

South Africa's top wines?

20 Apr 2010 by Jancis Robinson

South African wine writer Tim James of www.grape.co.za polled 26 respected observers of the South African wine scene with the questionnaire below*. (I declined, on the basis that I have not been to South Africa in the last two or three years.) The results of that poll are below and you can read Tim's own comments on the results [here](#).

I'd say there are not too many surprises here, except that so many of the names are so relatively new. Ataraxia Chardonnay (one of the wines we served at our [South African Room to Read dinner](#) in London last November, along with Boekenhoutskloof Syrah, Kanonkop Paul Sauer and Morgenster) has done amazingly well for such a young label with its own vineyards only just coming on stream. See this [wine of the week](#).

There also seems to be a reassuringly high level of coincidence between that list of up and coming wineries and various [wines of the week](#) on this website. See [Great new South Africans](#) published last November and Julia's [Jewels from South Africa](#) from last May.

Feel free to comment in the box below.

Top ten South African reds:

1st Sadie Family Columella
2nd Kanonkop Paul Sauer
Joint 3rd Boekenhoutskloof Cabernet, Boekenhoutskloof Syrah and *Le Riche Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve*
6th Morgenster
7th Vergelegen Red
8th Meerlust Rubicon
Joint 9th Bouchard Finlayson Galpin Peak Pinot Noir and
Jordan Cobblers Hill

Top ten South African whites:

Joint 1st Cape Point Vineyards Isliedh and Sadie Family Palladius
3rd Ataraxia Chardonnay and Vergelegen White
5th Hamilton Russell Vineyards Chardonnay
6th Tokara White
7th Ken Forrester The FMC
Joint 8th Chamonix Chardonnay, Sequillo White and
Steenberg Sauvignon Blanc Reserve

Up and coming wineries:

Haskell
Ataraxia
Mullineux
Badenhorst
Waterkloof

*Questionnaire:

Please note that in all cases we are looking for wines and wineries with a bit of track record - let's say 3 years. So a winery that has produced one or even two brilliant vintages should not qualify as a top 20 producer, nor should the wines themselves qualify in their categories until they have shown a bit of consistency. There is provision below for mentioning new wineries to expect great things from.

1. Name (order irrelevant) the top five wineries in the Cape, in terms of quality.

2. Name (order irrelevant) the next best 15 wineries. This will give a total of the top 20 wineries)

3. Name up to five wineries that you think will probably be VERY strong contenders for a Top 20 placing within a few years.

4. Name the top ten red table wines in the country (track record of three vintages).

5. Name the top ten white table wines in the country (track record of three vintages).