



KAPWEINE

The Home of South African Wines

www.kapweine.ch

KapWeine
Frankie's Wine Selection SA
Rütibüelstrasse 17
CH-8820 Wädenswil

Telefon +41 (0)43 888 21 21
Telefax +41 (0)43 888 21 22
Mail info@kapweine.ch
MwSt-Nr. CHE-107.570.196

Öffnungszeiten Büro/Showroom
Montag – Freitag 9.00 – 18.00
Donnerstag 9.00 – 20.00
Samstag 10.00 – 16.00

Stephen Tanzer Südafrika Report 2013

Stephen Tanzer ist einer der bekanntesten Weinjournalisten der USA. Lesen Sie hier seinen aktuellen Degustations Bericht mit über 100 Weinen aus Südafrika, welche er mit 90 oder mehr Punkten bewertet hat. Ergänzend finden Sie ebenfalls eine weitere lange Liste mit Value Weinen, die bei gutem Preis-Genuss Verhältnis mit 87 bis 89 Punkten ausgezeichnet worden sind.

Etliche dieser Weine finden Sie bei uns im online shop unter www.kapweine.ch

Mehr Infos zu Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar:

<http://www.wineaccess.com/expert/tanzer/newhome.html>



The Best New Wines from South Africa > All Ratings

Stephen Tanzer's
INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR

In This Article...

[print this page](#)

[View All Ratings](#)

[Sort by Winery](#)

2010 Sadie Family Wines Columella Red Wine Swartland

(\$130) (syrah with some mourvedre and grenache): Good dark red. Knockout nose combines blueberry, mulberry, smoky raspberry, Asian spices, flinty minerality, coffee, leather and dusty herbs; showed an increasingly pinot-like perfume as it opened in the glass. Wonderfully aromatic in the mouth, with superb energy and lift to the juicy red berry, spice, floral and mineral flavors. Not a hugely fleshy wine but in vibrancy, complexity and inner-mouth perfume it transcends its category. Finishes with firm tannins and a whiplash of flavor. I'd like to taste this wine again in five or six years.

94

2012 Hamilton Russell Vineyards Chardonnay Hemel-en-Aarde

(\$32) Good full yellow. Wonderfully complex aromas of pear, wild herbs, sweet butter, smoke and tropical fruits; showed an iodiney minerality with air. Concentrated and harmonious but firm-edged, with brisk lemony acidity framing the very youthful flavors of stone fruits and minerals. Conveys a powerful impression of intensity without weight, like the best white Burgundies. Very young but smooth on the long, peach aftertaste. Outstanding potential here for a chardonnay that is often South Africa's best.

93(+?)

2009 Vilafonte Series M Paarl

(46% malbec, 32% merlot, 21% cabernet sauvignon and 1% cabernet franc): Full ruby-red. Deep, brooding aromas of cassis, black raspberry, licorice and minerals, complemented by a very ripe chocolatey quality. Rich, sweet and glossy on the palate, with a seamless texture and terrific chewy depth to the flavors of blackberry and spices. The quality of the vintage comes through loud and clear in this wine's velvety texture and density of material. The very long, slightly high-toned finish features noble tannins and lingering notes of spices, chocolate and minerals.

93

2009 Mvemve Raats MR de Compostella Red Wine Stellenbosch

(\$65) (25% each cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon and malbec, plus 12.5% each petit verdot and merlot): Bright ruby-red. Vibrant if laid-back aromas of blackberry, licorice, mocha, chocolate, graphite and pepper. Rich, plush and hugely concentrated, with a remarkably silky texture to the plum, dark berry and spice flavors. This classically dry, compellingly deep wine spreads out and builds on the finish, which features sound acidity and big, broad, dusty tannins. Delivers a rare combination of power and class.

93

2012 Vergelegen Sauvignon Blanc Reserve Schaapenberg Vineyard Stellenbosch

(\$26) Pale yellow. Reticent but precise aromas of lime blossom, pineapple, licorice, ginger, dusty stone and crushed mint. Densely packed, creamy and deep, with superb inner-mouth tension to the citrus zest, floral, mineral and *fynbos* flavors. Terrific depth of fruit here. Finishes with outstanding sappy length and a lingering grapefruit note.

93

2011 Vergelegen G.V.B. White Blend Stellenbosch

(\$40) (13% alcohol; this is the estate's flagship white wine, from semillon and sauvignon blanc): Bright, pale silver-yellow. Knockout nose melds lime blossom, grapefruit, ginger and white pepper. Dense, plush and rich, combining a distinctly refined, smooth texture with explosive inner-mouth lift and tensile strength. The very pure, perfumed, rising finish is like an infusion of dusty herbs and flowers. This makes the Schaapenberg sauvignon seem almost hard by comparison. G.V.B. stands for "grown, vinted and bottled" at the estate.

93(+?)

2010 Kanonkop Wine Estate Pinotage Simonsberg-Stellenbosch

(\$40) (from vines up to 58 years of age; 75% new oak, 25% second-fill barrels): Good bright medium ruby. Precise, vibrant aromas of blackberry, boysenberry, bitter chocolate and violet. Sweet, dense and fine-grained, offering superconcentrated dark fruit flavors with a smoky, almost roasted ripeness nicely buffered by superb acidity. Finishes rich, dry and long. Pinotage is not for everyone, but it doesn't get much better than this.

93

2011 Ken Forrester Wines Chenin Blanc The FMC Stellenbosch

Bright yellow-gold. Wild, musky, slightly high-toned aromas of apricot syrup, beeswax and dusty spices, plus a whiff of meat. Very rich and honeyed, with a slight sweetness (15 grams per liter) to the exotic apricot fruit salad and spice flavors. Wonderfully round, broad, tactile wine with little in the way of phenolic character on the back end. Harmonious acidity gives the wine grip and extends the spicy, honeyed, very long finish. (FMC stands for Forrester Meinert Chenin; Martin Meinert is Forrester's long-time winemaker.)

92

2010 Vins D'Orrance Syrah Cuvee Ameena Stellenbosch

Bright medium ruby. Perfumed, musky aromas of black raspberry, smoked meat, bacon fat and licorice. Sweet, supple and deep, with strong but well-integrated acidity giving definition to the dark fruit, smoked meat and chocolate flavors. Concentrated, plush syrah in a northern Rhone-like style. Finishes broad, smooth and very long, with suave tannins.

92

2012 Downes Family Vineyards Semillon Elgin Valley

(\$30) (100% barrel-fermented in once-used oak): Pale, green-tinged yellow. Knockout musky nose combines ginger, quinine, lime zest, cardamom and mint. Round on entry, then dense and concentrated in the middle, with a saline element giving the spice and citrus flavors a tactile feel that reminded me of an Old World version of this grape. Subtle, classy, smooth and dry, this sappy semillon really saturates the mouth and echoes on the aftertaste, without leaving any impression of weight.

92

2010 Mullineux Family Syrah Swartland

(\$33) Good dark red. Sexy aromas of raspberry, crushed stone, spices and herbs; I would have picked this blind as a northern Rhone syrah from granitic soil. Silky, sweet and perfumed on the palate, with subtly complex flavors of strawberry, blueberry, pepper and stone. Builds slowly and lingers long on the aromatic back end, which features very fine-grained tannins. I suspect this wonderfully subtle syrah will show more opulence with a few years in the cellar. By the way, this was the Platter Guide's (South Africa's leading wine guide) red wine of the year.

92(+?)

2010 Mullineux Family Syrah Schist Swartland

(\$128) Good dark red. Aromas of raspberry, smoky brown spices and green pepper lifted by a subtle floral topnote. Rich and serious if a bit youthfully clenched, with a restrained sweetness countered by penetrating peppery lift. Shows more thrust and power than the Granite example, as well as more obvious tannins that call for several years of aging. I look forward to following these fascinating wines.

92(+?)

2011 Mullineux Family White Blend Swartland

(\$28) (65% chenin blanc, 26% clairette and 9% viognier): Bright, pale yellow-gold. Highly nuanced aromas of honeycomb, oatmeal and dusty herbs. Silky, seamless and understated, offering lovely richness and depth to its flavors of yellow fruit, herbs and honey lifted by a hint of orange oil. Finishes very long and classically dry. This fascinating, subtle white blend needs at least a couple years of cellaring.

92

Priced from: **31.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Ernie Els Wines Engelbrecht-Els Vineyards Proprietor's Blend Stellenbosch

(\$40) (15% alcohol; 59% cabernet sauvignon, 20% shiraz, 6% merlot and 5% each cabernet franc, malbec and petit verdot): Bright red-ruby. Vibrant aromas of black cherry, blackberry, raspberry, licorice, mocha and chocolate oak, lifted by a violet topnote. Silky and plush if quite young, offering lovely creamy depth to its dark fruit and chocolate flavors. Impressively dense and long, with substantial but edge-free tannins. Still a tad warm and in need of time in bottle to settle down. But this blend boasts outstanding potential.

92(+?)

2009 Ernie Els Wines Signature Red Stellenbosch

(\$95) (60% cabernet sauvignon, 25% merlot and 5% each petit verdot, malbec and cabernet franc): Good full, bright red-ruby. Cassis and licorice aromas lifted by glossy new oak. Densely packed and juicy, with compelling sweetness to the intense flavors of dark berries, mocha and licorice. Really spreads out on the very long back end to saturate the palate, with the suave tannins reaching the front teeth. A beauty.

92(+?)

2011 Edgebaston Cabernet Sauvignon GS Stellenbosch

(\$65) (from a single vineyard with 50-year-old vines, cropped at two tons per acre): Bright red-ruby. Complex, mellow aromas of cassis, redcurrant, spices and woodsmoke. Rich and ripe but sharply delineated too, with concentrated red and darker berry flavors complicated by a subtle smoky quality. Offers a lovely sugar/acid balance and an absence of hard edges. The subtly complex finish features firm but smooth tannins and excellent rising length.

92

2010 Sadie Family Wines Palladius White Wine Swartland

(\$105) Bright yellow. Bright citrus and white peach fruit aromas are complicated by toffee, fig, honey, lichee, spring flowers and smoky minerality. Concentrated, tactile and deep but still a bit youthfully unyielding, showing considerable soil complexity and hints of smoke, oatmeal and spices to the fresh apricot fruit. Nut lush but chewy and dusty, with some CO₂ yet to be absorbed. Finishes quite ripe but with a hint of youthful bitterness. Fascinating flavors here, and still unwinding.

92

2007 Vergelegen G.V.B. Red Blend Stellenbosch

(\$80) Good bright, dark ruby. Superripe aromas of black raspberry, coffee liqueur, chocolate and mocha. Broad, concentrated and sweet, with flavors of dark berries, spices and cocoa powder complemented by salty minerality and sappy oak. Deeper and more tactile than the reserve cabernet and longer on the aftertaste, with subtle herb and mint notes contributing to an impression of lift. I'd give this another four or five years in the cellar before pulling the cork.

92(+?)

2009 A.A. Badenhorst Red Wine Swartland

(66% shiraz, 16% mourvedre, 14% grenache and 4% cinsault): Good full ruby-red. Highly complex, savory nose combines black raspberry, minerals, herbs, spices, dark chocolate and black olive. Plush, broad, saline and dry, with deep, mouthfilling flavors of raspberry, black olive, wild herbs and mocha. A wonderfully tactile, ripe blend with smooth tannins and lingering flavors of sexy red berries, pepper, herbs and spices. A superb showing.

92

2009 De Trafford Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$45) (15% alcohol): Bright ruby-red. Piquant aromas of cassis, tobacco, *fynbos* and woodsmoke, accented by flinty minerality and pepper. Densely packed and concentrated, with saline and herbal nuances adding interest to the black fruit and dark chocolate flavors. Finishes serious, suave and very long, with dusty, toothcoating, ripe tannins and lingering notes of tobacco and brushy herbs. An essence of Stellenbosch cabernet.

92

2009 Beyerskloof Pinotage Diesel Stellenbosch

(\$90) Good medium-dark red with ruby highlights. Reticent nose hints at fruitcake and woodsmoke. Then dense, plush and deep in the mouth, with wonderfully pliant flavors of red berries and spicecake complicated by saline and woodsmoke elements. And yet this pinotage conveys the impression of a very young wine. Really saturates the mouth with flavor on the long finish, which features very smooth, fine-grained tannins. Beyers Truter, who made outstanding pinotage for so many years at Kanonkop, still has the magic touch with this quintessential South African variety.

92

2011 De Morgenzon Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$35) Good full yellow. Pungent aromas and flavors of orange blossom, ginger, menthol and herbal oils. At once sweet and penetrating, with a glyceric middle palate leavened by sound acidity and strong spice character. Boasts terrific structure and lift for chenin. Finishes broad, dusty and very long. This would be great with ginger shrimp or sweet/spicy Thai cuisine. Proprietary Hylton Appelbaum has rigged up speakers to play baroque music in his vines 24 hours a day.

92

2012 Glenelly Chardonnay Stellenbosch Vin de Glenelly

Bright, pale yellow. Knockout nose combines stone fruits, nutmeg, marzipan, almond butter and dusty herbs. Supple, layered and deep, but with sneaky acidity intensifying the flavors of green melon, musky citrus fruits and brown spices. Finishes firm and long, with lovely lingering perfume. This impeccably balanced wine looks to be the best chardonnay release to date from Glenelly.

92

2009 Glenelly Lady May Stellenbosch

(\$50) (90% cabernet sauvignon with 10% petit verdot): Good deep red. Deep aromas of cassis, chocolate, mocha, spices and herbs. Fat, broad and sweet, with deep flavors of dark cherry, dark berries, spices and herbs. Distinctly dry, seamless and old school in style, saturating the palate with dusty tannins on the very long finish. This is May-Eliane de Lencquesaing's flagship bottling.

92

2008 Glenelly Grand Vin de Glenelly Red Wine Stellenbosch

(\$28) (a 40/39/14/7 blend): Good deep red. Aromas of plum, dark cherry, cassis and tobacco are lifted by a floral topnote. Quite aromatic on the palate, with intense berry and tobacco flavors complicated by chocolate, herbs and a distinctly gamey syrah element. Flowers and sexy oak (one-third new) add complexity to this plush, broad wine. Finishes classically dry, with serious, tooth-dusting tannins and excellent savory length.

92

2012 Downes Family Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Sanctuary Peak Elgin Valley

(\$20) (blended with 11% barrel-fermented semillon): Bright pale yellow. Aromas of gooseberry, lime leaf and citrus peel are almost New Zealand-like in their penetrating pungency. Then juicy, spicy and very dry but with excellent texture and intensity to the uncompromising flavors of citrus peel, white pepper and flinty minerals. Excellent sauvignon blanc with real depth and spicy length, and a dusty peppery quality that leaves the mouth refreshed. A lot of sauvignon blanc for the price--and one to seek out.

92

2011 Ridgeback Wines Journey Red Wine Paarl

(\$22) (36% cabernet franc, 32% cabernet sauvignon, 21% merlot and 11% petit verdot): Healthy dark red. Good spicy, floral lift to the aromas of redcurrant, mint and spicecake. Concentrated, bright and nicely delineated, with attractive sweetness and depth to the berry and spicy oak flavors. A subtly intense blend with good penetration and youthfully firm-edged tannins that call for some bottle aging.

91(+?)

2010 De Toren Fusion V Stellenbosch

(\$55) (15% alcohol; 57% cabernet sauvignon, 14% merlot, 13% malbec, 11% cabernet franc and 5% petit verdot): Good deep red-ruby. Superripe aromas of blackberry, licorice, bitter chocolate and pepper. Silky and seamless in the mouth, offering impressively concentrated black fruit, spice, licorice and mineral flavors framed by harmonious acidity. This wine's three grams per liter of residual sugar are virtually erased on the firm-edged finish. A slight oaky bitterness in conjunction with the wine's high alcohol kept my score down.

91

Priced from: **42.95**

[Compare prices](#)

2009 Ken Forrester Wines Syrah/Grenache The Gypsy Stellenbosch

(\$65) (a 51/49 blend of grenache and syrah): Good full red. Slightly high-toned, complex nose melds brambly raspberry, blackberry, plum, licorice, cinnamon oil and pepper. Silky, intense and wild, showing noteworthy energy for a blend with so much grenache. The intense, rising finish features suave, fine-grained tannins that saturate the palate and incisors. This excellent blend will be even better for a few years of patience.

91(+?)

2010 Ken Forrester Wines "T" Noble Late Harvest Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch (half bottle)

(\$55) (11% alcohol; 186 g/l r.s.; 8.6 g/l acidity): Deep orange-gold. Deep aromas of apricot, honeycomb and molasses lifted by a topnote of orange zest. Thick and saline but with sound acidity giving shape and lift to the flavors of apricot syrup, honey, raisin and molasses. Showing more of the spicy, resinous side of noble rot and less of the gamey character. Finishes with a lightly tannic impression.

91

2010 Vilafonte Series M Paarl

(49% merlot, 30% malbec and 21% cabernet sauvignon): Bright red-ruby. Aromas of currant, graphite, woodsmoke, mocha and spicy oak complemented by a deeper chocolatey character. Plush, broad and sweet, with lovely depth to the dark fruit and chocolate flavors. Full, ripe and satisfying if a bit youthfully aggressive, finishing with broad, dusty tannins and excellent length.

91

2010 Mullineux Family Syrah Granite Swartland

(\$128) Good bright dark red. Knockout nose combines raspberry, violet, pepper, brown spices and smoked meat; very Cote-Rotie-like. Silky on entry, then uncompromisingly dry and very tightly wound in the middle, hinting at violet, pepper and stone. Very long and aromatic on the back end but still youthfully rigid. This will be a beauty with a few years of cellaring.

91(+?)

2010 Rudi Schultz Wines Syrah Stellenbosch

(\$85) Good bright medium ruby. More perfumed on the nose than the 2009 version, offering scents of dark berries, dark chocolate and pepper. Then plush and ripe in the mouth, with highly concentrated flavors of dark berries, truffle and chocolate. More backward and tightly coiled than the comparatively full-blown 2009, and distinctly darker in character. Finishes with substantial tooth-coating tannins and excellent length. Still unwinding.

91(+?)

2010 Rust en Vrede Estate Estate Wine Stellenbosch

(\$47) (15% alcohol; 59% cabernet sauvignon, 34% shiraz and 7% merlot): Bright ruby-red. Scented, complex nose offers cassis, blueberry, violet and cocoa powder. Suave, spicy and intense, showing lovely cut and penetration to the red and dark berry and spice flavors. Finishes firmly tannic and long, with the structure for a graceful evolution in bottle. This is excellent.

91(+?)

Priced from: **47.97**

[Compare prices](#)

2009 Chateau Naude Wine Creation Le Vin de Francois Coastal Region

(100% pinotage): Bright red-ruby. Inviting, high-toned aromas of raspberry and strawberry. Creamy, pliant and sweet, with a bright raspberry flavor complicated by meat and minerals. Very sexy, high-toned wine whose suave, fine dusting of tannins should give it the spine to age, even if it's utterly seductive already.

91

2009 Mulderbosch Vineyards Faithful Hound Stellenbosch

(\$25) (54% cabernet sauvignon, 27% merlot, 8% each cabernet franc and petit verdot, and 3% malbec): Good medium ruby-red. Blackberry, black raspberry, coffee, mocha, woodsmoke and peppery herbs on the nose. Rich, silky and fine-grained in a distinctly Old World way, offering complex, subtle notes of berries, tobacco leaf, fresh herbs, woodsmoke and soil in a very harmonious package. Finishes savory and long, with suave tannins and lingering spice and tobacco leaf notes. This held up very well in the recorked bottle.

91

Priced from: **16.96**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Rietvallei Wine Estate Esteanna White Wine Robertson

(a blend of sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, chenin blanc and viognier; partly fermented in barrel): Good bright yellow with a green tinge. Complex, vibrant aromas of lemon drop, lime blossom, green melon, licorice and lees, all lifted by a lavender topnote. Ripe, rich and sexy on the broad palate, with dense yellow fruit and herb flavors nicely supported by mouthwatering acidity. At once silky and tactile, finishing with chewy minerality and excellent verve. A very successful blend of South Africa's most important white varieties.

91

2009 Crystallum Wines Chardonnay Clay Shales Walker Bay

(\$46) Bright pale yellow. Inviting aromas and flavors of stone fruits, musky lees, nutmeg and hazelnut reminded me of Burgundy. Seriously fat and rich, offering terrific leesy complexity and depth, with complementary vanillin oak. Finishes dry and impressively long.

91

2012 Springfield Estate Sauvignon Blanc Life from Stone Robertson

Bright palish yellow. Outstanding lift to the aromas of lime blossom, licorice, botanical herbs and white pepper; smells icy! Then rich, tactile and concentrated, with soil-driven wild herb and curry powder flavors deepened by salty extract. Impressive chewy sauvignon blanc with terrific building length and adamant dryness. Consistently one of my favorite sauvignons from South Africa.

91

2010 Springfield Estate Chardonnay Wild Yeast Robertson

Full, bright yellow. Complex, borderline-exotic aromas of stone fruits, lemon drop, marzipan, oatmeal and sexy oak. Rich, broad and tactile, with a saline quality to the plush flavors of yellow and white fruits and ginger. Impressively chewy, deep chardonnay with a long, ripe, spicy aftertaste.

91

2009 Raats Family Wines Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$25) (beginning with the 2010 release, the label will say "Old-Vine Chenin Blanc"; 80% of this wine was aged in oak, the rest in steel): Bright full yellow with a green tinge. Musky aromas of honey, smoke and nutty oak are at once rich and vibrant. Silky on entry, then glyceric and honeyed in the middle, with a touch of sweetness counterpointed by very good mineral energy (from the granite soil?). This wonderfully round and seamless chenin blanc should go savory and truffley with several years of additional bottle aging. Made from vines in excess of 50 years of age, and it shows in the wine's depth.

91

2010 Raats Family Wines Cabernet Franc Stellenbosch

(\$35) (25% new oak): Good dark red. Complex, vibrant aromas of blackberry, licorice, pepper, herbs and tobacco, lifted by floral and mineral notes. Concentrated, round and seamless, with surprising sweetness of dark fruit flavor fruit balanced by harmonious acidity. Impressively rich, deep cabernet franc, with serious, ripe, building tannins that call for mid-term aging. From a very low crop level and bottled without fining or filtration.

91(+?)

Priced from: **34.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Raats Family Wines Chenin Blanc Old Vine Stellenbosch

Bright medium yellow. Apple and citrus peel aromas are lifted by high notes of violet, lavender and crushed stone and complicated by almost chardonnay-like toast and butter nuances. Dry, silky and rich, with lovely ripeness but also excellent penetration to the apple and stone flavors complicated by a touch of oak. I happened to taste this wine following a good flight of non-malolactic California chardonnays and there were definite similarities. I'd love to see this very young, primary wine in another seven or eight years.

91(+?)

2008 Kanonkop Wine Estate Paul Sauer Simonsberg Stellenbosch

(\$50) (69% cabernet sauvignon, 22% cabernet franc and 9% merlot; aged for two years in new French oak): Good deep red. Plum, spices, licorice, chocolate mint and exotic tarry oak on the nose, lifted by a floral note. Plush, large-scaled and ripe but classically dry, offering complex flavors of dark berries, tar, licorice, tea leaf, dark chocolate and smoky minerality. Finishes with serious, broad, dusty tannins and lovely sweetness and lift. This big boy is structured to reward aging.

91(+?)

2009 Kanonkop Wine Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Simonsberg-Stellenbosch

(\$40) (100% cabernet sauvignon; aged for 25 months in French oak, 50% new): Good full ruby-red. Sexy aromas of black raspberry, bitter cherry, coffee and game are lifted by a floral topnote. Broad, silky and quite dry, with bright acidity enlivening the flavors of dark fruits, leather and game. Finishes with a fine dusting of tannins and excellent length. This has plenty of development ahead of it. A superb wine from a terrific vintage.

91(+?)

2011 Strandveld Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon Adamastor Elim

(\$20) Bright, polished yellow. Pristine aromas of pineapple, gooseberry and white pepper; very sauvignon in a Bordeaux way. Juicy, dry and penetrating, with terrific intensity to its citrus and wild herb flavors. Finishes tactile and long, with an intriguing saline quality. This extremely promising wine needs time in the cellar to blossom.

91(+?)

2011 Vergelegen Chardonnay Reserve Stellenbosch

(\$28) (13% alcohol): Bright, pale yellow. Sexy aromas of orange oil and dusty spices complicated by crushed stone and metallic minerality. Concentrated, tactile and light on its feet, with terrific stone fruit intensity but little in the way of leesy complexity. This pristine, very smooth chardonnay needs time in bottle to develop more nuance.

91

2008 Vergelegen "V" Stellenbosch

(\$165) (100% cabernet sauvignon; this is winemaker Andre van Rensburg's more internationally styled flagship wine): Bright, dark red-ruby. Aromas of black raspberry, mocha, licorice, tar and bitter chocolate are sweetened by sexy oak and accented by a light herbal element. Juicy and penetrating on the palate, with a powerful spine of acidity giving terrific cut to the currant, blackberry, licorice, mint and tar flavors. Strong tannins give grip to the finish but suggest energetic extraction. This wine was aged for 20 months in all-new French oak and held back for another 2+ years before being released, but it still calls for several years of additional cellaring.

91(+?)

2009 Keermont Vineyards Red Wine Stellenbosch

(\$43) (a blend of 60% merlot, 20% cabernet sauvignon, 13% syrah and 7% petit verdot): Good full red-ruby. Crushed blue- and blackberry, raspberry, menthol and licorice on the complex, vibrant nose, along with hints of tobacco and herbs. Silky on entry, then dry, spicy, vinous and uncompromising, with excellent definition to the dark fruit and spice flavors. A step up in depth and refinement from the 2010 syrah bottling. Builds nicely on the lingering, spicy finish, which leaves behind a fine dusting of tannins. A lovely representative of this excellent vintage.

91(+?)

2009 Thelema Mountain Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon The Mint Stellenbosch

(\$45) Good red-ruby. Highly perfumed nose combines currant, eucalyptus, wild herbs and licorice pastille. Richer and deeper than the basic cabernet bottling, with smooth dark berry flavors accented by mint and herbs. Here the tannins are sweet and noble, allowing the dark fruit and herb flavors to carry well on the long aftertaste. Yes, The Mint is minty, but it has the courage of its convictions.

91

Priced from: **51.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2009 Waterford Estate The Jem Stellenbosch

(a blend based on cabernet and shiraz): Full ruby-red. High-toned aromas of cassis, raspberry, licorice and spicecake complicated by coffee, mocha and leather. Tactile on the palate but also juicy and penetrating, with excellent intensity to the flavors of dark raspberry, spices, coffee and leather. A bit rustic in a positive way. Finishes concentrated and long, with serious tannins reaching the front teeth. Another impressive wine from this excellent vintage.

91(+?)

2011 Boplaas Family Vineyards Hanepoot Sweet Dessert Wine Calitzdorp

(\$14) (16% alcohol; 100% muscat of Alexandria): Medium gold. Aomas of orange, peach, licorice, medicinal herbs, clove and flowers are complicated by a sweaty note. Very sweet and a bit aggressive with alcohol, offering concentrated flavors of yellow fruits, ginger, honeysuckle and clove. Finishes very sweet and long, with impressive lingering perfume. This comes across as a bit warm (it actually seems higher than 16% alcohol), perhaps owing to low acidity, but its sweetness of fruit and spicy lift are compelling.

91

2012 De Trafford Wines Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$32) Straw-gold. Peach, honey, menthol, herbs and flowers on the complex nose and palate. Honeyed, thick and brisk, with penetrating, ripe acidity perfectly buffering the wine's sweetness. Finishes very long, smooth and surprisingly dry. Very rich and very well balanced chenin blanc, one of the best of my tastings this year.

91

2008 De Trafford Wines Elevation 393 Stellenbosch

(\$95) (a blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, shiraz and cabernet franc): Bright, dark red. Currant, minerals, truffle and smoky oak on the nose, with hints of coffee and game. Sweet and lush but cool, with intense, youthfully medicinal black cherry and mint flavors framed by well-integrated acidity and complicated by saline minerality. The long, rising, gripping finish shows the flinty, saline syrah component, which comprises 20% of the blend, along with notes of chocolate and herbs. Tannins are broad and sweet. A very successful blend.

91

2011 David Aristargos Swartland

(31% chenin blanc, 27% roussanne, 22% viognier and 20% grenache blanc): Pale, bright yellow. Yellow fruits, lichee, botanical herbs and spring flowers on the nose, complemented by toast and vanilla. Fat, rich and dry, with a firm edge of acidity and a positive phenolic quality to the understated stone and citrus fruit and licorice flavors. A subtle, laid-back wine with good saline depth and a suave, very dry, palate-saturating finish. Offers very good lift for a rich white.

91

2009 Kleinood Syrah Tamboerskloof Stellenbosch

(\$40) Deep ruby-red. Riper and deeper on the nose than the 2008 version, offering scents of black fruits, spicecake, smoked meat and coffee. Seriously concentrated and youthfully backward syrah with rich black fruit and spice flavors framed by a strong acid/tannin spine. More flamboyantly ripe and expressive on the nose than the 2008 bottling, but this very tight, promising wine will need four or five more years in the bottle to unwind.

91(+?)

2008 Fairview Shiraz The Beacon Paarl

(\$36) (15% alcohol): Good saturated ruby-red. Soil-driven aromas of plum, pepper, tobacco, herbs, spicecake, licorice and woodsmoke; quite Old World in style. Then sweet, dense and seamless but with very good definition and spicy lift to the dark raspberry and dark chocolate flavors. Obviously powerful and high in alcohol but also deep, pliant and impressively concentrated, with enough harmonious acidity to maintain its balance. Finishes chewy, broad and long

91

2011 Glenelly Chardonnay Stellenbosch Vin de Glenelly

(\$28) (aged for ten months in new 500-liter French oak barrels): Good full yellow. Very rich aromas of stone fruits, almond and marzipan. Then sweet and concentrated in the mouth, with fresh apple and citrus zest flavors complicated by a saline element. This deep, tactile chardonnay really dusts the palate on the gripping finish. Impressive.

91

2010 Ken Forrester Wines Chenin Blanc The FMC Stellenbosch

(\$65) (from a 1974 planting harvested via multiple passes, the last with botrytized grapes): Full, bright, deep yellow-gold. At once decadent and fresh on the nose, with sexy flavors of dried apricot, peach nectar and spices. Plush, rich and seamless, with a glyceric texture and a considerable botrytis component to the tropical fruit, honey and spice flavors. Brisk acidity hides the wine's moderate sweetness on the very long finish. I'd wait a year or two for more complexity but this is already a beauty.

91

2010 Reyneke Wines Sauvignon Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$50) Bright yellow with a straw tinge. Aromas of lemon drop and sexy spices lifted by an herbal component. Sweet, pliant and lush on the palate; not at all an austere style of sauvignon blanc. The crystallized lemon peel and botanical herb flavors are framed and lifted by salty minerality. Nicely supple, deep wine with a layered mouthfeel. The fairly dry, even finish offers a note of white peach.

90

2012 The Foundry Grenache Blanc Coastal Region

Medium lemon-yellow. Perfumed aromas of *mirabelle*, white flowers, botanical herbs and tea leaf. Ripe, sweet and deep, with lovely purity and depth to its pear and lemon fruit flavors. Offers noteworthy finesse for grenache blanc--not to mention fruit intensity--and finishes ripe, clean and long.

90

2010 Painted Wolf Pinotage Guillermo Swartland

(\$20) (aged for 14 months in French and American oak, 30% new): Bright, dark red. Perfumed aromas of black raspberry, blueberry, spices, game and smoke reminded me of syrah. Sweet and smooth on the palate, with ripe acidity framing the black and blue fruit flavors. Nicely structured pinotage with suave, building tannins and very good length. And an excellent value.

90

2011 Downes Family Vineyards Merlot Family Reserve Elgin Valley

(\$35) Bright, dark red. Complex perfume of musky redcurrant, woodsmoke, pepper, chocolate and graphite minerality. At once smooth and energetic, with lovely balance to the flavors of redcurrant, graphite and woodsmoke accented by green pepper. This broad, round merlot is nicely framed by sweet tannins and a firm edge of acidity. The dry finish shows a repeating note of woodsmoke. This very well-balanced merlot is already sexy and approachable.

90

2010 Warwick Estate Three Cape Ladies Cape Blend Simonsberg

(a blend of 35% cabernet sauvignon, 33% syrah and 32% pinotage): Bright ruby-red. Aromas of cassis, black cherry, spices, licorice and woodsmoke. Rich, suave and tight-grained, with noteworthy intensity and inner-mouth aromatic character to its flavors of dark fruits, spices, bitter chocolate and pepper. Finishes long and perfumed, with the firm structure to age.

90(+?)

Priced from: **19.9**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Ernie Els Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$25) Good bright red-ruby. Restrained, pure aromas of cassis, licorice mint and herbs. Densely packed and rich, with a lovely sugar/acid balance to its flavors of cassis, minerals and spicecake; showing less herbal character than the 2010 merlot. Serious cabernet with a firm tannic spine and brambly dark fruit and pepper flavors spreading out nicely to saturate the palate on the lingering finish. Makes the merlot tannins seem a bit dry by comparison, but this cabernet will be even better for some time in bottle.

90(+?)

2011 Cape Point Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Cape Point

(\$25) Bright yellow. Ripe grapefruit, pineapple, gooseberry and dusty herbs on the nose. Densely packed and ripe, with a touch of sweetness to the concentrated fruit salad and grapefruit flavors. Less fruity than the Stonehaven bottling but also more laid-back today and more serious, with excellent framing acidity. Finishes with a persistent note of grapefruit pith. This should evolve nicely in bottle for at least a few years.

90

2009 Rudi Schultz Wines Syrah Stellenbosch

(\$30) Good deep ruby-red. Wild aroma of dark berries, licorice and pepper. Sweet and lush on the palate, with fat flavors of musky plum, mocha and chocolate liqueur; not a gamey style of syrah. Conveys an impression of rather soft acidity but the silky palate is given lift by a peppery quality. Finishes with serious but suave tannins and a surprisingly restrained sweetness.

90

2010 Porseleinberg Red Wine Swartland

(\$95) (100% shiraz): Good bright, dark red. Knockout nose combines black raspberry, mocha, game, coffee and flinty minerality; a real essence of syrah. Then much tighter in the mouth than the nose would suggest, showing a distinctly unyielding, even tart, quality to the raspberry, floral and saline flavors. Today the wine's tannins are tough and a bit dry, calling for considerable patience. Will this wine eventually deliver on the promise of its spectacular nose?

90(+?)?

2010 Edgebaston Cabernet Sauvignon GS Stellenbosch

(\$65) Saturated ruby-red. Cooler on the nose than the 2011, offering scents of blackcurrant, blackberry, licorice and graphite. Higher-pitched and more brooding in the mouth, with concentrated dark berry and spice flavors showing a youthful toughness. Finishes firmly tannic, with a minty note. Less giving today than the 2011, and in need of patience.

90(+?)

2011 Babylon's Peak Chenin Blanc Swartland

(\$8) Bright, pale silver-yellow color. High-pitched aromas of lemon, licorice, flowers and herbs. Juicy, floral and nicely delineated, with some unabsorbed CO2 and salty minerality contributing a dusty, tactile quality to the wine's mouth feel. A touch of sweetness is countered by ripe acidity. This attractively perfumed wine finishes citrusy and bright, with good lift and lift. Reportedly from 39-year-old vines.

90

2009 Rietvallei Wine Estate Esteanna Red Wine Robertson

(cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc with a bit of petit verdot): Bright red-ruby. Blackberry and chocolate on the inviting nose. At once supple and sappy in the mouth, with good chewy concentration and depth to the dark berry and chocolatey oak flavors. In spite of the showy chocolate quality, this tactile, vibrant wine shows an enticing coolness--not to mention the extract to reward a few years of cellaring.

90(+?)

2010 Bartinney Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$30) Good medium ruby-red. Very ripe aromas of plum, blackberry syrup, mocha and coffee. Rich, silky and glyceric but with firm, nicely integrated acidity giving cut to the flavors of dark berries, bitter chocolate and coffee. Finishes with good backbone and grip. Showing well already but may gain in complexity with a few years of bottle age.

90

2012 Groot Constantia Sauvignon Blanc Constantia

(\$20) Pale, bright silvery yellow. Pungent aromas of lime, guava and white pepper. Dense, bright and creamy; at once round and brisk, with plenty of personality to the flavors of tropical fruits, pepper and herbs. Finishes long and satisfying, with dusty tannins leaving the mouth refreshed. Thanks to an enticing sugar/acid balance there's nothing heavy about this sauvignon.

90

2010 Groot Constantia Grand Constantia Muscat de Frontignan Constantia

(\$60) Brownish-pink color. Captivating high-toned aromas of raspberry, strawberry, dried apricot, clove, honey and rose petal. Very sweet, dense and suave, with red berry and floral aromas complicated by a whiff of game. Still, this is more monolithic than I expected, and more sugary than truly complex. Finishes with a hint of youthful bitterness but could use more cut.

90

2012 Southern Right Sauvignon Blanc Walker Bay

(\$19) Pale, green-tinged yellow. Complex, bracing aromas of gooseberry, lemon peel, ginger, white flowers and crushed stone. Round and juicy, showing moderate flesh but excellent dusty palate presence to the flavors of citrus fruits, red grapefruit, minerals, fresh herbs and spices. Finishes tactile and brisk, with pungently aromatic, slightly tart hints of green tropical fruits and lime. A real wake-up call to the palate.

90

Priced from: **10.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 Southern Right Pinotage Hemel en Aarde Valley Walker Bay

(\$27) Good bright, dark red. Musky, soil-driven aromas and flavors of strawberry, black olive tapenade and chocolate. Supple and intense if a bit funky, with harmonious acidity framing and intensifying the mid-palate fruit. Very suave in texture but distinctly idiosyncratic in its flavors, although there's plenty of lurking red fruit here. Finishes with sweet tannins and a strong lingering olive element. You've been warned.

90?

2012 De Wetshof Estate Sauvignon Blanc Robertson

(\$18) Bright pale yellow. Perfumed nose offers grapefruit, lime oil, dusty herbs and wild mint. Densely packed and smooth, with an almost glyceric quality to the citrus and grapefruit flavors. But a tart lemony quality and a whiff of pungent greenness on the long, tactile finish gives this sauvignon excellent energy.

90

2009 De Wetshof Estate Chardonnay Bateleur Robertson

(\$35) (14.5% alcohol): Bright yellow. Pineapple, vanilla cream, nut oils and some exotic oak tones on the nose. Rich and round but still a bit youthfully locked up and slightly bitter-edged, showing strong oak influence today. The fruit is currently hidden by oak on the back end. This needs time in bottle.

90(+?)?

2012 Vergelegen Sauvignon Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$18) Pale, bright, green-tinged yellow. Pure, vibrant aromas of lime blossom, gooseberry, dusty herbs, white pepper and quinine. Dense, tactile and bone-dry, with brisk flavors of lime, crushed stone and saline minerality. A dusty yet weightless sauvignon blanc with a very long, icy finish featuring metallic minerality and a repeating salty quality.

90

2010 Vergelegen Merlot Reserve Stellenbosch

(\$30) Good bright medium red. Currant, plum, spicecake and tobacco on the sweet, expressive nose, complicated by leafy and tarry oak notes. Supple, suave and fine-grained, with good density and sappiness to the flavors of redcurrant, plum and sweet, spicy oak. Finishes long and sweetly tannic, with good depth of texture for South African merlot and lingering savory notes of woodsmoke and herbs.

90

2009 Vergelegen Estate Premium Red Wine Stellenbosch

(\$19) Bright dark red. Claret-like aromas of black- and redcurrant, coffee, tobacco, mocha and sexy oak. A sweet, pliant midweight with noteworthy richness and a firm spine of harmonious acidity to its intense berry and spice flavors. Finishes with broad, dusty tannins and very good length.

90

2007 Vergelegen Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Stellenbosch

(\$39) Dark, bright red. Deeply spicy aromas of cassis, chocolate, mint, mocha and saffras. Ripe but classically dry, showing excellent breadth to its dark fruit and spice flavors. Finishes with substantial dusty tannins and very good length. This distinctly savory cabernet can't quite match the 2006 for depth or intensity of fruit.

90

2011 A.A. Badenhorst Secateurs Red Coastal Region

(43% shiraz, 43% cinsault, 8% grenache and 3% each mourvedre and pinotage): Good full red. Musky strawberry and candied raspberry aromas are complemented by spices, minerals and tree bark, plus a smoky, saline quality. Suave and seamless in the mouth, with insidious smoky minerality giving shape to the almost liqueur-like red berry and saline flavors. Finishes silky and long, with dusty tannins and lingering sweetness. Distinctly Old World in the best sense.

90

2011 Keermont Vineyards Terrasse White Wine Stellenbosch

(\$27) (mostly chenin blanc with some sauvignon blanc): Bright gold-tinged yellow. Sexy, high-toned aromas of orange blossom, honey, spices, toast and lees; I get a hint of noble rot. Then rich, spicy and generous on the palate, with peach and spice flavors conveying a strong impression of dusty extract. This distinctly dry, substantial wine shows good energy and incipient complexity, closing with a honeyed aftertaste.

90

2012 Thelema Mountain Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Sutherland Elgin

(\$15) (made in stainless steel): Bright pale yellow. Fresh, cool perfume of lime ice, grapefruit pith, gooseberry, licorice and caraway seed. At once cool and glyceric in the mouth, showing excellent fruit intensity and punch. Finishes tactile, dusty and rich, with lingering spices. An excellent value in sauvignon blanc.

90

2011 Neil Ellis Wines Chardonnay Stellenbosch

(\$20) Pale, bright silver-yellow. Subtle aromas of nectarine, dusty brown spices and quinine. Concentrated and dry, with excellent spicy lift to the peach and wild herb flavors. Not a particularly fleshy chardonnay but boasts excellent flavor impact. Finishes with firm, dusty grip and sneaky spicy persistence. Has the backbone to improve in bottle for another few years.

90(+?)

2009 Neil Ellis Wines Shiraz Elgin

(\$20) (bottled with a screwcap): Good full, medium ruby. Wild aromas of plum, currant, mocha, game and nutty oak. Silky on entry, then concentrated, lush and dense without coming across as heavy, thanks to well-integrated acidity. Finishes with a firm spine of tannins and the structure to reward aging. Offers very good dark fruit intensity if not the ineffable white pepper high notes of the 2008 release. (A second bottle was more reduced and lower-toned, showing a strong note of black olive tapenade. But it had sneaky length and plenty of backbone for aging.)

90

2009 Glen Carlou Grande Classique Paarl

(\$20) (a five-variety Bordeaux blend): Good full, dark red. Deep, vinous, claret-like aromas of cassis, black cherry, tobacco, mocha, earth and sexy oak. Silky on entry, then firm and bright in the middle, offering intense dark berry and chocolatey oak flavors complicated by a loamy nuance. A bit youthfully clenched but already shows insidious sweetness. Energetic and light on its feet, finishing with a serious tannic backbone. Obviously a very good vintage for this bottling, but this will need time. A lot of wine for the price.

90(+?)

Priced from: **16.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Boekenhoutskloof The Chocolate Block Franschoek

(\$39) (69% shiraz, 14% grenache, 11% cabernet sauvignon, 5% cinsault and 1% viognier): Good full medium red. Highly aromatic nose melds blackberry, licorice, menthol and spicecake. Sweet and supple but juicy and primary too, with harmonious acidity framing and intensifying the dark fruit and spice flavors. A serious, youthfully aggressive midweight with substantial building, tongue-dusting tannins and a late note of balsamic nutty oak. Already quite perfumed but in need of at least another year or two in the cellar to express itself.

90(+?)

Priced from: **27.98**

[Compare prices](#)

2009 Waterford Estate Kevin Arnold Shiraz Stellenbosch

Bright ruby-red. Musky black raspberry, coffee and mocha aromas are complicated by subtle olive and pepper notes. Sweet, lush and broad but with plenty of underlying structure to the ripe flavors of dark raspberry and chocolate. Not the last word in complexity but impressively smooth and dense. Finishes with substantial dusty but ripe tannins and very good length.

90

2012 Bouchard Finlayson Sauvignon Blanc Walker Bay

(\$20) Bright yellow. Pure, scented aromas of white peach, fresh herbs, dried flowers and talc-y minerality. Tactile and intense, with peach and crushed herb flavors nicely framed by harmonious ripe acidity. This should be flexible with food owing to its freshness and dusty finish.

90

NV De Trafford Wines Chenin Blanc Four V Stellenbosch

(\$35) (this barrel-fermented chenin blanc is a blend of four vintages): Golden yellow. Yellow fruits, honey, caramel, toasty oak and musky lees on the inviting nose. Fat, lush and sweet but suave, with a ripe honeyed flavor accented by sexy soft citrus hints and framed by nicely integrated acidity. Finishes plush and smooth, with lovely length and lift.

90

2008 De Trafford Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$45) Bright ruby-red. Musky aromas of black raspberry, smoke, nuts and coffee. Sweet and supple on the palate, with a pliant texture but not quite the consistency of ripeness as the 2009 version. Dark berry flavors are joined by tobacco, truffle and herbs. Here the tannins are a touch green and less refined than those of the 2009, but the finish is still rich and persistent.

90

2009 De Trafford Wines Elevation 393 Stellenbosch

(\$80) (the label admits to 16% alcohol): Medium red-ruby. Sexy aromas of blackcurrant, blueberry, musky spices and flowers. Supple, sweet and generous but with good shape and definition to the dark berry, pepper and spice flavors. Not a meaty style of syrah and not obviously alcoholic either. Finishes with dusty, building tannins and sneaky length.

90

2009 De Trafford Wines Shiraz Blueprint Stellenbosch

(\$37) (15% alcohol): Good medium red-ruby. Wilder, scented, northern Rhone-like aromas of dark berries, game, spices and peppery herbs. Sweet and densely packed but more penetrating than the Syrah 393, giving the middle palate an impression of less body. But this juicy syrah is tighter today. Finishes with serious tannic spine and rising length.

90(+?)

2011 Buitenverwachting Chardonnay Constantia

(\$20) (aged in French oak, 50% new and 50% once-used barrels): Good bright, full yellow. Musky aromas of citrus fruits, grilled nuts and spices lifted by lively minerality; a bit Meursault-like. Concentrated and sharply delineated, with brisk acidity enlivening the flavors of stone fruits and brown spices. Not a fat or sweet style of chardonnay but quite elegant and firm. Needs to be served with food.

90

2011 David Chenin Blanc Swartland

Brilliant straw-yellow. Stone and citrus fruits complicated by fresh herbs and a leesy element on the nose. Supple, subtle stone and citrus fruit flavors show an enticing touch of sweetness but are kept firm by sound acidity. Finishes dry and minerally, with good smoky length. Nicely balanced chenin blanc.

90

2010 Beyerskloof Synergy Cape Blend Stellenbosch

(\$22) (36% pinotage, 31% merlot, 29% cabernet sauvignon and 4% shiraz): Dark red. Pure, sexy aromas and flavors of raspberry, spicecake, flowers and licorice. Suave, juicy and intense, offering excellent penetration and a light touch. Not a particularly fleshy wine but sharply delineated, floral and long on the aftertaste. A very classy blend.

90

2012 Iona Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Elgin

(\$18) Bright, pale yellow. Sexy aromas of tropical fruits, crushed stone and wild herbs. Tactile, dusty and classically dry, with noteworthy intensity but no hardness to the flavors of lemon, flowers and spices. Nicely concentrated, distinctly sauvignon blanc with a chewy finish featuring a lingering flavor of grapefruit pith. This is excellent.

90

2011 Vrede en Lust White Mischief Elgin

(\$20) (an unusual blend of chenin blanc, sauvignon blanc, semillon, pinot grigio and viognier): Bright yellow-green. Subtle stone and citrus fruits are lifted by white flowers on the nose. Concentrated and dense, with an enticing touch of sweetness to its citrus, white peach and fresh herb flavors. At once brisk and tactile; chewy but light on its feet. Finishes refreshing and long. A very successful blend.

90

2007 Dalla Cia Wine & Spirit Company Giorgio Stellenbosch

(70% cabernet sauvignon, 20% cabernet franc and 10% petit verdot; 80% new oak): Good deep medium red. Plum, redcurrant, tobacco leaf and loam on the nose, accented by a peppery nuance. Chewy and complex in an Old World way, with currant, pepper, spice and herb flavors complicated by a touch of woodsmoke. Finishes with fine-grained tannins and very good length.

90

2011 Dornier Wines Donatus White Wine Stellenbosch

(\$20) (a blend of chenin blanc and semillon): Aromas of yellow fruits, botanical herbs, marzipan and sexy oak. Sweet, supple and pliant, with a layered texture to the flavors of *mirabelle* and herbs. Nicely generous and sweet on the back end. Another very successful vintage for this blend, which in earlier vintages was normally less giving in the early going.

90

2010 Stony Brook V on A Viognier Naturally Sweet

(\$30) Full orange-tinged gold. High-toned aromas of tangerine and peachy fruit salad. A fruit bomb on the palate, with strong acidity intensifying the flavors of peach and mandarin orange. Finishes with an attractive light touch and a continuing high-toned character.

90

2012 De Morgenzon Sauvignon Blanc DMZ Western Cape

(\$18) (DMZ is De Morgenzon's value range; 5% of this wine was barrel-fermented): Pale straw. Pure, complex aromas of gooseberry, quinine, licorice, talc and fresh herbs. Intensely flavored and distinctly dry, with intense citrus fruit flavors complicated by saline minerality. Finishes serious and persistent, with lovely lingering perfume. In comparison to a classic New Zealand sauvignon blanc from Marlborough, this is a bit riper and less pungent but at least as concentrated and long on the aftertaste. A terrific value.

90

2012 De Morgenzon Chardonnay DMZ Western Cape

(\$18) Good pale yellow. Subtly complex aromas of peach nectar, brown spices and musky lees. Nicely dry in the mouth, but with an insidious sweetness to the flavors of stone fruits, pineapple and spices. A firm spine of acidity contributes to the dry impression on the brisk, persistent finish. Lovely expressive chardonnay with restraint.

90

Priced from: **14.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 De Toren Z Stellenbosch

(\$45) (55% merlot, 15% cabernet sauvignon, 14% cabernet franc, 12% malbec and 4% petit verdot; the malbec component was done in American oak): Good deep red-ruby. Pungent aromas of blackberry, boysenberry, truffle, chocolate and black pepper. Sweet and very ripe, with plush flavors of dark berries, truffle, tobacco, graphite and licorice. Finishes with serious, tongue-dusting tannins and excellent length. The Fusion V is the estate's Left Bank blend; this one is the Right Bank.

90

Priced from: **33.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 Stark Conde Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Three Pines Jonkershoek Valley

(\$40) Saturated medium red. Aromas of cassis, creosote, licorice, cedar and chocolate-mint; I would have guess this was aged in some American oak but it was actually 100% French. Rich, broad and concentrated, with good creamy depth to the dark berry and oak flavors. Fine-grained and dense without being heavy. Finishes with slightly dusty, tarry tannins and a repeating minty nuance. This serious cabernet needs time to soften and to absorb some of its oak.

90(+?)

Priced from: **39.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Reyneke Wines Syrah Stellenbosch

(\$28) Bright red-ruby. High-toned, expressive aromas of musky red berries and spicecake. Sweet, rich and deep, with spicy red and darker berry flavors complicated by a meaty nuance. This pliant syrah finishes with big, dusty tannins and noteworthy persistence.

90

2010 Cederberg Cabernet Sauvignon Five Generations Cederberg

(\$49) (aged for 18 months in new French oak): Medium red-ruby. Aromas of dark berries, coffee, mocha and woodsmoke. A step up in intensity over the regular Cederberg bottling, with harmonious juicy acidity giving definition to the ripe dark berry, mint and cigar box flavors. Finishes with firm tannic grip and good lift, but no dryness.

89

2012 Ridgeback Wines Viognier Paarl

Bright yellow. Aromas of *mirabelle*, lichee, smoke, licorice and spring flowers. Intense flavors of yellow plum, lemon drop and medicinal herbs are nicely framed by bright acidity. Finishes with a touch of sweetness and good length.

89

2009 Ridgeback Wines Merlot Paarl

(\$22) Dark red. Redcurrant, mocha, licorice and mint on the vibrant nose, with complicating notes of cocoa powder and clove. Sweet, chewy and deep, offering very good delineation and energy to the redcurrant and cocoa flavors. Still youthfully unevolved and in need of some time in bottle to develop more complexity. But one of the more convincing merlots I tasted from South Africa this year.

89

2010 Ridgeback Wines Naturally Sweet Viognier Paarl

(\$23) (9.5% alcohol): Full golden-yellow. Exotic honeyed high tones lift the aromas of apricot and spices. A very sweet fruit bomb, with a flavor of apricot liqueur complemented by a tactile saline quality. Superconcentrated, chewy and dense but a tad cloying, finishing with excellent fruit-driven length.

89

2008 Kaapzicht Estate Steytler Vision Cape Blend Stellenbosch

(\$35) (a blend of cabernet sauvignon, pinotage and merlot): Good bright, full red. Musky, claret-like aromas of currant, plum, mocha, tobacco and smoky, nutty oak. Big, round and mellow, with red berry and woodsmoke flavors accented by tobacco leaf and pepper notes that reminded me of Bordeaux. Boasts immediate sex appeal but doesn't have quite the verve or thrust for 90 points.

89

2009 Kaapzicht Estate Pinotage Stellenbosch

(\$20) Medium-deep red. Mellow aromas of plum and mocha. Supple, fine-grained and immediately approachable, but with lovely vinosity and intensity to the red fruit and mint flavors. Nicely made, persistent pinotage with a hint of minty lift.

89

2008 Hartenberg Estate Shiraz The Stork Stellenbosch

(\$115) Good healthy red-ruby. Plum, smoke, beefsteak tomato, black olive and earth on the nose. Spicy and expansive on the palate, with nicely concentrated dark fruit flavors complicated by meaty and herbal nuances. Finishes with firm, dusty tannins and good energy. (Unfortunately, Hartenberg's 2007 The Eleanor Chardonnay, apparently the most recent vintage in the U.S. market, was past its best.)

89

2009 Weltevrede Wine Estate Phipp Jonker Brut The Ring Blanc de Blancs

(\$28) (100% chardonnay, reportedly from a limestone-rich slope): Good bright pale yellow. Lovely finesse to the citrus and powdered stone nose. Broad, round and creamy but with good acidity giving shape to the citrus and mineral flavors. Just a touch of sweetness here but finishes nicely dry owing to its solid buffering material. A very pleasant surprise.

89

2011 Ken Forrester Wines Chenin Blanc Old Vines Reserve Stellenbosch

(\$15) (50% of this wine was aged in oak for 10 months, 20% new): Good full yellow. Aromas of exotic ripe peach, tropical fruits, honey and marzipan; this too hints at some botrytis. Rich and ripe on the palate, with tropical fruit flavors accented by spices and minerals. Saline and smoky nuances add another dimension to this slightly phenolic wine.

89

2008 Reyneke Wines Syrah/Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$75) (a 90/10 blend): Good bright, dark red. Musky, high-toned aromas of raspberry, mocha and chocolate. Rich, broad and sweet in the mouth, with raspberry, mocha and coffee flavors kept under wraps today by brooding, dusty tannins. Good mid-palate stuffing here, but this still needs time in bottle.

89(+?)

2010 Painted Wolf Shiraz Black Label Coastal Region

(\$20) (aged in one-third new French and American oak): Medium red-ruby. Currant, licorice and smoke on the musky nose. Ripe and round, offering good texture to the black raspberry and smoked meat flavors. A touch of sweetness is nicely balanced by ripe acidity. Finishes with firm but sweet tannins and good length.

89

2010 Downes Family Vineyards Merlot Mount Bullet Elgin Valley

(\$80) (from Italian and French merlot clones): Bright red-ruby. Cassis, tobacco, menthol, mint and eucalyptus on the nose. Distinctly greener than the great 2008 Mount Bullet, showing a slightly sharp character but a firm core to its dark fruit, licorice and peppery herb flavors. With its herbal character and firm tannic spine, this youthfully dry wine needs time, but I doubt it will ever be in the class of the 2008. Incidentally, this winery, which is known as Shannon Vineyards in South Africa, did not make this wine in 2009.

89(+?)?

2011 Warwick Estate Cabernet Sauvignon The First Lady Western Cape

Bright, deep red. Cassis, licorice, woodsmoke and pepper on the musky, oaky nose. Supple and moderately concentrated, with a restrained sweetness to the redcurrant, spice, tobacco leaf and fresh herb flavors. Nicely balanced cabernet in an Old World style. Finishes with supple tannins, some apparent oakiness and lingering notes of mint and herbs. These wines all offer very good value.

89

2012 Warwick Estate Chardonnay The First Lady Unoaked Western Cape

Bright, light yellow with green highlights. Enticing aromas of white peach, pineapple, nutmeg and wild herbs. Supple and round on the palate, with a silky, saline umami texture to the flavors of yellow fruits and brown spices. Really lovely chardonnay fruit here, and distinctly spicy even without any oak. The saline quality carries through onto the persistent finish. An excellent non-oaked chardonnay.

89

2012 Warwick Estate Sauvignon Blanc Professor Black Stellenbosch

Pale bright yellow. Pungent gooseberry, minerals and peppery herbs accent grapefruit pith and pear on the nose. Juicy, intense and quite dry, with some unabsorbed CO2 contributing to the impression of lift. Finishes distinctly dusty, with very good breadth and a flavor of crushed stone. This chewy, young, classic sauvignon may still fill out.

89(+?)

2011 Warwick Estate Pinotage Old Bush Vines Stellenbosch

Good bright ruby-red. Very dark aromas of crushed blackberry, licorice, mocha, woodsmoke and wild herbs, plus a whiff of smoky earth. Spicy, savory and concentrated, with juicy dark fruit flavors nicely framed by sound acidity. Finishes with serious, slightly rough tannins and good lift. This young pinotage seems a bit more extractive than some past versions of this bottling.

89(+?)

Priced from: **21.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Eagles' Nest Viognier Constantia

(\$34) (Martin Meinert is the cellar master here): Palish bright yellow. Aromas of lemon, *mirabelle*, licorice and flowers show a sweaty complexity from peppery Asian spices. Supple and creamy but with a distinctly firm edge to its candied lemon peel flavor. Dry and serious on the back end.

89

2009 Eagles' Nest Shiraz Constantia

(\$50) Good bright red-ruby. Meaty aromas of mocha and woodsmoke currently dominate underlying red berry scents. Sweet and nicely concentrated, with moderate definition and lift to the ripe red fruit and smoke flavors. Doesn't have the complexity or varietal flavor authority for 90 points but finishes generous and persistent.

89

2012 Mullineux Family Chenin Blanc Kloof Street Swartland

(\$20) Bright straw-yellow. Bright aromas and flavors of pineapple and crushed stone. Offers an attractive textural combination of glycerol and bright, showing a distinct umami texture to the restrained, very dry flavors of pineapple, dried flowers, minerals and herbs. Finishes with an intriguing leesy nuance.

89

2012 Waterkloof Sauvignon Blanc Circumstance Stellenbosch

(\$24) Pale straw. Fresh aromas of lime and herbs. Strong on the attack, with sweet citrus and tropical fruit flavors given cut and definition by bright acidity. Finishes dry and lemony, with a chewy impression of extract. Nicely concentrated sauvignon.

89

2011 Waterkloof Circle of Life White Blend Stellenbosch

(\$24) (mostly sauvignon blanc and chenin blanc): Pale, bright yellow. Pungent, inviting aromas and flavors of lemon, minerals, nutmeg, honey and dusty herbs complicated by musky lees. Sweet and silky in the mouth, offering a lovely glycerol richness buffered by sound lemony acidity. This rich, off-dry, rather soft wine boasts complementary oak and noteworthy persistence.

89

2009 Waterkloof Syrah Circumstance Stellenbosch

(\$28) Saturated ruby-red. Extravagantly scented nose offers black raspberry, cardamom, cocoa powder and black olive. Rich, spicy, dry and serious, with the dark berry and black olive notes dominating the palate. Could use a bit more flesh and give but this idiosyncratic syrah has the courage of its convictions. Finishes with dusty tannins and good length. Will this wine gain in sweetness with more bottle age?

89(+?)?

2010 Ernie Els Wines Merlot Stellenbosch

(\$25) Good dark red. Classic merlot aromas and flavors of plum, redcurrant, mocha, tobacco leaf and chocolate; distinctly herbal in an Old World way. Supple and fine-grained in the mouth, with good subtle flavor intensity. Harmonious acidity combines with ripe tannins to buffer the wine's moderate sweetness and give it a solid structure for further evolution in bottle.

89

2012 Ernie Els Wines Chenin Blanc Big Easy Western Cape

(\$19) Pale, bright yellow. Expressive, pure aromas of yellow fruits, lanolin and dusty herbs are lifted by a lemony element. Bright and slightly tart-edged, showing almost sauvignon-like pungency to its concentrated flavors of lemon, gooseberry and dusty herbs. Conveys a dusty impression of extract enlivened by harmonious acidity.

89

2010 Keets Wines First Verse Red Wine Stellenbosch

(32% cabernet franc, 26% merlot, 21% cabernet sauvignon, 11% malbec and 10% petit verdot): Bright, dark ruby-red. High-toned aromas of cassis, blackberry, licorice and cedar. Juicy, intense and penetrating, offering very good density without any undue weight. Black fruit and spice flavors are still a bit youthfully tight. Finishes with slightly tough tannins, but this unevolved wine's energy and length suggest that it will reward bottle aging.

89(+?)

2011 Edgebaston Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$40) Good red-ruby. Aromas of black- and redcurrant, tobacco, pepper, herbs and woodsmoke. Supple and quite ripe but with an enticing sugar/acid balance and insinuating intensity to the currant, plum and nutty oak flavors. Finishes with round, smooth, building tannins and a repeating note of nutty oak. I'd drink this attractive cabernet over the next few years.

89

2012 Edgebaston The Pepper Pot Stellenbosch

(\$14) Bright ruby. Slightly reduced aromas of black raspberry, smoke and game are lifted by a peppery quality. Fat, sweet and rich, but with sound acidity giving shape and verve to the concentrated black fruit and gunflint flavors. Finishes with a solid tannic spine. This makes the 2011 seem a bit dry by comparison. An excellent value.

89

2010 Black Pearl Wines The Mischief Maker Red Wine Paarl

(\$18) (14.5% alcohol; an 88/12 blend of shiraz and mourvedre): Bright red-ruby. Aromatic spices and a suggestion of pepper lift the almost liqueur-like aromas of black raspberry, blackberry, licorice and truffle. Lush and seamless, if a bit too sweet and easy for my taste, with rich black raspberry and spice flavors slightly dulled by alcoholic warmth. Finishes with sweet, soft tannins that will not get in the way of early enjoyment. A big mouthful of wine for its price.

89

2010 Black Pearl Wines Oro Paarl

(\$18) (14.7% alcohol; a 77/23 blend of cabernet sauvignon and shiraz; like The Mischief Maker, this was done in second- and third-fill French oak): Good bright red-ruby. Very ripe, smoky aromas of currant, graphite, licorice and truffle. Sweet, suave, lush and deep, with just enough acidity to give the middle palate a graceful texture. Finishes with a smooth dusting of tannins and easy drinkability. This is the project of American Mary-Lou Nash, who was born in Maine and taught English in Japan before becoming a *garagiste* in South Africa. These wines are very reasonably priced.

89

2012 Flagstone Winery Viognier The Rumour Mill Western Cape

Bright, pale yellow. Pure peach on the nose, lifted by floral and licorice nuances. Juicy, nicely concentrated and firmly built, with a spicy edge and slightly elevated acidity giving the wine a penetrating quality. Finishes persistent and lively, with a toasty suggestion.

89

2011 Mulderbosch Vineyards Chardonnay Stellenbosch

(\$25) Pale-medium straw-yellow. Delicate aromas of lime oil, yellow fruits, flowers and fresh herbs. Supple, smooth and nicely concentrated but laid-back, showing more subtle vanilla and toasty oak flavors than primary fruit today. But I was intrigued by this wine's melting umami texture and leesy complexity. Finishes saline, round and dry, with sneaky persistence. There's no rush to drink this chardonnay.

89

2011 Mulderbosch Vineyards Chenin Blanc Steen op Hout Stellenbosch

(\$12) Pale yellow. Musky peach, spices and flowers on the rather delicate nose. Saline, supple and easygoing, with a nice touch of fruit sweetness and very good palate presence. Finishes broad, spicy and dry. An excellent value in chenin blanc.

89

2011 Crystallum Wines Pinot Noir Peter Max Western Cape

(\$36) Medium red. Strawberry, sandalwood and a minty nuance on the rather offbeat nose. Then dry, silky and seamless on the palate, with enticing spicy lift to the raspberry and strawberry fruit. The sandalwood note repeats on the subtly persistent aftertaste. Interesting and distinctive pinot.

89

2010 Crystallum Wines Chardonnay The Agnes Western Cape

(\$34) Full yellow. Apricot, honey and resin plus a hint of fruit syrup on the nose. Fat, sweet and rather exotic, with just enough acidity to give shape to the decadent tropical fruit, peach syrup and vanillin oak flavors. Finishes with a hint of sweetness and considerable sex appeal. A guilty pleasure--and just this side of over the top.

89

2011 Bartinney Chardonnay Stellenbosch

(\$25) (fermented and aged in French oak, one-third new): Full yellow with gold highlights. Apricot, honey and vanillin oak on the rather exotic nose. Sweet, large-scaled and full, with ripe stone fruit and marzipan flavors currently overshadowed by a strong oak element. Very rich wine but I wanted a bit more verve.

89

2012 Excelsior Estate Sauvignon Blanc Robertson

(\$10) (done entirely in stainless steel): Good pale yellow. Pungent aromas and flavors of lime blossom, gooseberry and talc, plus a positive herbaceousness. At once supple and vibrant, showing a distinct limestone lift and subtle complexity for its gentle price. Firm acids extend the finish. A great value. By many accounts, the Robertson area did very well in 2012 and this one is a good example.

89

2006 Springfield Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Methode Ancienne Robertson

Dark red. High-toned aromas of currant, plum, tobacco and exotic spices. Broad, smooth, sweet and easygoing, with nicely concentrated flavors of redcurrant, plum and spices. Finishes with a fine dusting of tannins and lingering sweetness but doesn't have quite the verve or grip for outstanding.

89

2012 Haute Cabriere Chardonnay/Pinot Noir Franschhoek

(\$17) (12.5% alcohol; a 70/30 blend): Bright, light straw-yellow. Delicate aromas of white peach, *mirabelle*, ginger, herbs and lichee. Good density to the intense red berry, stone fruit and floral flavors, with a complicating suggestion of underbrush. Nicely fine-grained wine with a lightly phenolic character and good lingering sweetness of fruit. A surprisingly successful "Burgundy blend."

89

2009 De Meyer Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$17) Bright red-ruby. Enticing aromas and flavors of black raspberry, currant, tobacco leaf, graphite and woodsmoke. Sweet, smooth and energetic, with harmonious acidity giving shape and lift to the middle palate. The woodsmoke and tobacco notes carry through to the lingering, slightly dry finish, which boasts fine-grained tannins. Nicely balanced cabernet.

89

2011 Raats Family Wines Red Jasper Stellenbosch

(\$20) (56% cabernet franc, 27% malbec, 11% cabernet sauvignon and 6% petit verdot): Dark red. Plum, dark berries, mocha, brown spices and fresh herbs on the expressive nose. Sweet, silky and fresh on entry, then a bit clenched in the middle, with slightly elevated acidity and firm minerality accentuating the varietally typical elements of licorice and herbs. Finishes firmly tannic and a touch dry, in need of time in bottle to unwind.

89(+?)

2010 Kanonkop Wine Estate Kadette Stellenbosch

(\$15) (a Cape blend of 44% pinotage, 41% cabernet sauvignon, 9% merlot and 6% cabernet franc; aged in two- and three-year-old barrels): Good full, deep red. Aromas and flavors of plum, cranberry, chocolate, smoke, herbs and spices. Ripe and lush but dry, with a lightly herbaceous quality providing lift. Finishes with broad, fine-grained tannins and noticeable sweet oak.

89

Priced from: **12.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Strandveld Vineyards The Navigator Red Wine Elim

(\$25) (58% syrah, 24% grenache, 12% mourvedre and 6% viognier): Bright medium red. Musky aromas and flavors of red plum, smoke and spices. At once silky and juicy, offering excellent intensity and a continuing musky character in the mouth. Very young and on the lean side, but this blend's concentration and very good length suggest it will reward four or five years of bottle aging.

89(+?)

2008 Robertson Winery Wolfkloof Shiraz

(\$19) Medium red. Mellow aromas of smoky red fruits and musky underbrush. A sweet, firm midweight, with red berry, pepper and spice flavors nicely framed by harmonious acidity. Finishes with serious but ripe tannins and good length.

89

2012 De Wetshof Estate Chardonnay Danie de Wet sur Lie Robertson

(\$15) Subtle aromas of lemon drop, crisp apple and *fynbos*, plus a suggestion of yellow Chartreuse. At once brisk and ripe, offering lovely texture for unwooded chardonnay. Sound acidity serves to intensify this wine's varietally accurate citrus and stone fruit flavors. The finish features very good length and grip. At 13% alcohol, this is very refreshing.

89

2012 Vergelegen Chardonnay Stellenbosch

(\$18) Sexy, subtle aromas of lime blossom, *mirabelle*, white pepper and quinine. Supple and vibrant on the palate, with harmonious acidity giving shape to the white peach, citrus fruit, herb and spice flavors. Not quite as complex in the mouth as the nose suggests but boasts excellent energy and dusty peppery lift.

89

2007 Vergelegen Shiraz Stellenbosch

(\$32) Bright, dark red-ruby. Complex, expressive aromas of black raspberry, blackberry, smoked meat, olive tapenade and truffle. Sweet and plush, with a funky gamey component dominating the palate today. Finishes with slightly drying tannins. Substantial wine but I wanted a bit more primary fruit. I'd drink this over the next year or two.

89

2012 A.A. Badenhorst Chenin Blanc Secateurs Swartland

Bright, light yellow. Peachy fruit salad and spice aromas are enlivened by grapefruit pith. Rich and silky, with a slightly sweet impression nicely countered by harmonious acidity. Round and fairly full in the mouth and still a bit youthfully aggressive. Finishes nicely dry, with hints of ripe stone fruits and quince.

89

Priced from: **14.97**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 Creation Wines Syrah Walker Bay

(\$29) Good bright, dark red. Red raspberry, mocha and a whiff of woodsmoke on the nose. Supple and sweet in the mouth, but with good energy and clarity to the red berry flavors. Finishes with firm, dusty tannins and good length. Tasty already owing to its sweetness of fruit.

89

2010 Keermont Vineyards Syrah Stellenbosh

(\$40) Good dark ruby-red. Captivating if restrained aromas of blackberry, smoked meat, pepper and herbs. Not especially fleshy but spicy and aromatic in the mouth, with a black fruit confiture flavor complicated by a touch of dried berries. Still rather youthfully tight, finishing with substantial dusty tannins and lingering perfume.

89

2012 Thelema Mountain Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$15) (done entirely in stainless steel): Pale green-tinged yellow. Aromas of lime, tropical fruits, caraway seed and minerals. Rich, tactile and seamless; not yet particularly expressive but boasts excellent body and substance for sauvignon blanc. Finishes with a slightly dusty phenolic quality and very good length. Not quite the cut for 90 points.

89

2009 Thelema Mountain Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$41) Good dark red. Cassis, licorice, dark chocolate and cedar on the nose. Tightly wound and powerful but with a distinctly cool aspect to the dark berry and eucalyptus flavors. Finishes with a firm tannic spine that will require time to unwind. I don't yet find the sweetness or flesh of the year but this is very young.

89(+?)

2008 Thelema Mountain Vineyards Shiraz Stellenbosch

(\$36) (18 months in French oak, 40% new): Good dark red. Aromatic nose offers scents of pepper, game, chocolate and minerals. Spicy black fruits, bitter chocolate and earth on the palate, complicated by herb and truffle nuances. Finishes with substantial oak tannins and a touch of youthful dryness. Not hugely ripe but very well done.

89(+?)

2011 Neil Ellis Wines Sauvignon Blanc Groenekloof

(\$18) Bright, silvery straw-yellow color. Enticing aromas of citrus zest, musky yellow fruits, fresh herbs, honey and spices; conveys a strong impression of aromatic *fynbos*. Concentrated and tactile, with some unabsorbed CO2 providing lift. Finishes supple and persistent but doesn't quite have the intensity or nuance for 90 points.

89

Priced from: **17.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 Glen Carlou Chardonnay Paarl

(\$17) Medium straw-yellow color. Aromas of ripe apricot, clove, truffle and smoky oak. Rich, broad and nicely concentrated, with a touch of sweetness to the stone fruit and smoke flavors. Nicely balanced chardonnay with good stuffing and length. Began a tad aggressive but smoothed out with time in the glass. No hurry to drink this. (A second sample, which I scored a point lower, showed a more liqueur-like aspect to its yellow fruit and tropical flavors and more apparent oakiness. It was also a bit more evolved.)

89

2010 Diemersfontein Pinotage Reserve Wellington

(\$25) Good moderately saturated red. Musky red berries, plum and woodsmoke on the nose and palate. Juicy, supple and intense, showing good vinosity and varietal character. Has the fruit concentration to support its woodsmoke element.

89

2011 Bouchard Finlayson Chardonnay Crocodile's Lair Kaaimansgat Overberg

(\$25) Full yellow. Aromas of *mirabelle*, pineapple, honey and resin, with an exotic suggestion of noble rot. In a very ripe, plump style, offering good breadth and richness to the lemon candy and yellow fruit flavors. Comes across as thick in texture owing to its impression of soft acidity. Could use more zest but this is a big, smooth mouthful of yellow fruits with just enough shape and life in the mouth to make for a satisfying drink.

89

2011 Bouchard Finlayson Pinot Noir Galpin Peak Hemel-en-Aarde Valley

(\$55) Bright medium red. Sexy, perfumed aromas of strawberry, spices, flowers and soil. Supple and vinous in the mouth, with a saline complexity to the musky strawberry and earth flavors. Not hugely primary but this generous, silky pinot finishes with suave tannins and surprising lift.

89

2012 Lynx Wines Viognier Franschhoek

(\$20) (25% fermented in barrel): Pale, green-tinged yellow. Sexy aromas and flavors of ripe peach, lemon, pineapple and licorice. Round and spicy, with a seductive hint of sweetness nicely balanced by fresh acidity. Broad, graceful, fine-grained viognier with nice balance and finishing lift.

89

2012 Lynx Wines Blanc de Noir Franschhoek

(\$14) (a 95/5 blend of merlot and cabernet franc, done via *saignee* in stainless steel): Partridge eye color. Aromas of strawberry and raspberry complicated by a musky leesy element. Supple, ripe and smooth, with an attractive sweet touch to its subtle red fruit flavors. Very fresh and gracefully made rose with a persistent perfumed finish. Excellent value.

89

2011 De Trafford Wines Chenin Blanc Straw Wine Stellenbosch

(\$50) (14.5%, vs. 14% for the 2012; this was in a green bottle, while the 2012 was brown): Good, full deep yellow. Riper, muskier aromas of apricot and honey, plus a suggestion of apple pie; smells heavier than the 2012. Then very ripe and soft but with enough acidity to give shape to the apricot and honey flavors complicated by a leesy nuance. Finishes lush and broad, with a slightly tannic impression and very good length.

89

2008 De Trafford Wines Merlot Stellenbosch

(\$40) Good full, dark red. Varietally expressive aromas of redcurrant, plum, wild herbs, milk chocolate and truffle. Densely packed dark berry, bitter chocolate and licorice flavors are complicated by truffle, herbs and a hint of tar. Finishes with a firm tannic spine and very good length. This very young merlot needs a few years in bottle to gain in pliancy.

89(+?)

2007 De Trafford Wines Elevation 393 Stellenbosch

(\$95) Good bright ruby-red. Smoke and mocha on the very ripe nose; showing more syrah than cabernet today. Round and sweet on the palate but without quite the clarity of the 2008. Ultimately a less complex wine, finishing with a slightly herbaceous character and a touch of dryness.

89

2010 Wildekrans Wine Estate Pinotage Barrel Select Reserve Bot River

(\$35) Good medium-deep red. Raspberry, strawberry, meat and smoky oak on the nose. Silky on entry, then nicely smooth and concentrated in the middle, with harmonious acidity framing the juicy red fruit flavors. A step up from the regular 2010 pinotage in definition, intensity and lift. Finishes with firm, oak-influenced tannins and good length. Has personality.

89

2009 The Three Foxes Syrah The Castillo Swartland

(\$35) Good medium red. Slightly sweaty aromas of strawberry and pepper. Penetrating and vibrant, with pepper and spicy notes enlivening the red berry flavors. Finishes firmly tannic and gripping, with excellent verve and a light touch. Made by Chris Mullineux, who is also responsible for the superb wines under the Mullineux Family Wines label.

89

2012 Buitenverwachting Sauvignon Blanc Beyond Coastal Region

(\$12) (done in stainless steel): Pale yellow-green. Lime, lemon, powdered stone and fresh herbs on the nose, plus a whiff of passion fruit. Supple and easygoing but also vibrant and delineated, with a firm edge of minerality to the citrus and spice flavors. The clean, lingering finish shows a positive dusty quality. As always, a terrific value.

89

2012 Buitenverwachting Sauvignon Blanc Bayten Constantia

(\$15) (this is the new name for Buitenverwachting's estate sauvignon blanc): Pale straw-yellow. Sexy aromas of gooseberry, grass and fig complicated by a chalky note. Very ripe but dry, with slightly exotic lime and fig flavors enlivened by strong acidity and flinty minerality. Finishes dusty and persistent.

89

Priced from: **14.96**

[Compare prices](#)

2008 Kleinood Syrah Tamboerskloof Stellenbosch

(\$40) Medium red. Red and darker fruit aromas accented by pepper and spices. Juicy and penetrating, offering enticing if youthfully clenched flavors of dark berries, licorice and graphite, along with a whiff of chocolate. Distinctly leaner than the 2009 release and in a more polite style.

89(+?)

2012 Fairview Chenin Blanc Darling

(\$13) Very pale, green-tinged yellow. Subtle aromas of citrus zest, ginger, crushed stone, minty wild herbs and white pepper. Supple and dense, with plenty of palate presence to the flavors of citrus peel, ginger, licorice and herbs. Finishes dusty and firm, with a hint of quinine bitterness. This would be a very good choice with spicy Asian dishes. A very good showing.

89

2010 Fairview Pinotage Primo Paarl

(\$29) Dark red with a saturated middle. Very ripe, musky aromas of stewed plum, smoke, spice cake and chocolatey oak, lifted by a minty nuance. Fat, sweet and fairly full, with plum, red berry and spice flavors firmed on the end by dusty, peppery tannins that coat the front teeth. Rather old-fashioned but varietally expressive and rich pinotage with some exotic smoky, chocolatey oak tones.

89

2010 Fairview Caldera Coastal Region

(\$22) (43% shiraz, 43% grenache and 14% mourvedre): Good dark red. Musky dark berry aromas complicated by tobacco, mocha, earth and nutty oak. Sweet, suave and smooth, with harmonious acidity framing the flavors of red plum, redcurrant, cherry, menthol and spicecake. Finishes with hints of woodsmoke and leather and sweet, dusty tannins. Not the last word in definition or lift but elegantly styled.

89

2009 Fairview Shiraz Jakkalsfontein Swartland

(\$36) Bright ruby-red. Sexy nutty oak complements musky black raspberry, chocolate and mint aromas on the slightly porty nose. Thick, lush and seamless, with black raspberry fruit currently overshadowed by smoke, olive and earth. Finishes with big tannins that turned a bit dusty on the persistent back end. This bottle was actually fresher than an earlier sample but I still wanted more lift and energy.

89?

2007 Ashbourne Sandstone White Wine Walker Bay

(\$23) (12.5% alcohol; 85% sauvignon blanc and 15% chardonnay; this is a project of Anthony Hamilton Russell, whose objective is to make an ageworthy white wine with moderate alcohol, from well-drained sandstone soil): Full, bright golden-yellow. Idiosyncratic nose combines dried apricot, ginger and raw pepper. Broad, lush, spicy and dry, with an insidious element of dusty herbs running through the wine. Not at all a fruity style but nicely ripe and deep. Doesn't have quite the length for an outstanding rating, though.

89

2012 Iona Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Sophie Te'blanche Cape South Coast

(\$14) Pale bright yellow. Subtle, refreshing aromas of lemon, grapefruit, honey and fresh herbs lifted by white pepper and flowers. Sweeter than the 2012 flagship sauvignon, but without quite that wine's bracing character. But this is easygoing, supple and delicious, not to mention a superb value. Finishes with tropical fruits and grapefruit.

89

2008 Iona Vineyards One Man Band Red Wine Elgin

(a blend of shiraz, merlot, cabernet franc, petit verdot and mourvedre): Good full ruby-red. Aromas of black raspberry, mocha, woodsmoke, graphite, herbs and shoe polish. Supple and sweet but firm too, with noteworthy concentration and depth to the dark berry, mocha and woodsmoke flavors. Finishes with substantial dusty tannins, very good breadth and good persistence.

89

2011 Iona Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Elgin

(\$17) Bright pale yellow. Pure and complex on the nose but more restrained than the 2012, offering hints of lemon, grapefruit, tropical fruits and dusty herbs. Offers enticing sweetness if not quite the grip of the 2012. Nicely open-knit sauvignon with an attractive lemon candy flavor, very good intensity and firm finishing minerality. Perfect now or over the next year or two.

89

2012 Iona Vineyards Chardonnay Elgin

(\$22) Bright yellow. Subtly complex nose combines peach and apricot with wild herbs, musky lees, white pepper and a hint of minerality. Supple and rich, showing an impression of sweetness that comes more from textural richness than from actual residual sugar. The peach and mineral flavors carry through to the lingering finish, which is nicely firmed by a light phenolic edge.

89

2011 Vrede en Lust Chardonnay Marguerite Simonsberg-Paarl

(\$24) Bright medium yellow. Aromas of *mirabelle*, pear, wild herbs, nutmeg and subtle musky oak. Vibrant and uncompromising, with the citrusy energy to manage its oak element. Finishes broad, smoky and slightly phenolic, with a saline, tactile quality and a light touch. I like this.

89

2009 Vrede en Lust Boet Erasmus Simonsberg-Paarl

(\$30) (a Bordeaux blend based on 54% cabernet sauvignon and 38% merlot): Bright, dark red. Currant, plum, spices and herbs on the nose and palate, plus a hint of menthol. Sweet and tactile, with firm minerality energizing the middle palate. A firm spine of tannins gives this fairly dense blend good structure for aging. I'd cellar it for two to four years before pulling the cork.

89(+?)

2008 Tokara Director's Reserve Red South Africa

(\$35) (a Bordeaux blend based on 73% cabernet sauvignon; aged for 22 months in French oak): Good dark red. Aromas and flavors of currant, plum, tobacco leaf, green pepper, mocha and loam are very Old World. Ripe and supple on entry, then penetrating in the mid-palate, with good life and grip to the flavors of red fruits, tobacco and coconutty oak. Not hard in spite of its rather peppery acidity; in fact,

this wine is rather plush without being oversized. Finishes dry and persistent, with youthfully edgy tannins that call for at least a couple years of patience.

89(+?)?

2011 Tokara Sauvignon Blanc Western Cape

(\$16) Pale, green-tinged yellow. Cool, precise aromas of lemon, lime, musky herbs, grass and white pepper, plus a whiff of tropical fruits. The palate offers an enticing combination of sweet fruit and dusty minerality, showing very good spicy lift to the flavors of white peach, lemon-lime and grapefruit. Finishes pliant and long, with a refreshing edge of citrus pith giving the wine a slightly sweet/sour quality on the back. This needs to be served with food.

89

2011 Teddy Hall Chenin Blanc Summer Moments Stellenbosch

(\$10) Pale yellow. Cool aromas of lime, apple and mint lifted by high notes of lavender and powdered stone. Dry, intense and penetrating, with strong lemony acidity framing the crisp apple, lemon and floral flavors. No shortage of body for a wine with just 12% alcohol. Brisk, substantial chenin blanc with a clean, persistent finish. (An earlier sample came across as drier and more rigid, as its fruit remained in the deep background.)

89

2008 Anthonij Rupert Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Coastal Region

(\$80) Good full, deep red. Cassis, mocha, tobacco leaf and sweet oak scents on the nose. Supple, concentrated and nicely sweet, offering a creamier, more pliant texture than the cabernet franc. The flavors of dark raspberry, tobacco leaf and herbs are nicely framed on the finish by dusty tannins.

89

2011 Dornier Wines Pinotage Stellenbosch

(\$18) Bright red-ruby. Fresh, delicate aromas of blackberry, licorice and spices. Juicy, bright and firmly built, with noteworthy purity to the black fruit and spice flavors. A bit hard-edged today but this is still a baby. In a distinctly modern, clean style. Finishes with a firm tannic spine and very good length.

89(+?)

2010 Dornier Wines Donatus Red Wine Stellenbosch

(\$25) Bright red-ruby. Superripe aromas of cherry and mulberry. Very rich and creamy, offering excellent depth but a bit less refinement than usual for this Bordeaux blend. Conveys excellent ripeness but I don't find outstanding complexity or length. Finishes with building dusty tannins and a slightly heavy quality.

89

2008 Stony Brook Semillon Reserve Franschoek

(\$22) Full, bright yellow. Lemon, lanolin and enticing nutty oak on the nose. Appealing citrus fruit flavor shows good texture and intensity and a hint of sweetness. Finishes with a slightly phenolic dusty quality and sneaky length. Still youthfully wound up.

89

2009 Stony Brook The Max Red Wine Franschoek

(\$26) (62% cabernet sauvignon and 38% merlot): Good medium red. Currant, mocha, tobacco, woodsmoke and peppery herbs on the nose. At once sweet and vinous, with good penetration and intensity to the currant and herb flavors. Still tight and firmly tannic, but this nicely concentrated wine offers plenty of flavor interest and very good persistence. I'd come back to it in 12 to 18 months.

89(+?)

2010 Rhebokskloof Wine Estate Syrah Black Marble Hills Paarl

(\$54) (15% alcohol): Good bright, deep red-ruby. Musky red fruits, mocha and smoky oak on the nose. Silky on entry, then sweet, lush and very ripe in the mid-palate, with red berry flavors complemented but not overwhelmed by nutty oak. Finishes with substantial dusty tannins and a hint of alcoholic warmth.

89

2012 De Morgenzon Cabernet Rose DMZ Western Cape

(\$12) Orange-pink color. Pungent, high-pitched aromas of pomegranate, strawberry and flowers. Wonderfully intense rose, with an impression of mineral cut and strong acidity giving grip and lift to the bracing palate. Just over five grams of residual sugar are eaten up by very high acidity. The palate-cleansing finish is dusty, fairly dry and long. An amazing value in pink wine.

89

2011 De Morgenzon Syrah DMZ Western Cape

(\$15) (blended with 7% mourvedre and 5% grenache): Bright ruby-red. Musky aromas of boysenberry, huckleberry, smoke and dark chocolate. Suave and sweet on the palate, offering complex flavors of red berries, coffee, mocha and tree bark. Finishes with a fine dusting of tannins. Excellent value.

89

2012 Glenelly Chardonnay Unwooded The Glass Collection Stellenbosch

(\$20) Pale bright yellow. Stone fruits, melon, honey, musky lees and a whiff of smoky oak on the nose. Nicely glyceric and seamless, with stone fruit flavors lifted by citrus zest. Boasts lovely varietal character at a relatively low 12.5% alcohol; I like this style. Finishes broad but without quite the grip for 90 points.

89

2010 Glenelly Cabernet Sauvignon The Glass Collection Stellenbosch

(\$20) Good dark red-ruby. Sexy, inviting aromas of plum, currant, coffee, mocha, herbs and spices. Suave and fine-grained, with a restrained sweetness to the currant and espresso flavors. Sound acidity gives shape to the middle palate and carries the dry finish.

89

2011 Spice Route Wine Company Sauvignon Blanc Darling

(\$15) Pale green-tinged yellow. Cool aromas of passion fruit, lime, flowers, pepper and minerals. At once supple and juicy, with ripe limey acidity and some dusty CO2 framing the musky gooseberry and tropical fruit flavors. Finishes firm, minerally and dry, with good tactile length. Well done.

89

2012 Spice Route Wine Company Chenin Blanc Swartland

(\$18) (barrel-fermented): Medium, bright straw-yellow. Aromas of spiced apple, white flowers and honey. Supple, ripe and concentrated, showing noteworthy breadth to the citrus, melon, spice and vanillin oak flavors. The spice character carries through on the moderately long, dry finish, which features good dusty grip. This is very good but I'd give it another year in bottle for the finish to soften a bit.

89

2010 Spice Route Wine Company Shiraz Swartland

(\$20) Good saturated ruby-red. Highly perfumed, in-your-face aromas of blackberry, licorice, espresso and mint. Rich, tactile and concentrated, with dark berry flavors accented by spices and herbs. Nicely deep, persistent shiraz with a firm dusting of tannins. Very smooth wine but without quite the verve for 90 points.

89

2009 Stark Conde Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$25) Full red-ruby. Plum, currant, mocha, menthol and woodsmoke on the nose, accented by pepper and herbs. Supple but firm, with dark berry and spicecake flavors nicely framed by harmonious acidity. I was bothered by a slightly intrusive note of woodsmoke on the palate and aftertaste. The dusty tannins seem a bit dry. I'd give this another couple years to harmonize.

89

2012 Vins D'Orrance Chenin Blanc Kama Western Cape

(aged for 11 months in third-fill French *barrisques*): Light, medium yellow. Dusty, high-toned spices and ripe peach on the nose. Round, spicy and rich in the mouth; nicely dry and tactile, with flavors of grapefruit, lichee and menthol. Finishes broad and quite dry, with a medicinal reserve to its grapefruit and white peach flavors. Intense and uncompromising chenin blanc.

89

2011 Beyerskloof Pinotage Western Cape

(\$13) Bright, modestly saturated red. Lively aromas of strawberry, flowers and spices. Light, juicy and fresh, offering moderate intensity to the supple red fruit flavors. Finishes with dusty tannins. This is all about fruit.

88

2009 House of Mandela Chardonnay Royal Reserve Elgin

(\$25) Bright yellow. Musky peach and apple aromas are complicated by a leesy nuance. A major step up in concentration from the basic chardonnay, with bright acidity framing and lifting the fruit-driven flavors of peach, lemon and pineapple. Finishes firm and persistent, with good flavor authority.

88

2008 Stelkaya Winery Hercules Red Wine Stellenbosch

(\$28) (50% sangiovese and 25% each merlot and cabernet sauvignon): Medium red. Subtly perfumed aromas of cherry, dried flowers and smoky herbs. A juicy, vibrant midweight in an Old World style, with lively acidity giving definition to the currant, plum, spice and herb flavors. Finishes with serious tongue-dusting tannins and a brisk acid spine. Not at all sweet but subtle and persistent.

88

2011 Fairview Viognier Paarl

(\$20) Pale straw-yellow. Slightly exotic aromas of apricot, marzipan, clove oil, dusty herbs and pepper. Supple and perfumed in the mouth, with good spicy/herbal lift. Turns a bit lean on the back half, finishing with decent length and a peppery greenness that should work well with food. I'd drink this viognier within the next year.

88

2010 Fairview Pinotage/Viognier Coastal Region

(\$20) Dullish dark red. Slightly diffuse aromas of musky plum, spicecake, chocolate and pepper. Supple and plump but also surprisingly fresh in the mouth, with the viognier component providing a floral, white fruit perfume. Conveys an impression of sweetness in the middle palate, then finishes with fine-grained dusty tannins that coat the entire mouth.

88

2009 Fairview Shiraz Coastal Region

(\$15) Good saturated ruby-red. Plum, mocha and nutty oak on the nose. Nicely sweet in the mouth, with decent life to the plum, mocha and smoke flavors. Finishes with dusty, building tannins and a slightly dry suggestion of unabsorbed acidity.

88

2010 Fairview Eenzaamheid Shiraz Paarl

(\$36) Bright, dark red with ruby tones. Slightly porty aromas of raspberry, blackberry, mocha and chocolate. Ripe, pliant and fairly full-bodied, but with a faintly tired quality to the musky red fruit, beefsteak tomato and smoky, nutty oak flavors. Plush wine but I wanted more shape and verve.

88?

2010 Iona Vineyards Chardonnay Elgin

(\$22) Bright, light yellow. Peach and high-toned vanillin oak on the nose, with a suggestion of candied fruits. Round and ripe but a bit simple, showing a rather developed note of browning apple. Boasts good texture and mouth feel but finishes with a slight dry edge. I'd drink this soon.

88

2012 Vrede en Lust Viognier Western Cape

(\$28) Pale, bright yellow. Aromas of apple, apricot, lichee and flowers. Sweet and agreeable, offering musky apple and peach flavors lifted by spices and flowers. The persistent finish shows a slightly dusty phenolic quality and a hint of resinous oak that adds interest.

88

2010 Tokara Shiraz Stellenbosch

(\$19) Good bright, medium red. Musky red berries, pepper, herbs and woodsmoke on the rather laid-back nose and palate. Sweet and pliant on entry, offering sneaky depth and intensity, then firmer in the middle plate, showing a savory olive character to the red fruit flavors. Finishes dry and a bit rigid, with a slight green edge. This reminded me of an old-fashioned Saint-Joseph.

88

2009 Tokara Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$19) Good medium red. Redcurrant, raspberry, tobacco leaf and an herbal element on the nose and palate, complicated by pepper, woodsmoke and chocolatey oak. Vinous and aromatic but a bit tart, showing modest flesh and intensity but good varietal character. Gained a bit of depth as it opened in the glass, but the dusty, light tannins are accompanied by a repeating greenness on the back. (A second bottle, which I scored 87 points, showed more of a roasted character and an almost candied quality to its dried fruit flavors.)

88

2010 Tokara Sauvignon Blanc Reserve Collection Elgin South Africa

(\$22) Pale, green-tinged yellow. Rather raw aromas of grapefruit pith and green pepper, plus an herbaceous note that reminded me of the spruce bark wrapper on a piece of Edel de Cleron cheese. Dusty, intense and bright, with grapefruit, herb and pepper flavors sharpened by some unabsorbed CO₂. A distinctly uncompromising, tart-edged sauvignon blanc that will shock the sensibilities of some tasters.

88(+?)?

2011 Diemersdal Chardonnay Reserve Durbanville

(\$17) Full gold-tinged yellow. Deep aromas and flavors of yellow fruits, hazelnut and smoky, toasty, vanillin oak. Considerably richer than the winery's unoaked 2011 chardonnay, but this leesy wine will need a year or two to absorb some of its oakiness. Finishes with edgy stone fruit flavors and good length.

88

2008 Anthonij Rupert Wines Cabernet Franc Coastal Region

(\$90) Good full red. Aromatic, varietally expressive nose offers blueberry, redcurrant, tobacco leaf and mocha. Supple on entry, then sappy and youthfully wound-up in the middle, hinting at red- and blackcurrant, tobacco, leather, mocha, smoke and earth. This nicely delineated wine's firm tannic spine calls for patience. May well merit a higher score with three or four years of additional time in bottle.

88(+?)

2009 Rooiberg Pinotage Reserve Robertson

(\$15) Bright red-ruby. Dark berries, olive tapenade, mocha and woodsmoke on the oaky nose. Rich and nicely concentrated, with dark berry flavors complicated by smoke and spicecake and given shape by surprisingly firm acidity. Finishes with serious, dusty, slightly tough tannins that call for a couple more years of patience.

88(+?)

2009 Rooiberg Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Robertson

(\$15) Bright ruby-red. Aromas of blackcurrant, blueberry, licorice and clove complicated by spicy oak. Sweet, concentrated and a bit youthfully muscular, with strong acidity giving the very dark fruit flavors an impression of medicinal reserve. Vinous and brisk but youthfully bound-up today, this cabernet will need time to unwind.

88(+?)

2010 Dornier Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Stellenbosch

(\$18) Good full ruby-red. Very ripe aromas of dark berries, licorice and dark chocolate show a slightly porty aspect. Then sweet, plush and generous, with the dark fruit and licorice flavors lifted by mineral acidity. Finishes with good length, but the slightly tough tannins give the wine a youthful hardness.

88(+?)

2010 Stony Brook Ghost Gum White Wine Franschhoek

(\$26) (a 67/33 blend of semillon and sauvignon blanc): Pale straw-yellow. Idiosyncratic nose offers honey, horseradish, vanilla and a meaty nuance. Supple, broad and fairly dry, with waxy honey and sweet oak flavors dominating the middle palate. Round, sexy and essentially easygoing wine with good length and an oaky firmness on the back.

88

2010 Post House Penny Black Stellenbosch

(\$30) (a blend of shiraz, merlot, cabernet sauvignon, petit verdot and chenin blanc!): Full, saturated ruby-red. Vibrant aromas of crushed blackberry and mint. Juicy, intense and sharply delineated if a bit youthfully rigid, with black fruit and mint flavors accented by licorice and leather on the firmly tannic finish. Plenty of flavor interest here but will this rather extractive blend become more pliant and harmonious with bottle aging?

88(+?)

2011 Guardian Peak Merlot Western Cape

(\$15) Moderately saturated medium red. Good lift to the aromas of redcurrant, tobacco, cocoa, mocha and coffee. Supple, sweet and edge-free, with a creamy texture to the flavors of redcurrant, plum and mocha. Sweet tannins won't get in the way of enjoying this merlot right now.

88

2012 Indaba Chenin Blanc Western Cape

(\$12) Pale greenish yellow. Citrus and mint aromas accented by flowers and pepper. Round and slightly sweet (five grams per liter r.s.), but with sound acidity giving shape to the flavors of melon, honey and green pepper. A touch of oak adds complexity. This crowd-pleasing, aggressively priced chenin should be flexible at the dinner table.

88

Priced from: **6.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Indaba Mosaic Red Wine Western Cape

(\$12) (a Bordeaux blend based on 76% cabernet sauvignon): Brambly blackberry, dark chocolate, licorice and a peppery accent on the nose. Densely packed and juicy, with bright acidity framing the cassis and spice flavors. Just a bit syrupy owing to its four grams of residual sugar but the soft finish nonetheless manages good grip. Ready to drink--and an excellent value.

88

2009 Spice Route Wine Company Chakalaka Swartland

(\$22) (37% syrah, 21% mourvedre, 18% carignan, 10% petite sirah, 10% grenache and 4% tannat): Good deep red. Musky, rather low-toned aromas of plum, spices, tobacco and pepper. Silky and seamless in the mouth, with ripe flavors of dark berries, smoke and spices. Finishes with a smooth dusting of slightly edgy tannins, some nutty oak and good length.

88

Priced from: **15.83**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Spice Route Wine Company Pinotage Swartland

(\$23) Good dark red. Blackberry, cranberry, chocolate mint and exotic spicy oak on the nose. Juicy and firmly built, with good peppery, spicy lift to the flavors of dark berries and chocolatey oak. Finishes with good vinosity and building, chewy, oak-driven tannins.

88

2011 Juno Wine Company Shiraz Western Cape

(\$10) Bright dark red. Perfumed aromas of raspberry, blueberry, licorice and flowers. Vinous and suave, with good lift to the fairly intense dark berry, licorice and spice flavors. Finishes with a firm dusting of tannins and attractive pliancy. An attractive little shiraz, showing little of the gamey side of the variety.

88

2008 The Foundry Syrah Stellenbosch

Good bright red-ruby. Aromas and flavors of plum, black cherry, dark chocolate, spicecake, mint and mocha. Sweet and plush on the palate but a bit chunky, even stunted, today despite possessing sound acidity. Finishes with chewy, youthfully clenched tannins. This is not the first vintage of this bottling that has struck me as a bit musclebound at this stage of its life in bottle.

88(+)?

2010 Cederberg Merlot/Shiraz Cederberg

(\$14) Good full, deep red. Raspberry, smoke, mint and a whiff of tobacco leaf on the nose. Supple and juicy on the palate, offering modest texture to the red fruit, spice and pepper flavors. Could use more flavor authority but this is a nicely balanced blend with a soft dusting of tannins that won't get in the way of early consumption.

88

2010 Cederberg Shiraz Cederberg

(\$20) Medium red-ruby. Slightly stunted aromas of dark raspberry, woodsmoke and violet. Supple and nicely filled in, if not especially dense or intense. A round, pleasant wine with dark fruit flavors framed but not overwhelmed by sweet tannins.

88

2012 Ridgeback Wines Sauvignon Blanc Paarl

(\$16) Very pale yellow. Lime, lichee and fresh herbs on the nose, lifted by a floral note. Juicy, brisk and firmly built, showing a positive bitterness to its lemon and mineral flavors. Finishes firm and refreshing.

88

2008 Ridgeback Wines Shiraz Paarl

(\$22) Good bright medium red. Plum, currant, cherry, spicecake and chocolate on the nose, lifted by a peppery nuance. Supple, spicy and moderately deep, with rather polite-for-syrah flavors of red berries, spicecake and herbs. Finishes with broad, dusty, slightly drying tannins.

88

2012 Nederburg Special Late Harvest Winemaster's Reserve Western Cape

(\$13) Aromas of apricot, peach syrup and white raisin. A superripe, sweet, fat fruit bomb on the palate, with lightly viscous stone fruit and sultana raisin flavors given shape by harmonious acidity. Silky in texture but ultimately a sweet wine of modest complexity. Finishes with a strong raisiny aftertaste.

88

2012 Nederburg Sauvignon Blanc Winemaster's Reserve Western Cape

(\$11) Bright pale yellow. Pungent aromas of gooseberry, melon and fresh herbs. Juicy, spicy and cleanly made, with good intensity to the flavors of citrus fruits, pineapple, pepper and herbs. Finishes firm, dusty and persistent, with refreshing pineapple and grapefruit notes.

88

2012 Nederburg Chardonnay Winemaster's Reserve Western Cape

(\$11) Pale straw-yellow. Aromas of fresh peach, apricot, lime, licorice and nutmeg, with subtle, complementary oak notes. Supple and sweet but brisk too, with sound acidity giving shape and lift to the strong stone fruit flavors. Not especially complex but nicely balanced--and delicious already.

88

2011 Kaapzicht Estate Sauvignon Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$14) Bright, light yellow. Ripe aromas of melon and tropical fruits complicated by herbs. Supple, dusty and dry, with good freshness and restraint to the citrus, floral and nutty flavors. Moderately intense, nicely understated wine with nothing hard about it.

88

2012 Ken Forrester Wines Petit Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$12) Sexy suggestion of noble rot adds interest to the aromas of ripe melon, quince, green apple, honeysuckle and spices. Supple and creamy, in a distinctly easygoing style. A tad phenolic on the finish but smooth nonetheless. This is always a terrific value.

88

2011 Thokozani Chenin Blanc/Chardonnay/Viognier Wellington

(\$21) Bright, light yellow. Musky stone fruits, flowers, herbs and dusty spices on the nose. Layered flavors of lemon, spices and lees are lifted by some unabsorbed CO₂. The dry, palate-dusting finish shows good persistence.

88

2011 Reyneke Wines Capstone Red Blend Stellenbosch

(\$28) (45% cabernet sauvignon, 36% merlot and 19% cabernet franc): Good bright, dark red. Aromatically complex nose offers currant and raspberry complicated by leather and exotic flowers, plus an intrusive whiff of adhesive tape. Juicy and tightly wound, with currant fruit accented by pepper and spice notes. Finishes edgy and unyielding, with a serious tannic spine. I'm not sure where this can go in bottle.

88(+?)?

2012 Painted Wolf Chenin Blanc Black Pack Coastal Swartland

(\$17) (two-thirds fermented in used barrels): Bright, full straw-yellow. Withdrawn nose hints at vanilla, honey and spice oils. A step up in intensity from The Den viognier, showing a brisk lemon zest note but less obvious fruit today than its less expensive sibling. Finishes drier and longer if a bit backward.

88

2010 Eagles' Nest Sauvignon Blanc Constantia

(\$22) Bright, light yellow. Pungent aromas of citrus peel, pepper and nettles, plus a whiff of asparagus. Intensely flavored and penetrating, showing good ripeness and texture, but the asparagus note will be too strong for the faint of heart. Finishes with good length.

88

2008 Eagles' Nest Merlot Constantia

(\$32) Medium red. Currant, licorice, tobacco leaf and woodsmoke on the nose, plus an element of peppery herbs. Supple, sweet and seamless, offering attractive inner-mouth perfume in spite of its slightly green character. I ultimately marked this down more for its woodsmoke quality than for its herbal aspect. Finishes with a soft dusting of tannins and moderate grip.

88

2009 Eagles' Nest Verreux Constantia

(\$35) (a Bordeaux blend based on merlot; from a young vineyard): Good bright, dark red. Dark berries, mocha and herbs on the inviting nose. Supple, sweet and easygoing, even opulent, with good breadth and a touch of greenness to its red berry and chocolate flavors. Finishes with sweet, easy tannins and a building dusty quality. A rather soft wine but shows good texture for young vines.

88

2010 Eagles' Nest Shiraz Constantia

Good bright, dark red. Rather musky aromas of chocolate and woodsmoke, with primary red fruits in the deep background. Concentrated and creamy-sweet, with plum, mocha and spice flavors and a repeating note of woodsmoke. The wine's substantial tongue-dusting tannins currently shut down the fruit on the finish.

88

2012 Mullineux Family Kloof Street Rouge Swartland

(\$20) (72% syrah with 13% mourvedre, 11% cinsault and 4% carignan): Bright, full red. Red berries and pepper on the nose. Round, spicy and easy to drink, offering seamless flavors of red berries and pepper and an impression of ripe acidity. Like a ripe Cotes du Rhone bottling, this could use a bit more lift but offers early appeal.

88

2010 Waterkloof Chardonnay Circumstance Stellenbosch

(\$24) Bright straw. Seductive aromas of *mirabelle*, lime, spices, herbs and musky lees. Juicy and intense, with bright citrus and white peach flavors complemented but not dominated by spicy oak. Not the last word in complexity but fruity, fresh and persistent.

88

2011 Ernie Els Wines The Big Easy Red Blend Stellenbosch

(\$20) (61% shiraz, 20% cabernet sauvignon, 7% grenache and 4% each cinsault, mourvedre and viognier): Good dark, bright red. Brooding, inky aromas of blackberry, licorice and herbs complemented by a suggestion of dried berries. Silky on entry, then firm and a bit youthfully stunted in the middle palate, with black fruit, herb and spice flavors complicated by a leathery nuance. Sound acidity gives this wine good lift, but I'd wait a year or two before pulling the cork.

88(+?)

2012 Cape Point Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Stonehaven Cape Point

Pale bright yellow. Complex, expressive aromas of lime, lemon oil, grapefruit, pepper and dusty spices, with some tropical fruit notes emerging with air. Tactile but uncompromisingly dry on the palate, with citrus, yellow fruit and white pepper flavors complicated by saline minerality and framed by slightly edgy acidity. No shortage of palate presence but this would have rated a higher score with a touch more cut.

88

2011 Rust en Vrede Estate Merlot Stellenbosch

(\$22) Good bright, dark red. Currant, black cherry, loam and tobacco on the nose. Smooth and vinous, with a nice touch of sweetness to the currant and tobacco flavors. An attractive, juicy midweight with moderate complexity but good intensity and length.

88

2011 Edgebaston The Berry Box Stellenbosch

(\$14) (47% merlot, 23% shiraz, 17% cabernet sauvignon, 11% petit verdot and 2% cabernet franc): Bright, dark red. Aromas of black cherry, licorice, tobacco and woodsmoke; showing its shiraz component today. Sweet and supple but a bit youthfully brooding today compared to the Pepper Pot. Juicy acidity energizes the middle palate. Finishes with building dusty tannins and a lingering smoky nuance.

88

2012 Edgebaston The Honey Pot Stellenbosch

(\$14) (79% sauvignon blanc, 13% semillon and 8% viognier): Bright, pale yellow. Perfumed aromas of grapefruit, lemon peel, fresh lichee, honeysuckle and flowers; showing its viognier side today (the other varieties provide the lift). Bright and a bit sweet, with surprising energy to its citrus and honeysuckle flavors. Finishes slightly phenolic and persistent, with a lingering grapefruit note. A nicely balanced blend with very good fruit intensity for the price.

88

Priced from: **11.98**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Edgebaston Chardonnay Finlayson Stellenbosch

(\$20) (from 26-year-old vines): Full straw color. Ripe peach, musky spices and vanilla and toffee oak notes on the nose. Supple and spicy if a bit youthfully reserved, showing sound acidity and good energy but with fresh fruit in the background today. Finishes with a lightly phenolic quality and hints of honey and star anise. Seems to be in a shell today.

88

2011 Edgebaston The Pepper Pot Stellenbosch

(\$14) (47% syrah, 22% mourvedre, 18% cinsault, 9% grenache and 4% tannat): Good full red. Red fruits, spices and a peppery note on the nose. Juicy, spicy and light on its feet, but with good volume and ripeness to its red berry, plum and spice flavors. I like the combination of restrained sweetness, good cut and fine, dusty tannins. This would be very easy to drink right now, especially with fatty meats. A very good value.

88

Priced from: **11.98**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 Edgebaston The Berry Box Stellenbosch

(\$14) (39% shiraz, 29% merlot, 23% cabernet franc, 5% petit verdot and 4% cabernet franc): Good bright, dark red. More open-knit and less primary on the nose than the 2011, offers scents and flavors of redcurrant, smoke and truffle. Mellow and edge-free in the mouth, with an impression of low acidity. Finishes with rather soft tannins but lively pepper and herb notes. Ready to go right now.

88

2012 Flagstone Winery Noon Gun Western Cape

(45% chenin blanc, 29% sauvignon blanc, 21% viognier and 5% nouvelle, a South African cross between semillon and ugni blanc): High-pitched aromas of grapefruit, lime, melon, white peach, anise and peppery herbs. Shows a more tropical character on the palate, but flavors of grapefruit and herbs, plus some dusty unabsorbed CO₂, keep the wine fresh on the palate.

88

2011 Flagstone Winery Longitude Western Cape

(a blend of shiraz, cabernet sauvignon and malbec): Moderately saturated dark red. Enticing aromas of cherry, chocolate, espresso, herbs and spices, accented by floral and peppery notes. Juicy and bright on the palate, with good definition but a slight rigidity to the flavors of red berries, flowers and spices. Finishes perfumed and persistent but a tad dry. This blend is still unwinding.

88(+?)

2009 Flagstone Winery Dragon Tree Western Cape

(37% cabernet sauvignon, 36% shiraz and 27% pinotage): Good medium-deep red. Sexy, open-knit nose offers scents of currant, black cherry, spices and cigar box. Supple on entry, then a bit green on the back half, with edgy acidity clashing with the wine's tannins to give the finish a slightly sour quality in spite of its intense berry fruit and good length. Perhaps in an awkward stage today.

88(+?)?

2011 Mulderbosch Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Western Cape

(\$18) Pungent aromas of citrus peel, grass, anise and peppery herbs. Quite rich and broad on the palate; in a round style but quite dry and a little diffuse. Mouthfilling sauvignon blanc but I wanted a bit more flavor and fruit intensity. Finishes with a citrus edge.

88

Priced from: **15.95**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Mulderbosch Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Rose Coastal Region

(\$12) Pale, bright watermelon-pink. Expressive aromas and flavors of red berries, flowers and spices. Nicely concentrated, fruit-driven rose with a touch of residual sugar countered by bright acidity. Offers good texture and gulpability. Not particularly complex but finishes with a subtle fruit sweetness.

88

Priced from: **8.95**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Rietvallei Wine Estate Chardonnay Classic Natural Unwooded Robertson

(\$13) Bright straw-yellow. Bright, pure nose offers stone and citrus fruits and flowers. Tactile and dusty, with musky, varietally expressive stone fruit flavors of noteworthy depth and intensity. Very nicely done.

88

2012 Excelsior Estate Chardonnay Robertson

(\$10) (25% in French oak and 75% in stainless steel; includes 3% viognier): Straw-yellow. Pear drop and spice aromas complicated by a leesy nuance. A touch sweet but has the apple and soft citrus fruit intensity and bracing acidity to support it. Not particularly complex but delivers terrific fruit and verve for ten bucks.

88

Priced from: **6.89**

[Compare prices](#)

2011 Excelsior Estate Syrah Robertson

(\$10) (blended with 10% petit verdot): Good medium ruby. Enticing aromas of candied blueberry, violet, licorice and spices. Sweet, supple berry fruit shows moderate nuance and density but a succulent sugar/acid balance. Finishes with lingering berry perfume. Excellent value.

88

2012 Rustenberg Wines White Wine Western Cape

(\$13) (a blend based on 62% sauvignon blanc): Bright pale yellow. Enticing aromas of pineapple, passion fruit and white flowers. Juicy and bright on the palate, with sauvignon-dominated flavors of lemon and grapefruit. A touch of steeliness and a saline element add nuance and grip to this nicely balanced blend, which also includes chardonnay, semillon, viognier, grenache blanc and roussanne. At once supple and lively on the back end, throwing off notes of grapefruit, tropical fruits and dusty herbs.

88

Priced from: **11.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Rustenberg Wines Sauvignon Blanc Western Cape

(\$13) Pale, bright silver-yellow. Pear, pepper and wild herbs on the nose, along with light metallic and weedy nuances. Suppler and creamier in the mid-palate than the winery's 2012 white blend but a bit less harmonious today for all its breadth. Finishes tactile and quite dry, with lingering notes of lemon and grapefruit. I'd wait six months before pulling the cork.

88

2010 Rustenberg Wines John X Merriman Stellenbosch

(\$30) (48% cabernet sauvignon, 45% merlot, 4% petit verdot, 2% malbec and 1% cabernet franc): Good bright medium ruby. Pure, subtly perfumed aromas of cassis, black cherry and chocolatey oak. Rich and chewy but a bit youthfully tough today, showing limited flesh and sweetness. Quite taut, even austere, finishing with a strong element of chocolatey oak and a touch of dryness. A puzzling early showing for a wine that normally offers outstanding value.

88(+?)?

Priced from: **24.96**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 Van Loveren Pinotage Five's Reserve Robertson

(\$15) Good bright medium red. Musky red berries and woodsmoke on the nose. Sweet and creamy, with good depth and nuance to the red fruit, mocha and woodsmoke flavors. Avoids the banana quality of so many pinotages. Finishes with sweet tannins and good length.

88

2010 Van Loveren Christina Van Loveren Methode Cap Classique

(86% chardonnay and 14% pinot noir): Medium straw. Aromas of yellow peach, *mirabelle* and gingery spices. Frothy and lively, offering accurate chardonnay stone fruit flavors and harmonious acidity. Doesn't have quite the cut or oomph of the better non-vintage brut Champagnes but I like this wine's flavors.

88

2012 Groote Post Vineyards Chardonnay Reserve Darling

(\$34) Restrained aromas of apple and licorice. Nicely concentrated, fruit-driven wine, with subtle oak accenting the apple and stone fruit flavors. Fresh and firm.

88

2011 Morgenhof Estate Chardonnay Simonsberg-Stellenbosch

(\$18) Bright medium yellow. Aromas of *mirabelle*, quince, herbs, clove oil and nutty oak. Smooth and sweet in the mouth, with stone fruit and brown spice flavors that carry nicely on the pliant, oaky finish.

88

2011 Raats Family Wines Original Chenin Blanc Unwooded Coastal Region

(\$15) (made entirely in stainless steel; from vineyard parcels between 30 and 65 years of age): Pale golden yellow. Ripe, musky aromas of pineapple and honey. Plump and ripe in the mouth, offering noteworthy richness to the apple, yellow fruit and honey flavors. Shows a touch of minerality but little in the way of citrus character. Finishes dry, smooth and persistent.

88

2011 A.A. Badenhorst The Curator Red Wine Coastal Region

(82% shiraz, 16% mourvedre and 1% each cinsault and viognier): Bright, moderately saturated red. Peppery red fruits and tree bark on the nose, perfumed by botanical herbs. Then surprisingly sweet--almost syrupy--in the mouth, with strawberry, licorice and pepper flavors complicated by a saline element and lifted by lively acidity. The red fruit flavors are framed by a peppery, herbal edge on the back end. A very good value.

88

2012 A.A. Badenhorst The Curator White Wine Swartland

(54% chenin blanc, 30% chardonnay and 15% semillon; yes, according to the back label the wine is missing its last percent): Pale medium yellow. Aromas of lemon candy, stone fruits and flowers lifted by exotic notes of honey, licorice and resin. Fruity and silky, offering honeyed yellow fruit flavors and a fatness from the chardonnay. Finishes with a bit of warmth.

88

2012 A.A. Badenhorst Secateurs Rose Swartland

(a blend of 57% cinsault, 26% shiraz and 17% grenache): Pale, bright orange-pink. Musky strawberry, minerals and medicinal herbs on the nose; smells like bone-dry, classic rose from southern France. Then intensely flavored and supple, with a touch of sweetness giving the palate an easier impression than the nose suggests. Good silky, lively rose.

88

2010 Creation Wines Syrah/Grenache/Petit Verdot Walker Bay

(\$30) Bright, dark, moderately saturated red. Aromas of roasted red fruits, woodsmoke and underbrush. Supple and nicely sweet, with good shape and intensity to the flavors of dark fruits (from the petit verdot?) and spices. Finishes with broad, ripe, dusty tannins and notes of smoke and mocha.

88

2010 Vriesenhof Vineyards Grenache Piekenierskloof

(\$29) Good dark red. Sexy, high-toned aromas of red berries, graphite, woodsmoke, leather and pepper. Sweet and open-knit, with berry and woodsmoke flavors joined by slightly rustic meat and leather nuances. Finishes with dusty tannins and a lingering gamey quality. Drink soon.

88

2011 Solms-Delta Vastrap Cape Blend Western Cape

(\$20) (61% chenin blanc, 36% semillon and 3% riesling): Pale-medium yellow. Pungent, high-toned aromas of lemon drop and nutty vanillin oak. Juicy, spicy and light on its feet, showing modest flesh but very good cut to its lemony fruit. The phenolic edge of this nicely intense white blend calls out for food.

88

2011 Alheit Vineyards Cartology Bush Vines White Wine Western Cape

(\$50) (a 92/8 blend of chenin blanc and semillon): Bright, light yellow. Slightly high-toned aromas of lemon peel, pineapple and honey. Fat, round and moderately deep, with citrus, pineapple, honeycomb and oatmeal flavors. Finishes a bit warm but with a citrus edge that gives grip to the fruit.

88

2010 Thelema Mountain Vineyards Mountain Red Western Cape

(\$15) (29% shiraz, 28% cabernet sauvignon, 18% grenache, 11% petit verdot, 11% merlot and 3% cabernet franc): Good bright, dark red. Musky blackberry, licorice, espresso and herbs on the nose. At once supple and juicy, with a faint green edge and good spicy lift to the flavors of plum, blackberry, chocolate and mocha. Offers good fruit and sweet tannins for the price range.

88

2009 Thelema Mountain Vineyards Riesling Stellenbosch

(\$17) (from 25-year-old vines on decomposed granite): Pale, green-tinged yellow. Cool aromas of lemon ice and petrol. Pliant, slightly glyceric and off-dry, with nicely concentrated citrus and rocky flavors. Not yet complex but boasts good texture and length. A tad phenolic on the back end--but then this riesling has a track record for rewarding six to eight years of cellaring.

88(+?)

2010 Thelema Mountain Vineyards Chardonnay Sutherland Elgin

(\$15) Full yellow. Slightly high-toned, gamey aromas and flavors of orange blossom, marzipan, vanilla and nuts. The palate shows moderate breadth and a firm edge of acidity, with the oak component currently dominating the wine's underlying fruit. Finishes with slightly dusty tannins and a restrained sweetness. I wanted a bit more verve.

88

2012 Neil Ellis Wines Chardonnay Sincerely Western Cape

(\$14) Very pale straw-yellow. Pure, subtle aromas of peach, nutmeg, flowers and spicy oak. Tactile and generous if a bit loosely knit, with good breadth and freshness to the pear, apple and white peach flavors. Lifted on the finish by notes of mint and herbs and an attractive saline quality.

88

2011 Neil Ellis Wines The Left Bank Western Cape

(\$15) (46% cabernet sauvignon, 33% shiraz, 15% merlot and 6% cabernet franc): Good dark red. Musky aromas and flavors of red- and blackcurrant, black cherry, menthol and licorice, plus suggestions of coffee and mocha. Bright acidity gives cut and energy, not to mention immediate appeal, to the moderately deep middle palate. Finishes with a touch of herbal bitterness but the tannins are fairly light.

88

Priced from: **12.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2008 Neil Ellis Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$23) Good full, deep red. Subdued aromas of plum, mocha, menthol and pepper. Fresh in the mouth, with sound acidity framing the flavors of dark fruits, licorice, truffle and menthol. Finishes with firm, tongue-dusting tannins and good length. Will this gain in complexity with further time in bottle while retaining its fruit?

88(+?)?

2009 Neil Ellis Wines Pinotage Hemel-en-Aarde Valley

(\$19) Bright, full red-ruby. Musky, peppery aromas of red and dark berries, tree bark and earth, plus a ripe chocolatey nuance. Concentrated and very ripe on the palate, with pliant flavors of roasted red berries and spices. Finishes with substantial dusty, broad tannins, good length and some slightly spiky acidity.

88(+?)?

Priced from: **19.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Boekenhoutskloof The Wolftrap Red Wine Western Cape

(\$11) (a 67/31/2 blend): Good bright, dark red. Aromas of cherry liqueur, blueberry, wild herbs and tree bark. Juicy, spicy red fruit and menthol flavors are accented by cool herbal notes. Boasts good intensity but could use more flesh and pliancy; seems a bit pinched today. This fresh blend finishes with firm tannins and moderate persistence.

88

Priced from: **9.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 Diemersfontein Viognier Reserve Wellington

(\$21) Bright yellow. Sexy aromas of stone fruits, licorice, flowers and honey. Rich, moderately deep flavors of peach and spices show a touch of sweetness but are kept fresh by slightly citrusy acidity and some unabsorbed CO₂. Boasts good texture and fruit but finishes a bit dry. I'd enjoy this wine over the next 12 months.

88

2008 Diemersfontein Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Wellington

(\$25) Bright, full ruby-red. Cassis, dark cherry, black raspberry and strong chocolatey oak on the nose. Sweet, vinous and nicely deep, with an attractive sugar/acid balance to the dark berry and chocolate flavors. Finishes with a serious dusting of building, oak-driven tannins and a nutty quality from the wood.

88

2012 Bouchard Finlayson Blanc de Mer Western Cape

(\$15) (49% Rhine riesling, 27% viognier, 14% sauvignon blanc, 8% chardonnay and 2% chenin blanc): Full yellow. Sexy aromas of peach, lemon drop and ginger lifted by a floral topnote. Sweet and immediately appealing, showing a hint of caramel apple development but given shape and verve by some unabsorbed CO₂. I'd drink this rather fat, perfumed blend within the next 12 months.

88

2011 Bouchard Finlayson Hannibal Walker Bay

(\$45) (an unconventional blend of 51% sangiovese, 13% pinot noir, 13% shiraz, 13% mourvedre, 6% nebbiolo and 4% barbera): Good medium red. Slightly muted aromas of red fruits, spices, mocha and flowers. Then sweet but a bit diffuse on the palate, with good texture but modest definition and verve to the plump red fruit and spice flavors. Not bad.

88

2011 Lynx Wines Cabernet Franc Franschhoek

(\$25) Bright, full red. Medicinal currant and a distinct pyrazine quality on the nose. Then less green and peppery on the palate, offering varietally expressive red fruit and floral flavors. This graceful midweight finishes with smooth dusty tannins, good length and a light touch. I'd wait a year or so for more texture and complexity.

88(+?)?

2010 Rupert and Rothschild Classique Western Cape

(a blend of cabernet and merlot): Good full, deep red. Musky aromas of black raspberry, red plum, dried cranberry and smoke. Classically dry in an Old World way, with a dusty quality to the cassis and musky game flavors. Boasts good texture but I wanted a bit more verve. Finishes a tad dry.

88(+?)?

2007 Boplaas Family Vineyards Cape Vintage Reserve Western Cape

(\$30) Saturated bright ruby. Musky aromas of black cherry, coffee, chocolate truffle, molasses and raisin. Superconcentrated, saline and a bit aggressive, with an almost syrupy chocolate and coffee character to its dark fruit flavors. Finishes very sweet and hugely tannic, with a suggestion of raisiny berries and a repeating syrupy quality.

88

2011 Cederberg Chenin Blanc Five Generations Cederberg

(\$34) Pale straw-yellow. Aromas of citrus fruit, pineapple, peppery herbs and grass. Moderately dense and juicy, with a lemon flavor accented by grass and spices. A bit warm but has good intensity. Finishes a tad tart. I expected more.

87

2012 Indaba Merlot Western Cape

Bright, full red. Bitter cherry, red berries and spices on the nose, plus hints of pepper and herbs. Simple but refreshing, with spicy red berry and menthol flavors showing nice peppery lift. Juicy, pliant red wine with a light dusting of tannins.

87

2008 Ridgeback Wines Cabernet Sauvignon Paarl

(\$22) Good bright, dark red. Brooding dark berry aromas are carrying a full load of oak. A step up in fruit intensity from the cabernet franc but also tougher today, with dark berry flavors complicated by dried herbs and spices. Still closed and firmly tannic but not dry. This midweight calls for a year or two of patience.

87(+?)

2008 Kaapzicht Estate Merlot Stellenbosch

(\$20) Good medium red. Aromas of plum, mocha, tobacco, spices and herbs. Subtly spice and restrained, with modest depth to the flavors of plum and mulberry. Finishes with edgy tannins and a lingering woodsmoke character. Could use a bit more fruit.

87

2007 Kaapzicht Estate Steytler Pinotage Stellenbosch

(\$35) (Steytler is Kaapzicht's top range of bottlings): Good medium red-ruby. Less fresh on the nose than the 2009 "regular" pinotage, showing a strong element of nutty oak. Fuller and lusher too, but with slightly evolved red fruit and nutty oak flavors. Finishes with some edgy acidity but I'd drink this soon.

87

2011 Ken Forrester Wines Sauvignon Blanc Stellenbosch

(\$15) (blended with 5% viognier): Good pale yellow. Aromas of smoke, honey and jalapeno pepper, plus a slightly exotic peachy quality from the viognier. Fat and sweet in the mouth, with tropical and stone fruit flavors dominating. Good white wine but lacks lift for sauvignon. Finishes ripe and lightly dusty.

87

2012 Ken Forrester Wines Petit Rose Stellenbosch

(\$12) (100% grenache): Pale, bright red. Lovely spicy lift to the aromas of strawberry, raspberry and watermelon candy. Juicy, spicy and brisk, conveying a dry impression in spite of its nearly five grams per liter of residual sugar. In a Provencal style, finishing with surprising grip. Delightful little rose at a gentle price.

87

2010 Joostenberg Wines Little J Red Wine Western Cape

(\$10) Good bright, deep red. Dark berry and spice aromas are accented by pepper and menthol. Fresh, juicy and appealing, offering pliant dark berry and spice flavors nicely framed by harmonious acidity. Well-balanced wine for drinking now.

87

2012 Painted Wolf Chenin Blanc The Den Coastal Region

(\$12) (partly fermented in used barrels): Bright straw-yellow. Aromas and flavors of *mirabelle*, peach and white flowers. Round, fruity and off-dry, with sound acidity making it very easy to drink.

87

2010 Painted Wolf Pinotage Black Pack Swartland

(\$12) (aged in one-third new French and American oak): Bright, dark red. Slightly exotic aromas of mocha, smoky oak and herbs. Fairly fine-grained but rather simple, with a strong cinnamon stick character running through the wine. Finishes with dusty tannins and a note of woodsmoke.

87

2012 Waterkloof Chenin Blanc Circumstance Stellenbosch

(\$24) Bright, light yellow. Musky aromas of quince, ginger and smoky oak; still a bit youthfully reduced. Then round and fat but a bit lacking in shape; owing to its almost chardonnay-like texture and musky oakiness I would never have picked this as chenin.

87

2011 Delheim Estate Gewurztraminer Stellenbosch

(\$25) Full golden-straw color. Exotic, fruit-syrupy aromas of mango, papaya and Chartreuse. A sweet, no-holds-barred fruit bomb on the palate, with exotic fruit flavors complicated by rose petal and ginger. Ultimately a bit hot but there's no shortage of flavor here.

87**2010 Rust en Vrede Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch**

(\$29) Bright dark red with ruby highlights. Rather cool aromas of currant, tobacco leaf and herbs. Juicy and moderately ripe, showing decent intensity of currant fruit but a slightly green character that gives the finish a disjointed quality. Is this too young to broach or is it simply spiky?

87(+?)?**2010 Rietvallei Wine Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Classic Robertson**

(\$15) Moderately saturated medium red. Plum, redcurrant, herbs and strong oak on the nose and palate. In a rather cool style but ultimately creamy and soft, with modest complexity but easy drinkability. A touch dry on the back.

87**2012 Villiera Wines Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch**

(\$14) Bright, light yellow. Fresh apple and musky ginger aromas are accented by licorice and lichee. A touch of unabsorbed CO2 and a spice component give shape and lift to the flavors of yellow plum, peach and hay. Not bad, but a bit phenolic on the finish.

87**2011 Excelsior Estate Cabernet Sauvignon South Africa**

(\$10) (includes 3% petit verdot): Good dark red. Ripe aromas of cassis, plum, graphite and chocolate. Glyceric and a bit sweet (4.3 g/l r.s.), but with enough acidity to maintain its balance. Just a touch roasted and chunky but offers a mouthful of dark fruit flavors and finishes with good mineral spine.

87

Priced from: **7.98**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Rustenberg Wines Dry Red Stellenbosch

(\$13) (a blend of shiraz, cabernet sauvignon, grenache and petit verdot): Bright, full red. Nuanced nose offers redcurrant, sour cherry, menthol, tobacco and herbs. Supple on entry, then drier and a bit green in the middle, with a peppery element currently dominating red fruits. With its modest texture and dusty, drying tannins, this is tough going today.

87**2010 Groot Constantia Shiraz Constantia**

(\$20) Good bright, full red. Cassis, black cherry and menthol on the nose, lifted by spicy oak and pepper. Offers modest flesh and pliancy today, with some tart acidity keeping the red fruit, spice and pepper flavors tight today. I would be more optimistic about the future of this wine except for a lightly cooked dried-berry character.

87

Priced from: **15.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2010 De Meyer Trutina Stellenbosch

(\$23) (55% cabernet sauvignon, 20% merlot, 15% shiraz and 10% cabernet franc): Moderately saturated red-ruby. Musky aromas of currant, pepper and herbs are less expressive than the 2009 cabernet. Supple on the palate, with a restrained sweetness to the currant, tobacco and woodsmoke flavors. Finishes with dusty, slightly drying tannins and modest length

87**2011 Groot Post Vineyards Shiraz Darling**

(\$30) Bright medium ruby-red. Musky red fruits, tobacco and smoke on the nose. Supple, sweet and vinous, offering modest complexity but good energy to the red berry and spice flavors. A green note emerges on the end, giving the finish a slightly dry edge.

87**2011 Morgenhof Estate Chenin Blanc Simonsberg-Stellenbosch**

(\$18) Bright, light yellow. Good lift to the aromas of lime blossom and green apple, along with a deeper-pitched note of honey. Some unabsorbed CO2 energizes the flavors of apple and spices. Tails off a bit on the dry back end.

87**2011 Kanonkop Wine Estate Pinotage Kadette Dry Rose Stellenbosch**

(\$15) Full orange color. Musky aromas of strawberry, flowers and smoke. Fat, sweet and seamless, with the smoky character following through on the palate. Plenty of texture here but lacks real lift and cut.

87**2008 Robertson Winery Shiraz Number One Constitution Road**

(\$30) Dark, bright medium red. Aromas of raspberry, plum and earth are complicated by a saline quality. Quite sweet, lush and concentrated, with just enough balancing acidity to provide for shape on the palate. This really fills the mouth but the finish suggests uneven ripeness of the fruit, showing a piquant bitter edge along with a hint of roasted berries.

87

2010 Sijnn White Wine Swillendam

(\$36) (a 57/43 blend of chenin blanc and viognier): Yellow-gold color, with an unfiltered appearance. Exotic aromas of apple, peach, honey, flowers and nutty oak, plus a suggestion of coconut. Not particularly nuanced or delineated but impressive for its richness of texture and sweetness. Turns a tad dry on the back end.

87

2009 Catherine Marshall Wines SMG Red Wine Coastal Region

(\$24) (61% shiraz, 22% mourvedre and 17% grenache): Bright medium red. Musky but reticent aromas of red fruits, spices and pepper. Juicy and spicy but a bit muted today, showing moderate flesh and intensity; could use a bit more primary red fruit flavor. Finishes slightly dry but with light tannins.

87

2012 Creation Wines Viognier Walker Bay

(\$23) Bright pale yellow. Delicate aromas of white peach, lichee, herbs and white flowers. Supple and moderately intense, with a touch of sweetness to its peach fruit. A tad dry and warm on the back end, finishing with a note of licorice.

87

2011 Creation Wines Pinot Noir Walker Bay

(\$30) Medium red. Attractive aromas and flavors of red fruits, mocha and underbrush. Supple, smooth and easygoing if slightly diffuse in the mouth; could use a bit more primary fruit and lift but a light dusting of tannins will not get in the way of enjoying this round pinot right now.

87

2010 Creation Wines Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon Petit Verdot Walker Bay

(\$28) Medium-deep red. Musky if slightly muted aromas and flavors of red fruits, smoky herbs and game. Supple and pleasant, offering modest intensity and grip but finishing with decent length and easygoing tannins.

87

2011 Vriesenhof Vineyards Chardonnay Stellenbosch

(\$26) Bright medium yellow. Hints of yellow fruit and strong nutty, vanillin oak on the nose. Quite restrained today but with decent intensity to the peach and meaty flavors. Finishes with a light phenolic dryness and good persistence. Not bad.

87

2010 Solms-Delta Amalie Coastal Region

(\$28) (48% viognier, 33% roussanne and 19% grenache blanc): Full yellow-gold. Sexy aromas and flavors of lemon, lanolin and resinous oak, with an oxidative nutty note. Pungent, high-toned wine in a distinctly old-fashioned style. My score is for its concentration and novelty value; most American drinkers will find this blend a shock to the system.

87

2012 Neil Ellis Wines Sauvignon Blanc Sincerely Western Cape

(\$14) Straw-yellow. Subdued aromas and flavors of *mirabelle*, resinous herbs and soft spices; not a fruity style. Supple and moderately complex, offering good ripeness and concentration but modest definition and nuance. Tails off a bit on the back end.

87

Priced from: **9.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2008 Glen Carlou Cabernet Sauvignon Gravel Quarry Paarl

(\$45) Bright, saturated ruby-red. Slightly high-toned aromas of currant, raspberry and exotic spices; shows some evolved notes of loam and nutty oak. Enters the mouth mellow, but a slightly edgy oak element and disjointed acidity clash with the maturing flavors of raspberry, loam and spices. Finishes a bit dry. Not up to past vintages.

87?

2012 Boekenhoutsloof Syrah Porcupine Ridge Coastal Region

(\$13) Good medium red. Musky red berries, smoke and chocolate mint on the slightly syrupy nose. Supple, easygoing and open-knit, with good sweetness to the slightly diffuse red fruit and smoke flavors. Finishes with a fine dusting of tannins that will not get in the way of enjoying this wine right now.

87

Priced from: **10.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2009 Muratie Estate Ansel van de Caab Red Wine Stellenbosch

(\$28) (a blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc): Medium red. Distinctly Old World nose offers currant, coffee, smoke and cigar box scents. Supple and dry, with edgy acidity framing the slightly evolved flavors. A bit like a ripe cru bourgeois but needs more fruit.

87

2010 Wildekrans Wine Estate Pinotage Bot River

(\$18) (in a Burgundy bottle, with a white label): Good full red. Raspberry, strawberry, mocha, smoke and spicy exotic oak on the rather modern nose. Supple and moderately sweet, with no rough edges to the flavors of red berries, cinnamon and smoke. Fairly full and round but a bit diffuse. Finishes with a fine dusting of tannins and a repeating element of exotic oak.

87

2008 Wildekrans Wine Estate Shiraz Bot River

(\$18) (in a Bordeaux bottle with a black label): Moderately saturated medium red. Aromas of plum, red berries, game, truffle, leather, smoke and mocha. At once juicy and earthy, with saline soil tones, truffle and spicy oak currently overshadowing the wine's fruit. Finishes quite dry, with fine-grained tannins and decent energy.

87

2008 Scali Syrah Voor-Paardeberg

(\$35) Good medium red. Aromas of redcurrant, raspberry, mocha, black olive and spices, complicated by intriguing soil tones. Silky on entry, then densely packed and fine-grained, with a saline quality leavened by firm acidity. In a distinctly old-fashioned, uncompromisingly dry style, leading with pepper, spices and earth and finishing with substantial dusty tannins and repeating pepper and spice notes.

87

2012 House of Mandela Cabernet Sauvignon The Thembu Collection Western Cape

(\$14) Good bright medium red. Vinous aromas of redcurrant, bitter cherry, mocha and menthol. Juicy, sweet and light, with moderately intense red fruit and mocha flavors. Not a fleshy wine but bright and easygoing, with supple tannins that will not get in the way of early enjoyment.

87

2008 Stellekaya Winery Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch

(\$30) Medium red. Varietally expressive aromas of cassis, black cherry, plum and menthol, along with coffee and smoky oak. Smooth and sweet on entry, then a bit unyielding in the middle, with flavors of plum, redcurrant, coffee, herbs and woodsmoke framed by slightly elevated acidity. Finishes with dusty tannins.

87(+?)

2008 Stellekaya Winery Cape Cross Stellenbosch

(\$30) (a blend of 50% merlot, 30% pinotage and 20% cabernet sauvignon): Moderately saturated medium red. Redcurrant and mint aromas show light vegetal and truffley nuances. Juicy but a bit dry-edged, with redcurrant, plum, herb and mint flavors turning a bit vegetal on the finish. The dusty tannins are rather dry.

87

2011 Fairview Pinotage Coastal Region

(\$16) Full, deep red. Spicy aromas of mulberry, pepper and smoke. Supple and moderately rich, with red berry and roasted plum flavors complicated by peppery spices. Could use a bit more nuance and energy. Finishes with dusty tannins and a repeating note of woodsmoke.

87

2007 Iona Vineyards The Gunnar Elgin

(\$21) (52% cabernet sauvignon, 44% merlot and 4% petit verdot): Good bright medium red. Pungent aromas of plum, woodsmoke, pepper and herbs. Smooth and suave in a cool-climate way, with a lightly vegetal character mostly buffered by the wine's stuffing. Finishes slightly dusty. A bit generic.

87

2011 Vrede en Lust Unwooded Chardonnay Sarah Simonsberg-Paarl

(\$14) Pale color. Musky pear, dried apple and a nutty hint on the nose (but not from oak!). Juicy pear and apple flavors come across as lean and dry but fresh. The dusty quality repeats on the rather uncompromising finish. I wanted a bit more fruit for unoaked chardonnay.

87

2012 Vrede en Lust Malbec Mocholate Paarl

(\$20) Bright medium red. Musky, slightly reduced aromas of red berries, chocolate, mocha and woodsmoke. A bit reduced in the mouth as well, offering red berry and woodsmoke flavors of moderate flesh and depth. Tannins are ripe but a tad dusty.

87

2009 Vrede en Lust Syrah Simonsberg-Paarl

(\$24) (aged for 16 months in 85% French and 15% American oak, 30% new): Good bright, dark red. Aromas of cherry, plum, mocha and herbs, with a strong component of chocolatey oak. Supple and mellow on the palate, with plum, currant and tobacco flavors--and varietal character--currently overshadowed by the wine's wood component and spicy oak-driven tannins.

87

2009 Diemersdal Pinotage Reserve Durbanville

(\$32) Good full medium red. Aromas of redcurrant and woodsmoke. Mellow, moderately deep pinotage with slightly diffuse flavors of red fruits, spices and smoke. Finishes with fine-grained tannins and a bit of alcoholic warmth. Could use a bit more clarity and lift.

87

2011 Lothian Vineyards Pinot Noir Vineyard Selection Elgin

(\$32) Modestly saturated red. High-toned, inviting aromas of strawberry, spices, leather and wild herbs. Spicy and intense, but with a faint bitter green edge to the red berry and earth flavors. Finishes with dusty, slightly drying tannins.

87

2011 Jam Jar Sweet White Western Cape

(\$12) (100% muscat; 47 g/l r.s.; 10% alcohol): Bright straw-yellow. Highly perfumed aromas of lime, peach, lichee and fresh herbs, with hints of honey and hay. Sweet and floral but not thick or over the top. Use this as a natural sweetener for sangria or in jello shots. Finishes with good dusty length.

87

2012 Jam Jar Shiraz Western Cape

(\$12) (12% alcohol; 62 g/l r.s.): Bright red-ruby. Musky aromas of berries, smoke, game and chocolate. Concentrated and very sweet, with just enough acidity to avoid cloying. This fruit bomb is actually surprisingly juicy and the softly tannic finish shows decent length. Jam Jar is the very successful project of importer Cape Classics, and the objective is to produce inexpensive, user-friendly wines.

87

2010 Rhebokskloof Wine Estate Shiraz Coastal Region

(\$23) Bright, dark red. Slightly diffuse aromas of red fruits, spices and nutty oak. Spicy and vinous, but without quite enough fruit intensity to fully support its oak element and slightly dusty tannins.

87

2011 Guardian Peak Shiraz Western Cape

(\$15) Good full medium red. Reticent aromas of musky redcurrant, licorice and herbs. A bit less fruity and sweet than the 2011 merlot, displaying a peppery quality to the redcurrant flavor. Has a bit less flesh to support its dusty tannins; I find this a bit closed today and in need of 6 to 12 months of patience.

87

2012 Indaba Sauvignon Blanc Western Cape

(\$12) Bright, light silver-yellow. Subtle aromas of lime peel, licorice and fresh herbs, plus a whiff of pine. Supple and slightly sweet; a rather tropical, almost glyceric style of sauvignon blanc with soft acidity and immediate appeal. Nicely full in the mouth. Indaba is a brand owned by its importer Cape Classics; Bruwer Raats makes the wines.

87

Priced from: **6.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2012 Indaba Chardonnay Western Cape

(\$12) Good full, deep yellow. Restrained nose hints at fresh apple, honey, brown spices and herbs. Broad and ripe but dry (actually 4.4 grams/liter of residual sugar), with citrus fruit and apple flavors joined by a slightly bitter vanillin oak component. I wanted a bit more personality.

87

Priced from: **6.99**

[Compare prices](#)

2008 Ridgeback Wines Cabernet Franc Paarl

(\$22) Bright medium red. Plum, redcurrant and resinous, spicy oak on the nose, complicated by a leafy nuance. A juicy, savory midweight with a restrained sweetness to its flavors of currant, tobacco leaf, pepper and herbs. Finishes with firm, dusty, slightly drying tannins and a note of woodsmoke.