

Wholewheat wines from the Cape

19 Jul 2013 by Jancis Robinson

Tastings organised by generic promotional organisations are rarely great showcases for quality. For obvious reasons, they feel they have to show wines from *all* producers rather than the best producers. And in some cases the best producers can sell their wines so easily back home that they are unwilling to participate in expensive voyages overseas to pour precious bottles for foreigners, not all of whom will truly value them. This is why, for example, I'm frequently disappointed by the tastings organised at the top of New Zealand House in London. The view of central London below is amazing but the view of the NZ wine scene provided by what's on the tasting tables, substantially from the biggest companies, is rarely as inspiring.

September is the month when, usually, South Africa, Chile and Argentina put on separate generic tastings in London. Next month, for the first time, they are pooling dates and resources, and wines from all three countries will be on show over two days at Olympia under the joint banner The Beautiful South. At JancisRobinson.com we'll do our best to pick out the wheat from the chaff in the vast tasting book.

But PIWOSA, Premium Independent Wineries of South Africa, is a new wholewheat organisation designed to make wine writers' lives easier. Formed at the beginning of the year, it's an association of 15 wine producers who consider themselves both premium and independent (no Distell here) and who were described to me by Ken Forrester as 'all blokes who get on' (see below, mit rhino). Yes, with some notable exceptions, the South African wine scene is still pretty male, so let the women come forward to seize a bit more control - although Kathy Jordan and winemaker Andrea Mullineux are represented by two of the members of PIWOSA, and the owner of another member, Glenelly, is the redoubtable May-Eliane de Lencquesaing, ex Pichon Lalande. Of course there are many other producers of great South African wine, but this is a very respectable group, apparently approved by the official organisations Wines of South Africa (whose chief executive Su Birch is leaving, alas) and [WIETA](#). I wish them well.

The aim of the organisation is to promote fine South African wine internationally and they certainly made a good start in Soho last June, showing a range of hand-picked whites at the Groucho Club and then reds at Quo Vadis up the road. South Africa, of course, has the world's finest repository of Chenin Blanc vines outside the Loire and we saw some of the proof. I've long been impressed by the white-wine potential in the Antarctic-cooled vineyards of South Africa. I'd say that many of the Chardonnays on show tasted just a year or so behind the curve in terms of being rather richer than the current international fashion, and still showing some rather-too-obvious leanness in some instances. But I'm sure more recent vintages will be increasingly refined. I loved the one Sémillon shown; another under-used South African resource. The reds on show last June were remarkably unlike the old Cape stereotype of massive alcohol, tannin and wood. There were some very smart reds indeed.

One of the wines that stood out was a rosé. The Drift Farm's Year of the Rooster 2012 is made from the under-sung port grape Touriga Franca and was delicious, if getting a little long in the tooth. It was interesting to see how keen the PIWOSA members were to show off their Pinot Noirs. None was absolutely knockout but they are definitely getting there. Among the reds, South Africa has long shown it can produce fine Bordeaux blends, but in June some of the Rhône blends were particularly impressive.

And the single most impressive aspect of the tasting? The prices. Particularly in view of the quality. Compare and contrast with other countries' collections of some of their best wines.

Producers are listed in alphabetical order. The background information in italics was provided by the producers themselves.

ATARAXIA, Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge

Winemaker: Kevin Grant. Our vines are nurtured in a unique terroir heavily influenced by our close proximity to the icy

Atlantic Ocean. We have chosen a stylistic approach to the Ataraxia Vineyards wine range, to defer completely to the sites from which the different grapes are sourced. Care has been taken to match rootstock choice exactly to the vineyard soil type, ensuring that no stone has been left unturned in the sourcing of the very best scion material available in the country. Our wines are handcrafted to reflect the origin and sense of place that this unique location offers us, producing wines of matchless quality and impeccable elegance.

Ataraxia Sauvignon Blanc 2012 Hemel-en-Aarde 16.5 Drink 2013-2017

100% Sauvignon Blanc. Green and lively with a great line and dynamism. Real energy here. And a useful distinction from standard Marlborough style. Dry finish. Nice restraint. And tight finish. 13.2%
£12.75 RRP

Ataraxia Chardonnay 2010 Hemel-en-Aarde 16.5 Drink 2013-2016

100% Chardonnay. Relatively sweet, rich nose but certainly not heavy. Bright fruit and well managed. The sort of wine that South Africa does very well – although they do seem to be a year or two behind the Chardonnay-making fashion alas. 13.5%
£19.20 RRP

BEAUMONT, Bot River

Winemaker: Sebastian Beaumont. Beaumont is a family-run farm and winery in the quaint Overberg village of Bot River. The farm - home to the region's oldest wine cellar - is steeped in history, dating back to the 1700s. The Bot River ward is one of the newest in South Africa and falls under the Walker Bay Region. We are fortunate to have old vineyard blocks that express the Bokkeveld shale soils. With 30 hectares under vine we currently produce 120,000 bottles.

Beaumont Chenin Blanc 2012 Bot River 16.5 Drink 2013-2016

100% Chenin Blanc. Perfumed with satisfying breadth on the palate. Lots of freshness. Serious wine with a beginning, middle and end. **GV** 12.5%
£9.50 RRP

Beaumont, Hope Marguerite Chenin Blanc 2012 Bot River 17 Drink 2013-2019

100% Chenin Blanc. A little bit of oak evident on the nose. Impressive concentration with vital green streak. Really good. Pure Chenin but bone dry and thoroughly satisfying. Well done! Very fresh finish. Really appetising. 12.5%
£16 RRP

Beaumont Pinotage 2011 Bot River 16.5 Drink 2013-2017

100% Pinotage. Quite rich and savoury. No hint of drains or burnt rubber! Proper wine – one of the most appealing Pinotages I have ever tasted. Complete and very fruity. 13.5%
£12 RRP

Beaumont, Vitruvian 2009 Bot River 17 Drink 2013-2019

38% Mourvèdre, 27% Pinotage, 12% Petit Verdot, 12% Cabernet Franc, 11% Shiraz. Rich and confident and a fully complete wine. Great density and tension. Lovely vibrancy. 14%
£25 RRP

CEDERBERG CELLAR, Clanwilliam

Winemaker: David Nieuwoudt. At 1,036 metres above sea level, Cederberg Cellar offers a unique environment. This is the Cape Winelands highest lying vineyard. Visitors are surprised by diverse soil types, unpolluted air, crystal clear water and a cool continental climate surrounded by more than 180,000 hectares of unspoiled land. It's here that owner/winemaker David Nieuwoudt makes red and white wines that echo the sandstone mountain terrain. For five generations, since 1893, the Nieuwoudt family has farmed this land.

Cederberg Sauvignon Blanc 2012 Cederberg 15.5 Drink 2014-2015

100% Sauvignon Blanc. The nose seems very slightly industrial – how can that be in that wonderfully clear environment? Over-enthusiastic clarification procedures? Or is it the clones? A bit hard on the end. Not too much fun. 13.5%

£12.90 RRP

Cederberg Bukettraube 2012 Cederberg 15.5 Drink 2013-2016

100% Bukettraube. Round, floral nose. Quite a sweet start and very bright fruit. Reminds me of a mountain version of Emerald Riesling! Somewhat chewy still. A curiosity... 13%

£10.85 RRP

Cederberg Shiraz 2009 Cederberg 16 Drink 2013-2017

100% Shiraz. Rich and sweet but distinctive. Lots of effort has gone into this. Really dense and serious. Long and well intentioned. 14.5%

£16.70 RRP

Cederberg, Five Generations Cabernet Sauvignon 2010 Cederberg 16.5 Drink 2013-2018

100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Complex and quite tight and demanding but easy to admire. Dry and yet chock full of ripe fruit. No ersatz sweetness. Well done them! 14%

£31.25 RRP

PAUL CLUVER, Elgin

Winemaker: Andries Burger. Pioneers of wine in Elgin - this family-owned and run estate has been instrumental in the success and recognition of this ward as a fine wine producing area of South Africa. Traditional winemaking techniques are used to make elegant, terroir-driven, expressive wines. The range includes various styles of Rieslings, Gewürztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

Paul Cluver Riesling 2012 Elgin 16 Drink 2014-2018

100% Riesling. Lightly floral. Very clean and sharp with lovely crystalline fruit but not so impressive to someone who has just come from the Howard Ripley 2012 Riesling tasting, alas. Hugely competent but not much grunt. 11%

£11.60 RRP

Paul Cluver Sauvignon Blanc 2012 Elgin 16.5 Drink 2013-2016

92% Sauvignon Blanc, 8% Sémillon. Smells as though there were some oak element in this. Lots to get your teeth into. But it's a serious Sauvignon not a glugger. Chewy finish. Lots of impact and nicely constructed. 13.5%

£11.40 RRP

Paul Cluver Chardonnay 2012 Elgin 15.5 Drink 2014-2018

100% Chardonnay. Leesy nose. Seems a year or two behind the curve. Clean and fresh but a little hard after the leesy impact. 13.7%

£14.70 RRP

Paul Cluver, Seven Flags Pinot Noir 2010 Elgin 15.5 Drink 2013-2016

100% Pinot Noir. Pale red. Funny to have three Elgin Pinots presented so close to each other! Sweet and straightforward, a little less complex than the other two. A bit lacking juice and charm. 13.91%
£34.60 RRP

THE DRIFT FARM, Overberg Highlands

Winemaker: Bruce Jack. The smile of a farm worker, clucking indigenous African chickens, multi-coloured heirloom vegetables, olive groves and vineyards that sway in the wind, and the occasional bark of the resident Ridgeback, Simba - these are some of the elements that create the magic that is The Drift Farm. 17 km outside the sleepy hamlet of Napier, in the spectacular Overberg, rests Bruce Jack's family farm. Primarily an olive and wine farm, The Drift also produces fine organic vegetables for guests of the renovated farm house - The Drift Villa; and for selected supermarkets. What better way for visitors to experience life on a working farm than relaxing with a glass of wine or an ice cold artisanal cider in hand on the stoep of the villa.

The Drift Farm, Year of the Rooster Rosé 2012 Western Cape 16.5 Drink 2013-2014

100% Touriga Franca. Very pale pink. Fun! Massively fruity with more than a hint of the Douro on the nose. Amazing this is only 11% when one gets so much on the nose. Dry but not emaciated on the palate. Something a bit like bloody roast beef. Very well done! But to be drunk in the short term. 11%
£12 RRP

The Drift Farm, The Mysteries 2012 Overberg 15.5 Drink 2014-2016

100% Pinot Noir planted in 2003. Granite. Good dormancy. Lots of wind. Rich and sweet and in your face. Not very subtle but future vintages surely will be.

The Drift Farm, Mary Le Bow 2011 Overberg 15+ Drink 2015-2018

A blend of 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Shiraz and 20% Petit Verdot. Sweet and unformed with a hint of mealiness. Pretty modern and harsh. But it is said to evolve! 15%
£17 RRP

KEN FORRESTER, Stellenbosch

Winemaker: Ken Forrester. Ken Forrester's philosophy has always been to create a range of handcrafted, individually made wines that suitably complement a wide variety of food styles and provide excellent value.

Ken Forrester, Old Vine Reserve Chenin Blanc 2011 Stellenbosch 17 Drink 2013-2016

100% Chenin Blanc. Light nose and racy and absolutely bullseye exciting tense Chenin. Finger on the pulse of international winemaking fashion here. Clean and fresh. **VGV** 14.5%
£11.16 RRP

Ken Forrester, The FMC 2010 Stellenbosch 17.5 Drink 2012-2017

100% Chenin Blanc. They use the aerial system of measuring greenness, **NDVI**. Really rich and medium dry but with enough structure and acidity to make it fun and easy to drink even with food. Creamy sauces? 14.5%
£25.20 RRP

GLENELLY, Stellenbosch

Winemaker: Luke O'Cuinneagain. Glenelly Estate is located on the southern slopes of the Simonsberg Mountain. Its origins date back to the 17th century when Simon van der Stel, Governor of the Cape, gave the land to the French Huguenot François Villon in 1682. In 1812 it remained in French hands when it passed on to Johan Peter de Villiers and in 2003 May de Lencquesaing, then owner of the famous Ch Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande, purchased Glenelly Estate. 2009 saw the inauguration, on this 128 ha estate, of a winery which is a stellar example of modern methods, design and environmental awareness.

Glenelly Chardonnay 2011 Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 16.5 Drink 2013-2016

100% Chardonnay. A little more sophisticated than the national norm for Chardonnay though arguably six months behind the curve. Nicely fine and refined. Not a silly price at all. 13.5%
£15 RRP

Glenelly, The Glass Collection Shiraz 2010 Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 16.5 Drink 2013-2017

100% Shiraz. Rather compelling nose and with real concentration on the palate. Good balance and real tension. Dry finish. Assured oak management. **GV** 13.5%
£10.50 RRP

Glenelly, Grand Vin 2008 Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 16.5 Drink 2013-2017

A blend of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Merlot. Sweet and rich and complex. Lots going on here per penny. Serious stuff. Slow burner. 14%
£14.95 RRP

Glenelly, Lady May 2009 Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 16 Drink 2014-2019

90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Petit Verdot. The Cabernet is very obvious. Actually the wine seems less interesting than the Rhône varieties from the same address! A bit brash really with the sweet oak a bit too obviously in evidence. Very chewy. Dense. 14.5%
£25.95 RRP

WINERY OF GOOD HOPE, Stellenbosch

Winemakers: Edouard Labeye and Jacques De Klerk. The philosophy driving Radford Dale is to produce reference South African wines, with as little pretence and compromise as possible. These wines are made to be faithfully site-driven, natural and balanced. Quality and individuality dictates everything that Radford Dale stands for. Our conviction is that South African wines should reflect the individuality of our own terroirs and not be driven by the globalisation and flavour standardisation of a points and medal mentality. The latter makes a mockery of individuality, while causing wines from countries all over the globe to taste more and more alike. These wines are all produced with natural winemaking practices -low sulphur, natural fermentations, invisible oaking and minimalist intervention. Radford Dale is the expression of our nature, our terroir and our vineyards. Our fingerprints should be nowhere to be seen.

Winery of Good Hope, Radford Dale The Renaissance of Chenin Blanc 2012 Stellenbosch 15.5+ Drink 2015-2019

100% Chenin Blanc. Great idea; great name. But not that earthy. Doesn't immediately grab the imagination. A bit tight at the moment. 12.5%
£19.50 RRP

Winery of Good Hope, Radford Dale Black Rock 2011 Swartland 15.5 Drink 2014-2017

A blend of Syrah, Cinsault and Carignan. Bright ruby. Much more pointed and modern than most Swartland wines. Chewy and punchy. Rather than earthy and funky. 13.5%
£16.50 RRP

Winery of Good Hope, Radford Dale Freedom 2012 Elgin 16 Drink 2014-2017

100% Pinot Noir. 12- and 14-year-old vines. Sweet, rich oak. Lively and dry. Not that much heart but certainly correct and still a bit chewy. A tad brutal. 13.5%
£20.50 RRP

JORDAN, Stellenbosch

Winemakers: Gary and Kathy Jordan. Jordan Wine Estate is situated in Stellenbosch, the heart of the Cape Winelands, and boasts panoramic views of Table Mountain, False Bay and Stellenbosch Mountains. This family-owned estate, established in 1982, has been transformed to become one of the leading wineries in South Africa. The estate features a wine tasting centre, rolling lawns and a world-class restaurant where visitors can relax and enjoy fine Cape wines and the local Cape fare surrounded by breathtaking views of the vineyards.

Jordan, Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 2012 Stellenbosch 16.5 Drink 2013-2017

100% Chardonnay. Pale straw. Lightly honeyed nose. More South African than Chardonnay somehow – *tant mieux!* Racy and salty. Dry finish without excessive lees or MLF. Neat and satisfying. Good finish. 13.5%
£14.39 RRP

Jordan, Nine Yards Chardonnay 2011 Stellenbosch 16 Drink 2013-2017

100% Chardonnay. Bigger, richer but actually less sophisticated than the regular bottling. Creamy texture but I think less is more actually. 13.5%
£24.95 RRP

Jordan, Cobblers Hill 2009 Stellenbosch 16 Drink 2012-2017

58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot. Quite gentle and sweet. Very well meaning. Relatively subtle. Lively. Clean. 14%
£24.95 RRP

JOURNEY'S END, Schapenberg, Stellenbosch

Winemaker: Leon Esterhuizen. At Journey's End we are focused on producing healthy parcels of fruit in our own family vineyards, situated on the coastal Schapenberg Hills of Stellenbosch at Sir Lowry's Pass. Our location benefits from cooling winds coming off the Atlantic Ocean, helping to create wines with elegance and natural acidity. Following a belief that 'less is more', we focus on yield control with our fruit handpicked at 2.5 tonnes or less per acre. We strive to produce fruit organically and follow a number of organic principles that lend themselves to the production of exceptional wine. In our new 350 tonne capacity cellar, we follow a path of minimal intervention letting nature do its work where possible and sourcing French oak from coopers that we feel are most suitable for our wines. We combine traditional winemaking methods, modern technology and a degree of experimentation to produce dynamic fruit driven wines with elegance and complexity.

Journey's End Chardonnay 2011 Stellenbosch 16 Drink 2013-2016

100% Chardonnay. Dense and dry on the end. Tangy. Some cappuccino character but overall lots of delivery and a refreshing green streak so **VGV**. 14%
£14.99 RRP

Journey's End, Destination Chardonnay 2011 Stellenbosch 17 Drink 2013-2017

100% Chardonnay. All new François Frères barrels and wild yeast. Broad and satisfying with distinctly Meursault-like

notes. Dry and not fat but with many layers of flavour. **GV** 14.5%
£24.99 RRP

Journey's End Chardonnay 2002 Stellenbosch 16 Drink 2005-2014

First vintage, before the house burnt down in 2005. Still in pretty good nick even if very slightly sweeter than one would see today. Lots of fun and good balance.

MULDERBOSCH, Stellenbosch

Winemaker: Adam Mason. Mulderbosch has established an enviable reputation for excellence since 1989. Mindful of our proud heritage we continue our quest to innovate. Our wines are produced from rigorous selection and made with infinite care.

Mulderbosch Sauvignon Blanc 2012 Western Cape 16 Drink 2013-2016

92% Sauvignon Blanc, 8% Sémillon. Pick and mix of vineyards but will eventually be estate grown. Lean and a bit hard. But very well intentioned and nicely restrained and dry on the end. 13.44%
£12.99 RRP

Mulderbosch, Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 2010 Stellenbosch 16 Drink 2014-2017

100% Chardonnay. Tight and fine though a little soulless. Dry but a bit dead. 12.45%
£21.99 RRP

Mulderbosch, Noble Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc 2009 Stellenbosch 16 Drink 2012-2014

100% Sauvignon Blanc. Botrytised and rich and lots of fun, tangy, falls away a bit but lots of well-balanced sweetness. **GV** 13.32%
£14.99 per 50 cl RRP

MULLINEUX, Swartland

Winemakers: Andrea and Chris Mullineux. Mullineux Family Wines is a small, highly focused family run winery based in the village of Riebeeck Kasteel in the Swartland. Husband and wife wine-making duo, Andrea and Chris Mullineux produce a select portfolio of hand-crafted wines from old dry-farmed bushvines planted in the granite and shale based terroirs of the region. Our aim is to bottle wines that are a true expression of the Swartland and we follow a natural, minimalist approach in the vineyards and cellar. Within a very short time period, we have established ourselves as one of South Africa's most celebrated wine brands, both locally and on the international front.

Mullineux 2012 Swartland 17.5 Drink 2013-2017

76% Chenin Blanc, 16% Clairette Blanche, 8% Viognier. Broad and tangy and complete. Much more interesting than the varietal examples I have previously been tasting. Deep and rich and concentrated. Big salty finish. So many flavours here! 13.5%
£17 RRP

Mullineux, Kloof Street 2011 Swartland 16 Drink 2013-2016

72% Syrah, 13% Mourvèdre, 11% Cinsault, 4% Carignan. In South Africa I would fall on this but in the UK where we have so many inexpensive southern Rhône wines to choose from, I would have thought it is more difficult a sell. Gentle, delicate, more transparent with juicier fruit than most Côtes du Rhône's. Dry finish but lots of interesting flavours on the

way. 14%
£13 RRP

Mullineux Syrah 2011 Swartland 16.5+ Drink 2014-2019

100% Syrah. Pure and sinewy with great muscles and purity. Not totally unlike an early-maturing Côte Rôtie. Dry finish. Needs just a bit more juice? Or is that the granite talking? Confident. 13.5%
£19 RRP

NEWTON JOHNSON, Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley

Winemaker: Gordon Newton Johnson. Situated approximately 135 km from Cape Town on the southeast Cape coast, this appellation has established itself as one of the premier viticultural sites in the Cape. Traditionally specialising in Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, it has further discovered an affinity for Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc. One of the coolest vineyard sites in South Africa, the parallel mountain ranges channel the southerly maritime winds through the appellation in the summer, bringing regular sea mists and remarkably even temperatures (average mean of 19.8 °C). There are two properties belonging to the domaine - Newton Johnson Vineyards (north-facing) and Sandford (south facing), with 18 ha of vineyard planted. Our farming practices are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Newton Johnson, Southend Chardonnay 2012 Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley 16 Drink 2013-2016

100% Chardonnay. From the neighbour's vineyard. Tangy, creamy, well put together. Some green fruit. Lean sinewy finish. **QGV** 13%
£14 RRP

Newton Johnson, Family Vineyards Chardonnay 2012 Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley 16 Drink 2014-2017

100% Chardonnay. Fuller and more complex but I'm not sure it is more to my taste! Love the sinewy muscularity of the Southend tasted just before. This may shine in the future. 13%
£19 RRP

Newton Johnson, Full Stop Rock 2009 Walker Bay 16 Drink 2015-2018

A blend of Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre. Dense, bright ruby. Much more interesting than the average Cape red, though a little tough and chewy. 14.5%
£19 RRP

Newton Johnson, Family Vineyards Pinot Noir 2011 Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley 15 Drink 2013-2016

100% Pinot Noir. Pale ruby. Some beetroot aromas. Sweet start and lightly jewelily and sweet. Round and flattering but it reminds me of a light version of a German Spätburgunder rather than a red burgundy. Just not quite fruity and juicy enough. 13.67%
£22 RRP

Newton Johnson, Family Vineyards Pinot Noir 2012 Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley 16 Drink 2014-2017

A slightly drier, warmer year. Bright red. Sweet and round and more flattering and fruitier than the 2011. A little simple but it's certainly getting there!

RAATS, Stellenbosch

Winemaker: Bruwer Raats. Raats Family Wines is a boutique winery situated in the Polkadraai Hills area of Stellenbosch, South Africa. The Estate was established in the year 2000 and is considered a specialist in crafting world class and truly distinct wines from Chenin Blanc and Cabernet Franc from older vineyards. It is their mission to establish

these wines as international benchmarks. Raats Family Wines have already earned a stellar reputation internationally as a New World leader in the production of these varietals. "The difference for us is that in everything we do we try to resonate the quality in our wine and that eventually becomes our marketing angle. We do it small, we do it fantastically and we do it so differently to anybody else." Bruwer Raats

Raats, Original Chenin Blanc 2012 Coastal Region 16.5 Drink 2013-2016

100% Chenin Blanc. Floral, broad, honeyed nose. Very juicy and absolutely brilliant as a textbook example of the variety. Clean but not lacking in character. 13.5%
£9.99 RRP

Raats, Family Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2011 Stellenbosch 17 Drink 2013-2019

100% Chenin Blanc. Three blocks, all over 50 years old and 20% fermented in large old oak. Pale straw colour. Deep flavoured with honey and tang verging on oily. Extreme Chenin! Chewy finish. Very serious. 13.5%
£14.99 RRP

Raats, Dolomite Cabernet Franc 2011 Stellenbosch 16 Drink 2013-2017

95% Cabernet Franc, 5% Malbec. He still makes the Family bottling of Cab Franc at closer to £20 but this is his bid to make Cabernet Franc popular by making it rather like Pinot Noir. Transparent and different. Only just Cab Franc! But easy to like when young. **GV** 14%
£10.79 RRP

SHANNON, Elgin

Winemakers: Gordon Johnson and Nadia Cilliers. Shannon Vineyards is situated in the Elgin Valley, the coolest wine-growing area along South Africa's south coast. This valley is developing a reputation for outstanding wines, characterised by their mineral undertones and complimented by good natural acidity, displaying an elegance that has its origins in the uniquely cool terroir. What sets Shannon Vineyards wines apart is the combination of an exceptional setting; the high quality of its vineyards, meticulous viticulture; and focused artisanal winemaking. It is conventional wisdom that in growing noble wine varieties in the Cape, cool is cool, particularly in summer, as Shannon Vineyards certainly is. Situated high on the western rim of the Elgin Valley plateau, Shannon Vineyards produces three site-specific wines, all with names taken from geographical features along the mountain range above the vineyards.

Shannon, Sanctuary Peak Sauvignon Blanc 2012 Elgin 16.5 Drink 2014-2017

89% Sauvignon Blanc, 11% Semillon. Creamy with green notes and massive acidity. Difficult to place in the southern hemisphere I should think! Really crisp and punchy but avoids the cliché Sauvignon Blanc nose. 13.5%
£15 RRP

Shannon Semillon 2012 Elgin 16.5 Drink 2014-2020

100% Semillon. Aged in 500-litre barrels. Pure and broad with great varietal definition. Some chew on the end. Should age very well. 13.5%
£18 RRP

Shannon, Rockview Ridge Pinot Noir 2012 Elgin 16 Drink 2013-2015

100% Pinot Noir. Very pale bright red. Light, true nose. Very delicate and a little sweet but good varietal character. Definitely a step along the South African Pinot Noir road...! 13.5%
£25 RRP

Shannon, Mount Bullet 2010 Elgin 16 Drink 2014-2016

100% Merlot. Bright crimson. A bit of oak and sweetness – I feel it could come from many places on the earth but it's not too caricature-like. Quite gentle. 14.5%

£35 RRP