 90+ averages R257.

In simple terms, the highest-performing wines in this tasting are, on average, cheaper than the wider set of similarly high-scoring wines. This is counterintuitive in a traditional hierarchy, where better wines would typically sit at higher price points.

Instead, the Top 10 includes several standout performers at low prices, most notably Cape Discovery 2024 (R90) and Diemersdal 2025 (R165), which pull the average down while delivering top scores.

By contrast, the broader 90+ cohort contains multiple wines priced between R320 and R580, which lift the average significantly without a corresponding jump in score.

## 2. Premium pricing is not tracking score differences

The wider dataset shows clear price escalation at the top end that is not matched by meaningful score separation. In other words, higher prices do not consistently translate into higher ratings.

Several wines sit in the R400–R580 range while scoring only marginally above 90 points. This suggests that pricing is being driven less by incremental quality gains and more by factors such as brand positioning, scarcity, site identity, or production narrative.

The result is a widening gap between what consumers pay and what is reflected in the scores.

## 3. Scale producers deliver strong value efficiency

Large and medium-scale producers feature prominently among the best value wines in the tasting:

- Diemersdal shows consistent high performance across multiple price tiers (90–95 points)
- Cape Discovery (R90, 95 points) represents the most extreme value in the entire lineup
- Zonnebloem and Koelenhof both deliver precise, well-scored wines under R150.

This challenges the assumption that scale dilutes quality. Instead, it suggests that technical consistency at volume has become one of the defining strengths of the category's mid-tier segment.

## 4. A new stylistic language is emerging

Across the Top 10, a clear stylistic profile repeats: bright red and black fruit, measured oak influence, powdery tannins, and fresh acidity. Techniques such as whole-bunch fermentation, older oak usage, and partial concrete maturation now appear across both affordable and premium wines.

The implication is significant: highly ambitious, intervention-heavy winemaking – long a defining marker of premium Pinotage – is no longer guaranteed of being rewarded, at least by this panel.

## Conclusion

The 2026 results point to a category in transition. The Top 10 is defined less by exclusivity and more by disruption, with several of the highest-rated wines also among the most affordable.

At the same time, the broader 90+ cohort reveals a growing disconnect between premium pricing and incremental improvements in quality.

In short, higher scores no longer reliably translate into higher prices – or better value.

## Winner benefits

Diemersdal, as producer of best wine overall, wins shipping services to the value of R10,000 from Aspiring Couriers.

## TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



### Diemersdal | Best Overall 2025

Price: R165

Total Production: 22,000 bottles Abv 14.45%

*30% whole-bunch fermentation. Matured for 12 months, French oak staves in tank. Red and black cherry, floral perfume, musk and a hint of vanilla on the nose. The palate is medium bodied with sweet, juicy fruit to go with bright acidity and a creamy texture. Pure and poised.*



### Cape Discovery 2024 (Stellenview)

Price: R90

Total Production: 6,000 bottles Abv 13.85%

*Matured briefly in third-fill barrels with insert staves. Cherry, plum, lavender and spice on the nose while the palate is generous, sweet and soft – luscious and polished.*



### Hazendal 2025

Price: R409

Total Production: 3,000 bottles Abv 13.95%

*Mix of whole-bunch, whole berry and destemmed fruit. Matured for 11 months in 500-litre barrel and concrete tanks. Complex aromatics of red and black berries, flowers, herbs, incense and pencil shavings. Super-concentrated fruit with fresh acidity and supple tannins. Layered and long.*





## Mellish Family Vineyards Klipmynpad 2024

Price: R240

Total Production: 1,711 bottles Abv 13.42%

*13.5% whole-bunch fermented. Matured for nine months in older 225-litre barrels. Pretty aromatics of cranberry, red cherry, rose and herbs. The palate is light-bodied yet detailed with fresh acidity and powdery tannins, the finish savoury. Full of charm.*



## Bellevue 2023

Price: R115

Total Production: 35,000 bottles Abv 14.14%

*Matured for 12 months in French-coopered American oak barrels. Intriguing aromatics of cherry, strawberry, plum, herbs, a slight meaty note and spice. Medium bodied with good freshness and smooth tannins.*



## Zonnebloem 2024

Price: R149

Total Production: 24,000 bottles Abv 14.14%

*55% of the wine matured in first- and second-fill American, French and Hungarian oak, 45% in stainless steel tank. The nose displays berries, flowers, herbs and vanilla while the palate is pure and energetic with powdery tannins, the finish long and dry. Precise and tightly wound – should develop well in bottle.*





## Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Promenade 2024

Price: R189

Total Production: 13,932 bottles Abv 14.29%

*Matured for 14 months in a combination of first- and second-fill barrels. Black cherry, cassis, fynbos, vanilla and spice on the nose. The palate is luxurious, full and rounded with plenty of sweet fruit and smooth tannins, the finish nevertheless dry.*



## Du Toitskloof Granite 2024

Price: R165

Total Production: 7,002 bottles Abv 14.5%

*Matured for 18 months in 100% new oak. Red and black cherry, fynbos and subtle vanilla on the nose. The palate is pure and fresh with a dry finish. Has a lovely succulence about it.*



## Illimis 2025

Price: R325

Total Production: 650 bottles Abv 13.8%

*95% wholebunch fermented. Matured for seven months in older 225-litre barrels. Compelling aromatics of cranberry, strawberry, rose, fynbos and white pepper. The palate is light, even delicate – clean fruit and fresh acidity before a satisfyingly dry finish.*





## Koelenbosch 2023 (Koelenhof)

Price: R109

Total Production: 12,753 bottles Abv 14.15%

*Matured for 18 months in older oak. The nose is led by effusive berry fruit, while the palate is juicy and fresh, yet not without a measure of tannic grip. Made in an accessible, immediately appealing style.*



## 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 92 points:



Diemersdal Reserve 2022 | Price: R250

## BUYING GUIDE: CELLAR-DOOR PRICES FOR WINES RATED 90+

Wine	Score	Price
Diemersdal 2025	<b>95 – BEST OVERALL</b>	R165
Cape Discovery 2024 (Stellenview)	<b>95</b>	R90
Hazendal 2025	<b>95</b>	R409
Mellish Family Vineyards Klipmynpad 2024	<b>94</b>	R240
Bellevue 2023	<b>93</b>	R115
Zonnebloem 2024	<b>93</b>	R149
Koelenbosch 2023 (Koelenhof)	<b>92</b>	R109
Du Toitskloof Granite 2024	<b>92</b>	R165
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Promenade 2024	<b>92</b>	R189
Illimis 2025	<b>92</b>	R325
Diemersdal Reserve 2022	92	R250
Flagstone Truth Tree 2023	91	R178
Cape Five Reserve 2023 (Stellenview)	91	R180
Perdeberg The Dryland Collection Resolve 2024	91	R199
Diemersdal Reserve 2024	91	R220
Beaumont Jackals River 2023	91	R330
Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2023 (Koelenhof)	91	R400
Tokara Limited Release 2023	91	R440
Du Toitskloof 2024	90	R100
Perdeberg The Vineyard Collection 2024	90	R120
Nederburg The Winemasters 2024	90	R125
Arebeidsgenot 2024	90	R160
Diemersdal Reserve 2023	90	R235
Koelenbosch Director's Reserve 2023 (Koelenhof)	90	R320
Bellingham The Bernard Series Bushvine Pinotage 2023	90	R322
Grand Vin De Stellenbosch 2024 (Le Grand Domaine)	90	R325
Aaldering Estate 2024	90	R350
De Grendel Amandelboord 2023	90	R370
Diemersdal The Journal 2021	90	R550
Carlo 2023 (Stellenbosch Family Wines)	90	R580

## COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Aaldering Estate 2024	Stellenbosch	90
Africa Five 2024 (Stellenview)	Western Cape	88
Arebeidsgenot 2024	Swartland	90
Beaumont Jackals River 2023	Bot River, Walker Bay	91
<b>Bellevue 2023</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>93</b>
Bellingham The Bernard Series Bush Vine Pinotage 2023	Coastal Region	90
<b>Cape Discovery 2024 (Stellenview)</b>	<b>Western Cape</b>	<b>95</b>
Cape Five Reserve 2023 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	91
Carlo 2023 (Stellenbosch Family Wines)	Stellenbosch	90
De Grendel Amandelboord 2023	Cape Town	90
<b>Diemersdal 2025</b>	<b>Cape Town</b>	<b>95</b>
Diemersdal Reserve 2022	Durbanville	92
Diemersdal Reserve 2023	Durbanville	90
Diemersdal Reserve 2024	Durbanville	<b>91</b>
Diemersdal The Journal 2021	Durbanville	90
Diemersdal The Journal 2022	Durbanville	89
Diemersdal The Journal 2024	Durbanville	89
Du Toitskloof 2024	Western Cape	90
<b>Du Toitskloof Granite 2024</b>	<b>Swartland</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Promenade 2024</b>	<b>Durbanville, Cape Town</b>	<b>92</b>
Flagstone Truth Tree 2023	Coastal Region	91
Flagstone Writer's Block 2022	Coastal Region	88
Giant Periwinkle Camel Spider 2024	Cape Agulhas	89
Grand Vin De Stellenbosch 2024 (Le Grand Domaine)	Stellenbosch	90
Great Five Reserve 2021 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	88
Groot Phesantekraal Berliet 2023	Cape Town	88
<b>Hazendal 2025</b>	<b>Bottelary</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Illimis 2025</b>	<b>Polkadraai Hills</b>	<b>92</b>
Kaapzicht Skraalhans 2025	Stellenbosch	89
KFK Reserve 2022 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	87
<b>Koelenbosch 2023 (Koelenhof)</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>92</b>
Koelenbosch Director's Reserve 2023 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	90
<b>Mellish Family Vineyards Klipmynpad 2024</b>	<b>Durbanville, Cape Town</b>	<b>94</b>
Nederburg The Winemasters 2024	Western Cape	90
Perdeberg The Dryland Collection Resolve 2024	Coastal Region	91
Perdeberg The Vineyard Collection 2024	Paarl	90
Simonsig Pick of the Bunch 2024	Stellenbosch	89
Springfontein Daredevils' Drums Mashes Extreme 2022	Springfontein Rim	88
Stellenbosch 1679 Old Vine 2023 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	91
Tokara Limited Release 2023	Stellenbosch	91
Villa Esposto 2024 (Klawer)	Olifants River	<b>87</b>
Welbedacht Old Bush Vine 2023	Groenberg	88
Windmeul 2024	Coastal Region	88

Windmeul Reserve 2022	Paarl	89
<b>Zonnebloem 2024</b>	<b>Stellenbosch</b>	<b>93</b>



DURBANVILLE HILLS



MELLISH FAMILY VINEYARDS



HAZENDAL



DU TOITSKLOOF



ILLIMIS



STELLENVIEW



KOELENHOF

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