

Paul Cluver, Ferricrete Riesling 2012 Elgin

28 Feb 2013 by Jancis Robinson

21:08 M&S, much less in South Africa

Those who know me well know my great love of Riesling, the greatest white wine grape in the world even if some wines labelled Riesling are disgusting. It'd like to hand a bouquet here to the South African king of Riesling Paul Cluver, major possessor of the cool, South African region of Elgin. Once a wine famous for apples but, as elsewhere (Washington state for instance), apples have been followed by wine grapes.

As Paul Cluver the first Riesling vines were into the ground back in 1987 (read [more](#) about the madness surrounding the name Riesling in South Africa). Paul Cluver's current total of 12.9 hectares of Riesling makes it, also, the biggest single Riesling grower in South Africa. Another reason for admiring Paul Cluver is that it was one of the first wine estates to initiate a back employment scheme (which doubtless has another name by now). See [Therid wine](#).

I am firmly of the belief that South Africa, cooled by currents directly from Antarctica, makes some of the best value white wines in the world. Unfortunately South Africans, the New Zealanders and many Australians, are currently in the grip of a madness that values Sauvignon Blanc above Chardonnay, but to my mind Cape Chardonnay can be some of the finest in the southern hemisphere. Although I should point out that fine Sauvignon Blanc, also from Elgin, can be very fine - as you can see from our [2011 vintage notes](#). Average summer temperatures are under 20 deg C and the harvest is one of the latest in Africa.

This Paul Cluver, Ferricrete Riesling 2012 Elgin is a pretty dry-tasting wine despite its residual sugar of almost 20 g/l, thanks not least to a total acidity of 8 g/l and pH below 3. Alcohol is just 10%. The overall effect is of an off-dry wine with very strong lime and herbal overtones and this particular bottling is named after the iron-rich soils in which it is grown.

It seems from wine-searcher that you can get this wine in South Africa for less than half the price it costs in the UK, where M&S seem to be the sole retailer - but with good stocks currently. You can buy it online [here](#).

This is the second vintage of Paul Cluver's second-driest Riesling style.