

# The value of the global affair that is the Cape Winelands

By [Michael Fridjhon](#)

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Some argue that international buyers spoil the game for locals, using their dollars/euros/pounds to tilt the playing fields away from those constrained by rand-based wealth. But whatever they have spent on acquiring and upgrading estates in South Africa remains forever in the slopes and vineyards of the country's wine properties.



Chris Snelling via [Wikimedia Commons](#) -

The South African wine industry is hardly a homegrown affair. Its first vines came with Jan van Riebeeck. It profited from a foreigner's (Simon van der Stel) written guidelines for grape-farming as well as the practices he implemented at Constantia. The arrival of the French Huguenots contributed to the overall wine-making competence of the colony; the European settlers of the 18th and 19th centuries added to these skills sets.

Imperial Preference created (and then destroyed) the 19th-century export market, while the Anglo-Boer War gave the industry - struggling to recover from the devastation of phylloxera - a new (admittedly temporary) but important consumer market.

The role played by the so-called "flying winemakers" in the immediate post-apartheid era served to fast-track the modernisation of cellar technology, compromised by years of isolation, while the export boom of the past couple of decades has helped the country's over-enthusiastic growers find markets for...

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