



Prescient

CABERNET SAUVIGNON
REPORT 2022

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2022

Winemag.co.za produced a series of category reports over the course of the year with multinational financial services company Prescient as sponsor. Each report was 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 wine writer Malu Lambert and James Pietersen, CEO 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

The 2019 vintage is generally considered challenging, the harvest initially looking promising with favourable weather conditions contributing to excellent grape analyses up until the end of February, but unusually cold, rainy weather arrived in March which made for slow ripening.

Even so, wines from this vintage showed remarkably well in the tasting for this year's Cabernet Sauvignon Report – Cab, of course, is a late variety and generally seems to have delivered elegant wines, lower sugars leading to lower alcohols.

There were 64 entries from 51 producers in total, with 32 (50%) rated 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale. 17 entries came from the 2019 vintage, 13 of these rated 90-plus and when considering the Top 10 specifically, 2019 made up seven of them. As for the vintages either side, wines from 2018 in many instances are starting to look quite evolved and probably should not be kept for much longer while those from 2020, by contrast, tend to appear youthful and unresolved.

With respect to which growing area predominates, Stellenbosch again had the most wines in the Top 10 with six, followed by two multi-site blends from Nederburg and then Voor Paardeberg and Walker Bay with one each.

Though the 2019 growing season was difficult, with the Autumn rains presenting growers with the problems of rot and uneven ripeness, those who managed to prevail seem to have made particularly pure and precise wines. Judging phenolic ripeness (the flavour and texture imparted by tannins) has always been key in making great Cab but it seems producers are becoming more and more astute avoiding both wines that are either unnecessarily astringent or too soft and “squishy”. Equally, how maceration (the extraction of colour and tannin) is handled in the cellar also seems defter.

The average price of the 32 wines to rate 90-plus is R303 a bottle and of the Top 10 is R353. Offering the best quality relative to price is Maastricht 2020 with a rating of 91 and selling for R130 a bottle.

Koelenhof, as producer of the wine judged best overall, wins a 2BFermControl organic fermentation kit worth approximately R11 000.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Stellenbosch 1679 2019 (Koelenhof)

Price: R375

Total Production: 1 780 bottles Abv 13.63%

24 months in 300-litre French oak, 100% new. Compelling aromatics of red and black berries, flowers, herbs and pencil shavings. Great fruit definition, bright acidity and fine tannins, the finish super-dry. This has depth but also verve – pure, poised and wonderfully well structured.



Cavalli 2019

Price: R250

Total Production: 7 800 bottles Abv 14.12%

Matured for 24 months in French oak, approximately 30% new. Complex aromatics of red and black berries, vanilla and oak spice with some subtle notes of violets and herbs in the background. The palate is medium bodied with juicy fruit and good grip, the finish gently savoury.



Neil Ellis Jonkershoek Valley 2018

Price: R520

Total Production: 12 000 bottles Abv 14.5%

Matured for 18 months in French oak, 100% new. Enticing aromatics of oystershell, red and black berries, floral perfume, some leafiness plus hints of vanilla and oak spice. The palate is medium bodied and taut – good fruit definition, fresh acidity and appropriately firm tannins. Layers of flavour.





Vondeling Barrel Selection 2019

Price: R175

Total Production: 13 500 bottles Abv 13.52%

Matured for 16 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, one-third new. Red and black berries, some cigar box, vanilla and oak spice on the nose. The palate is dense and smooth textured in the best sense – pure fruit, bright acidity and firm but fine tannins. Harmonious and long.



Benguela Cove Estate 2019

Price: R295

Total Production: 6 400 bottles Abv 13.97%

Matured for 20 months in 300-litre barrels, 40% new. Red and black berries, a floral note and fresh herbs on the nose. The palate is medium bodied with good clarity of fruit, lovely freshness and fine tannins. Plenty of detail, the finish long and savoury.



Delaire Graff Reserve 2019

Price: R875

Total Production: 5 000 bottles Abv 14.5%

Matured for 16 months in French oak, 80% new. Red and black berries, floral perfume and some leafiness on the nose while the palate is sumptuous and broad with creamy tannins, the finish gently savoury. Plush but very well handled.





Ernie Els Major Series 2018

Price: R250

Total Production: 30 000 bottles Abv 14.38%

Matured for 17 months in 300-litre French oak barrels, 20% new. Dark berries, violets, fennel and pencil shavings on the nose. The palate, meanwhile, is powerful – excellent fruit density, bright acidity and firm tannins that make for a long, dry finish.



Nederburg The Manor House 2019

Price: R220

Total Production: 84 025 bottles Abv 14.69%

Grapes sourced from across the Western Cape. Matured for 25 months in French and American oak, partially new. Red and black berries, some attractive herbal character, cola, pencil shavings and oak spice on the nose. The palate is plush with good depth of fruit, bright acidity and smooth tannins. Plenty of power.



Nederburg Private Bin Two Centuries 2018

Price: R395

Total Production: 3 000 bottles Abv 14.67%

Grapes from Philadelphia and Simondium. Matured for 28 months in French oak, 100% new. Red and black berries, violets, herbs, pencil shavings and toast on the nose. The palate is big and bold – good depth of fruit, bright acidity and nicely grippy tannins, the finish long and savoury.





Zorgvliet 2019

Price: R170

Total Production: 9 939 bottles Abv 14.19%

Matured for 22 months in French oak, 21% new. Rather primary on the nose at this stage with notes of red and black berries, violets as well as vanilla. The palate is full bodied but balanced. Rich but not short of freshness, smooth in texture, the finish nicely dry. Tightly wound, this needs time in bottle.



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

Wine	Score	Price
Stellenbosch 1679 2019 (Koelenhof)	96	R375
Vondeling Barrel Selection 2019	95	R175
Cavalli 2019	95	R250
Neil Ellis Jonkershoek Valley 2018	95	R520
Nederburg The Manor House 2019	94	R220
Ernie Els Major Series 2018	94	R250
Benguela Cove Estate 2019	94	R295
Delaire Graff Reserve 2019	94	R875
Zorgvliet 2019	93	R170
Nederburg Private Bin Two Centuries 2018	93	R395
Peter Falke PF 2019	93	R250
Le Grand Domaine Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2020	93	R300
La Petite Ferme 2019	92	R265
David Finlayson GS 2020	92	R550
Maastricht 2020	91	R130
Glenelly Glass Collection 2020	91	R150
Joostenberg Philip Albert 2018	91	R195
Bellevue The Reserve Collection 2020	91	R230
Stellenbosch Reserve Ou Hoofgebou 2020	91	R280
Plaisir de Merle 2018	91	R280
Zevenwacht Z Collection Reserve 2020	91	R315
Peter Falke Keilani 2018	91	R750
Groenland 2018	90	R133
Cape Five Reserve 2019 (Stellenview)	90	R155
Dornier Equanimity 2018	90	R192
Journey's End V4 2017	90	R198
Delheim 2019	90	R250
Kruger Family Reserve 2019 (Stellenview)	90	R250
Vergenoegd Löw Lara 2020	90	R280
Groot Constantia 2019	90	R283
Kaapzicht Skemerlig 2020	90	R300
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2018	90	R435

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Alto 2018	Stellenbosch	86
Babylonstoren 2020	Simonsberg-Paarl	89
Bartinney 2018	Banghoek Stellenbosch	88
Bellevue The Reserve Collection 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Benguela Cove Estate 2019	Walker Bay	94
Beyerskloof Eerste Ry 2018	Stellenbosch	87
Beyerskloof Eerste Ry 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Blaauwklippen 2020	Stellenbosch	87
Boschendal 2018	Stellenbosch	87
Brampton Roxton Black 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Cape Five Reserve 2019 (Stellenview)	Coastal Region	90
Cavalli 2019	Stellenbosch	95
Christiena Trousseau 2020 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	88
David Finlayson GS 2020	Stellenbosch	92
Delaire Graff Reserve 2019	Banghoek	94
Delheim 2019	Stellenbosch	90
Diemersdal The Journal 2020	Durbanville	89
Dornier Equanimity 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Du Toitskloof 2020	Western Cape	87
Ernie Els Major Series 2018	Stellenbosch	94
Glenelly Glass Collection 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Groenland 2018	Bottelary Stellenbosch	90
Groot Constantia 2019	Constantia Cape Town	90
Groot Pheasantekraal 2021	Cape Town	89
Jakob's Vineyards 2018	Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge	87
Joostenberg Philip Albert 2018	Paarl	91
Journey's End V4 2017	Stellenbosch	90
Kaapzicht Skemerlig 2020	Bottelary Stellenbosch	90
Kleine Zalze Cellar Selection 2020	Coastal Region	89
Kleine Zalze Family Reserve 2018	Stellenbosch	90
Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection 2020	Stellenbosch	88
Knorhoek 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Kruger Family Reserve 2019 (Stellenview)	Stellenbosch	90
La Bri Limited Release 2018	Franschhoek	88
La Petite Ferme 2019	Franschhoek	92
Le Grand Domaine Grand Vin de Stellenbosch 2020	Stellenbosch	93
Le Grand Domaine The Pledge Our Stellie 2020	Stellenbosch	89
Maastricht 2020	Cape Town	91
Mischa 2021	Mischa	89
Mooiplaas 2022	Stellenbosch	89
Mooiplaas Tabakland Reserve 2020	Stellenbosch	89

Mountain Ridge 2020	Breedekloof	89
Nederburg Private Bin R163 2018	Paarl	89
Nederburg Private Bin Two Centuries 2018	Coastal Region	93
Nederburg The Manor House 2019	Western Cape	94
Nederburg The Winemasters 2020	Western Cape	88
Neethlingshof 2019	Stellenbosch	84
Neethlingshof 1802 2018	Stellenbosch	86
Neil Ellis Jonkershoek Valley Stellenbosch 2018	Jonkershoek Valley	95
Peter Falke Keilani 2019	Stellenbosch	91
Peter Falke PF 2019	Stellenbosch	93
Plaisir de Merle 2018	Simonsberg-Paarl	91
Rietvallei 2018	Robertson	88
Rust en Vrede 2020	Stellenbosch	87
Spier Seaward 2020	Coastal Region	89
Stellenbosch 1679 2019 (Koelenhof)	Stellenbosch	96
Stellenbosch Reserve Ou Hoofgebou 2020	Stellenbosch	91
Stellenview 2018	Stellenbosch	88
Van Loveren 2021	Robertson	88
Vergenoegd Löw Lara 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Vondeling Barrel Selection 2019	Voor-Paardeberg	95
Waterford 2018	Stellenbosch	89
Zevenwacht Z Collection Reserve 2020	Polkadraai Hills/Banghoek	91
Zorgvliet 2019	Banghoek	93

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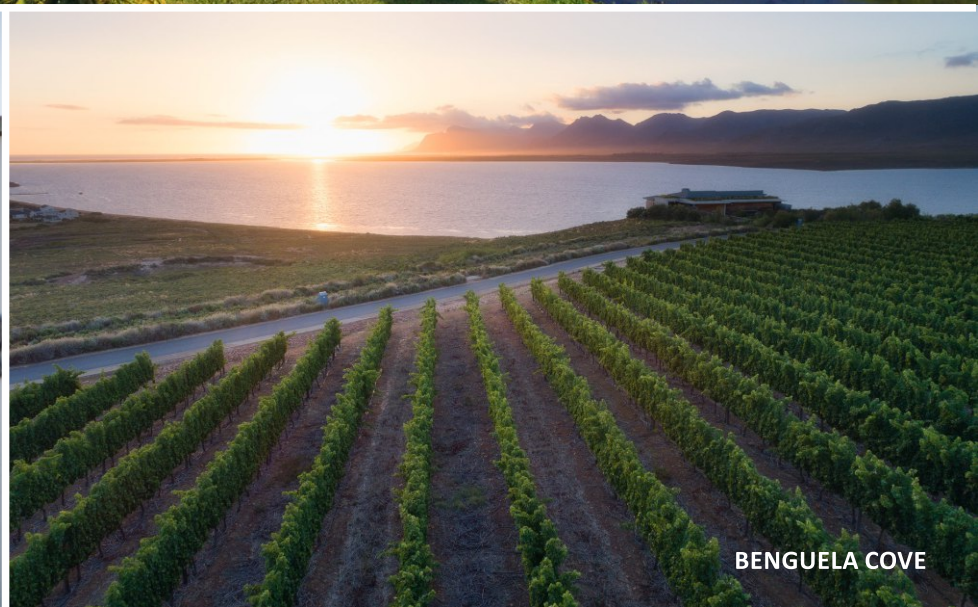
NEDERBURG



ZORGVLIET



KOELENHOF



BENGUELA COVE