



Prescient

SAUVIGNON BLANC
REPORT 2022

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2022

Winemag.co.za is set to produce a series of category reports over the course of the year with multinational financial services company Prescient as sponsor. Each report will be 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 and scores on the 100-point quality scale for all wines entered. Upon release, 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 two trusted colleagues, namely Ndaba Dube, Food & Beverage Operations Manager at the President Hotel, Cape Town and Spencer Fondaumiere, chairman of the South African Sommelier Association.

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

For this Sauvignon Blanc Report sponsored multinational financial services company Prescient, there were 94 entries from 71 producers with 47 (50%) rating 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. In addition, there were 10 examples of single-variety Semillon and 18 Sauv-Sem blends entered.

In contrast with previous reports, the distinction between unwooded and wooded Sauvignon Blanc was dispensed with on the basis that an ever-increasing number of producers at the top-end are choosing to use some sort of alternative to stainless steel tank during fermentation and maturation, whether partially or entirely, to build complexity in the final wine.

The addition of Semillon as a tool to add an extra dimension to straight Sauvignon Blanc is also more and more commonplace. As mentioned above, there were 18 wines specifically labelled as blends (Sauvignon Blanc not necessarily the majority component) that were entered but out of the single-variety Top 10, three contain a portion of Semillon amounting to 15% or less as allowed by Wine and Spirit Board regulations.

Yes, Sauvignon Blanc has become ubiquitous on account of how readily it makes aromatic, crisp but ultimately unchallenging wines intended to have mass appeal and yes, these are probably not worth consideration by highly involved wine enthusiasts but to dismiss the variety out of hand is short-sighted as this Report reveals.

As ever, Sauvignon Blanc responds well to cooler climate conditions, whether this be due to vineyards being located close to the sea or at altitude - Constantia, Darling, Durbanville, the Cape South Coast plus certain locations in Stellenbosch all produced wines that showed well.

When it comes to winemaking, meanwhile, there is plenty of freethinking in evidence. The Diemersdal team, for instance, saw fit to employ spontaneous fermentation and four days of skin contact before maturation lasting 11 months in older oak when it came to Wildhorse Shoe 2021. Brad Paton of Buitenverwachting used a selection of five yeast strains in creating his 2022. And there's very little that's predictable or formulaic about the other top-performing wines.

Sauvignon Blanc, when sited correctly and then treated with both care and imagination in the cellar, is producing wines that are just as intense and complex as the best examples of Chardonnay or Chenin Blanc. In particular, the perennial criticism of Sauvignon Blanc that its acidity is too hard and aggressive is now invalidated by wines that have the fruit weight to provide balance. In addition, wines premised on having a very high pyrazine count (the chemical compounds that gives Sauvignon Blanc its "green" character and measured in nanograms per litre) to make an impression seem to be increasingly out of fashion. In their place are wines of far more nuance and detail.

Suffice to say, being a Sauvignon Blanc naysayer no longer identifies you as hip and unconventional but rather it's a sign of being dogmatically closed minded if not radically out of touch.

The average price of the 47 wines to rate 90-plus is R149 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R194. Offering the best quality relative to price is Robertson 2022 with a rating of 92 and selling for R65 a bottle.

Kershaw Wines, as producer of the Sauv-Sem blend judged best overall, wins a new 225-litre Sylvain Blanc barrel worth €941 (the equivalent of R16 075 at the time of writing) from Tonnellerie Sylvain.

SAUVIGNON BLANC - TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Cape Point Vineyards Reserve 2020

Price: R220

Total Production: 9 000 bottles Abv 14%

Fermented and matured for 15 months in older oak. Complex aromatics with notes of hay, fynbos, citrus, white peach and a hint of blackcurrant while the palate shows great fruit purity matched by punchy acidity, the finish long and savoury. Layered and long, this shows great refinement.



Diemersdal Wild Horseshoe 2021

Price: R265

Total Production: 1 300 bottles Abv 13.34%

Four days of skin contact. Spontaneously fermented and matured for 11 months in older 500-litre barrels. Peach, blackcurrant, dried herbs and spice on the nose while the palate is rich and thick textured – good fruit definition and well-integrated acidity before a savoury finish.



Buitenverwachting 2022

Price: R120

Total Production: 220 000 bottles Abv 13.37%

Fermented using a selection of five yeast strains. A complex nose with top notes of flowers and fynbos plus a little flinty reduction before pear, peach and lime. The palate, meanwhile, has good fruit concentration and zippy acidity before a dry finish. Focused and elegant, this wine has a lovely energy about it.





Iona
Elgin Highlands
Wild Ferment
2021

Price: R240

Total Production: 3 400 bottles Abv 13.2%

Spontaneously fermented and matured for 11 months in older 500-litre barrels before a further three months in tank. Exotic aromatics of hay, dried herbs, peach, blackcurrant and pineapple plus some leesy complexity while the palate is rich with tangy acidity and a savoury finish. A dramatic wine.



Kleine Zalze
Family Reserve
2021

Price: R260

Total Production: 5 143 bottles Abv 13.66%

Grapes from Darling and Durbanville. 50% fermented in new 400-litre barrels, while maturation lasted six months. A pronounced herbal note plus citrus, peach and some leesy complexity on the nose while the palate is rich and forceful – dense fruit plays off against tangy acidity before a savoury finish.



Mellish
Family Vineyards
Bakenkop Blanc Fumé
2020

Price: R220

Total Production: 1 068 bottles Abv 12.6%

90% fermented and matured in 300-litre barrels of which a third were new and 10% fermented on the skins for eight days. White peach, blackcurrant and fennel plus vanilla and some waxy character on the nose while the palate has real presence with good fruit density and coated acidity – rich and thick textured.





The Smuggler's Boot 2021 (Richard Kershaw Wines)

Price: R195

Total Production: 2 157 bottles Abv 13.37%

88% Sauvignon Blanc, 12% Semillon. Grapes from Elgin and Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge. Some flinty reduction before peach and blackcurrant on the nose while the palate shows dense fruit and well-integrated acidity before a gently savoury finish. It's a wine with plenty of power but also nuance.



Zevenwacht 2022

Price: R105

Total Production: 26 666 bottles Abv 13.87%

90% Sauvignon Blanc, 10% Semillon. Five months of lees contact. A herbal top note before citrus, peach, green melon and some yeasty character. The palate is rich and thick textured with plenty of flavour and well-integrated acidity.



Zorgvliet Single Vineyard 2021

Price: R130

Total Production: 2 150 bottles Abv 13.73%

Grapes from a 3.2ha block on steeply terraced, south-facing slope. 10% fermented in second-fill 500-litre barrels. Citrus blossom, herbs, lime and white peach on the nose while the palate is well balanced with pure fruit counteracting snappy acidity. Fleshy in texture with some white pepper bite to the finish.





Groot Constantia 2022

Price: R185

Total Production: 38 420 bottles Abv 13.33%

93% Sauvignon Blanc and 7% Semillon. Four months on the lees. Pretty aromatics with top notes of flowers and herbs before white peach, lime and a hint of blackcurrant. The palate is well balanced – pure fruit and a creamy texture, the acidity nicely integrated. Layers of flavour, the finish long and dry.



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NITIDA

SEMILLON - TOP 3 TASTING NOTES



Wildeberg
Semillon
2021

Price: R360

Total Production: 4 498 bottles Abv 13%

Grapes from Franschhoek old vines. Spontaneously fermented in new and older oak. A wonderfully complex nose showing top notes of thatch and fynbos before citrus and peach while the palate has a dense core of fruit, bright acidity and a saline finish. Precise and detailed, this is very classy.



Nitida
Semillon
2021

Price: R130

Total Production: 4 400 bottles Abv 14.47%

70% of the juice fermented in French oak, 80% new. Maturation lasted six months. Top notes of floral perfume and hay before citrus, stone fruit, spice and some bee's wax. The palate is rich and broad with great texture and moderate acidity, the finish gently savoury. Full of flavour.



Benguela Cove
Catalina Semillon
2019

Price: R650

Total Production: 1 400 bottles Abv 13.8%

Matured for nine months in 500-litre barrels, 35% new. A hint of reduction before citrus, peach and blackcurrant and a touch of herbs. Excellent fruit expression matched by a great line of acidity, the finish long and dry. Not too lean and very well balanced.





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SAUV-SEM BLENDS - TOP 5 TASTING NOTES



Kershaw
GPS Series
Cape South Coast
Semillon Sauvignon Blanc
2020

Price: R395

Total Production: 3 950 bottles Abv 13.22%

52% Semillon from Hemel-en-Aarde, 48% Sauvignon Blanc from Elgin. Semillon finished fermentation in barrels of which two-thirds were new, the Sauvignon Blanc fermented in tank. Maturation lasted four months. Citrus, white peach and blackcurrant on the nose while the palate has a dense core of fruit and punchy acidity before a dry finish. A seamless wine with just the right amount of weight and texture.



Wade Bales Regional Series
Constantia White
2020

Price: R250

Total Production: 3 787 bottles Abv 13.83%

78% Sauvignon Blanc, 22% Semillon. Grapes from Beau Constantia, Buitenverwachting, Constantia Glen, Constantia Royale, Constantia Uitsig, Groot Constantia, Klein Constantia and Steenberg. Fermented and matured for seven months in barrel. A top note of fynbos before lime, naartjie, white peach and blackcurrant on the nose while the palate has pure fruit and racy acidity before a finish that is long and dry. Great complexity and energy.



Coterie by Wildeberg
Semillon & Sauvignon Blanc
2020

Price: R295

Total Production: 15 528 bottles Abv 14%

80% Semillon, 20% Sauvignon Blanc. Semillon was fermented in 600-litre French and Austrian oak of which 36% was new, while the Sauvignon Blanc was fermented in stainless-steel tanks, maturation lasting 10 months altogether. A top note of hay before stone fruit and blackcurrant plus some waxiness on the nose while the palate is rich and smooth textured with well-integrated acidity and a savoury finish.





Constantia Glen Two 2020

Price: R295

Total Production: 15 528 bottles Abv 14%

71% Sauvignon Blanc, 29% Semillon. Fermented and matured for eight months in 600-litre barrels (French and Austrian oak as well as acacia) plus a few clay amphorae. Hay, herbs, lime and white peach on the nose. Seemingly light bodied and rather taut – pure fruit and zippy acidity before a saline finish. Precisely made.



Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve White 2019

Price: R525

Total Production: 2 756 bottles Abv 13.26%

60% Sauvignon Blanc, 40% Semillon. Fermented and matured for 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Herbs and sea-breeze before yellow apple and stone fruit plus some waxy character on the nose while the palate is rich and broad but not short of freshness thanks to a nice line of acidity. Well structured with a savoury finish.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Cape Point Vineyards Reserve 2020	94	R220
Diemersdal Wild Horseshoe 2021	94	R265
Zevenwacht 2022	93	R105
Buitenverwachting 2022	93	R120
Zorgvliet Single Vineyard 2021	93	R130
The Smuggler's Boot 2021 (Richard Kershaw Wines)	93	R195
Mellish Family Vineyards Bakenkop Blanc Fumé 2020	93	R220
Iona Elgin Highlands Wild Ferment 2021	93	R240
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2021	93	R260
Groot Constantia 2022	92	R185
De Grendel CWG Wooded 2021	92	N/A
Robertson 2022	92	R65
Rietvallei 2022	92	R100
DeMorgenzon DMZ 2022	92	R125
Benguela Cove Estate 2021	92	R170
Diemersdal The Journal 2021	92	R230
Zevenwacht 7even 2022	91	R58
Groot Phesantekraal 2022	91	R94
Nitida 2022	91	R110
Cape Collective Seeboei 2021	91	R115
Neil Ellis Groenekloof 2021	91	R125
Elgin Vintners 2022	91	R135
Fryer's Cove 2022	91	R139
Land's End Cape Agulhas 2021	91	R150
Zevenwacht 360° 2020	91	R170
Groote Post Seasalter 2022	91	R172
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2021	91	R200
Marianne 2021	91	R245
De Wet 2022	90	R58.50
John B 2022 (Rietvallei)	90	R60
Koelenbosch 2022 (Koelenhof)	90	R75
Cilmor Winemaker's Selection 2021	90	R85
David Finlayson 2022	90	R85
Bellingham Homestead 2022	90	R100
Boplaas Bobbejaanberg 2022	90	R105
De Grendel 2022	90	R110
Groote Post 2022	90	R116
Nomada 2022	90	R120
Boschendal 1685 2022	90	R125
Paul Wallace Little Flirt 2021	90	R125
Constantia Uitsig 2022	90	R130
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2022	90	R136
Eikendal 2021	90	R170
Nitida Wild Child 2021	90	R170
Maastricht The Contour 2021	90	R180
Zevenwacht Z Collection 2021	90	R280
Beau Constantia Pierre 2021	90	R295

SAUVIGNON BLANC COMPLETE SCORES:A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Aaldering 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Allée Bleue Darling 2021	Darling	88
Altydgedacht 2022	Cape Town	89
Backsberg Hillside 2022	Coastal Region	89
Beau Constantia Pierre 2021	Constantia	90
Bellevue 2022	Stellenbosch	88
Bellingham Homestead 2022	Cape Town	90
Benguela Cove Estate 2021	Walker Bay	92
Benguela Cove Vinography 2020	Walker Bay	88
Black Elephant Vintners Two Dogs, a Peacock and a Horse 2022	Western Cape	89
Boplaas Bobbejaanberg 2022	Coastal Region	90
Boschendal 1685 2022	Cape Coast	90
Bruce Jack Reserve Collection 2021	Western Cape	89
Buitenverwachting 2022	Constantia	93
Cape Collective Seeboei 2021	Western Cape	91
Cape Point Vineyards Noordhoek 2021	Cape Town	89
Cape Point Vineyards Reserve 2020	Cape Town	94
Christiena Trousseau 2021 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	89
Cilmor Winemaker's Selection 2021	Worcester	90
Cilmor Wooded Limited Edition 2021	Worcester	89
Constantia Uitsig 2022	Constantia	90
David Finlayson 2022	Stellenbosch	90
De Grendel 2022	Cape Town	90
De Grendel CWG Wooded 2021		92
De Grendel Koetshuis 2021	Western Cape	87
Delaire Graff Coastal Cuvée 2022	Coastal Region	88
DeMorgenzon DMZ 2022	Stellenbosch	92
De Wet 2022	Worcester	90
Diemersdal Eight Rows 2022	Cape Town	89
Diemersdal The Journal 2021	Durbanville	92
Diemersdal Wild Horseshoe 2021	Durbanville	94
Douglas Green Vineyard Friends 2021	Western Cape	88
Durbanville Hills Collectors Reserve The Cape Mist 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	88
Eikendal 2021	Elgin	90
Elgin Vintners 2022	Elgin	91
Fat Bastard 2022	Robertson	89
Franschhoek Cellar Statue de Femme 2022	Western Cape	88
Fryer's Cove 2022	Cape West Coast	91
Fryer's Cove Bamboes Bay 2021	Bamboes Bay	87
Great Expectations 2022 (Goedverwacht)	Robertson	87
Groot Constantia 2022	Constantia	92
Groote Post 2022	Darling	90
Groote Post Seasalter 2022	Darling	91

Groot Phesantekraal 2022	Cape Town	91
Iona Elgin Highlands 2021	Elgin	89
Iona Elgin Highlands Wild Ferment 2021	Elgin	93
Jakkalsvlei 2022	Herbertsdale	88
John B 2022 (Rietvallei)	Robertson	90
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2020	Western Cape	89
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2021	Western Cape	93
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2022	Western Cape	90
Koelenbosch 2022 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	90
Koelenhof Koelenhoffer 2022	Stellenbosch	88
Land's End Cape Agulhas 2021	Cape Agulhas	91
Land's End Cape South Coast 2020	Cape South Coast	89
Le Bonheur Blanc Fumé 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Leipzig 2022	Western Cape	85
Le Sueur Wild Card 2022	Klein Karoo	88
Maastricht The Contour 2021	Cape Town	90
Marianne 2021	Western Cape	91
Mellish Family Vineyards Bakenkop Blanc Fumé 2020	Durbanville Cape Town	93
Mooiplaas 2022	Stellenbosch	88
Nederburg The Winemasters 2022	Western Cape	88
Neil Ellis Groenekloof 2021	Groenekloof	91
Nitida 2022	Durbanville Cape Town	91
Nitida Golden Orb 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	88
Nitida Wild Child 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	90
Nomada 2022	Durbanville	90
Oak Valley Fountain of Youth 2022	Elgin	87
Org de Rac 2022	Western Cape	89
Paul Wallace Little Flirt 2021	Elgin	90
Rickety Bridge Paulina's Reserve 2021	Western Cape	91
Ridgeback Lion Hound 2022	Paarl	89
Rietvallei 2022	Robertson	92
Robertson 2022	Robertson	92
Saxenburg Private Collection 2022	Polkadraai Hills Stellenbosch	91
Silver Myn 2022 (Zorgvliet)	Stellenbosch	89
Tangle Tree Tropical 2022	Robertson	87
The Fledge & Co. Jikken Bareru 2022	Elgin and Stellenbosch	87
The Smuggler's Boot 2021 (Richard Kershaw Wines)	Cape South Coast	93
TSW 2021 (Trizanne Signature Wines)	Cape South Coast	89
Usana The Doctor's Journey 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Van Loveren 2022	Robertson	87
Vergelegen 2022	Stellenbosch	89
Vergelegen Reserve 2020	Stellenbosch	89

Warwick The First Lady 2022	Western Cape	89
Warwick Professor Black 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Waterford Elgin 2021	Elgin	89
Wildeberg Terroirs 2021	Stellenbosch	89
Zevenwacht 360° 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Zevenwacht 7even 2022	Stellenbosch	91
Zevenwacht 2022	Stellenbosch	93
Zevenwacht Z Collection 2021	Stellenbosch	90
Zorgvliet Single Vineyard 2021	Banghoek	93

SEMILLON COMPLETE SCORES:A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Belle Rebelle A Bird in the Hand 2021	Breedekloof	90
Benguela Cove Catalina 2019	Walker Bay	93
Constantia Uitsig 2021	Constantia	89
Elgin Vintners Mirra 2021	Elgin	91
Nitida 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	94
Rickety Bridge The Pilgrimage Old Vine 2019	Franschhoek	91
Vergelegen Reserve 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Vrede en Lust Barrique 2019	Elgin	93
Wildeberg 2021	Franschhoek	94
Zorgvliet 2019	Banghoek	87

SAUVIGNON BLANC - SEMILLON BLENDS COMPLETE SCORES:A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Cilmor Winemaker's Selection 2021	Worcester	90
Constantia Glen Two 2020	Constantia	91
Constantia Uitsig Natura Vista 2021	Constantia	90
Coterie by Wildeberg Semillon & Sauvignon Blanc 2020	Coastal Region	94
Coterie by Wildeberg Semillon & Sauvignon Blanc 2021	Coastal Region	90
Delaire Graff White Reserve 2020	Western Cape	91
Durbanville Hills The Tangram 2020	Durbanville Cape Town	90
Elgin Vintners The Century 2021	Elgin	89
Groot Constantia Gouverneurs Reserve 2019	Constantia	91
Kershaw GPS Series Cape South Coast Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 2020	Cape South Coast	95
Nitida Coronata Integration 2021	Durbanville Cape Town	89
Saxenburg Limited Release 2021	Polkadraai Hills Stellenbosch	90
Strandveld Adamastor 2020	Elim	87
Tokara Director's Reserve 2019	Stellenbosch	91
Trizanne Signature Wines Reserve Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2020	Elim	91
Vergelegen G.V.B 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Wade Bales Regional Series Constantia White 2020	Constantia	95
Zorgvliet Simoné 2020	Banghoek	91

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