

Tim Atkin releases his annual South African wine report

Tim Atkin MW's annual South Africa wine report has been released. Now in its ninth edition, the report has become a bellwether for local producers who benchmark themselves against his ratings.



Source: Supplied

Known for his capacity to scouting out the country's top talent, Atkin has become one of the authoritative guides on the South African category for trade and consumers around the world. Still a huge champion of South African Chenin Blanc, Atkin is now turning his gaze on Syrah. Calling it the Cape's "best red grape", also provides the foundation for the country's only 100-score wine in his 2021 South Africa report, the Rhône-style 2019 Sadie Family Columella

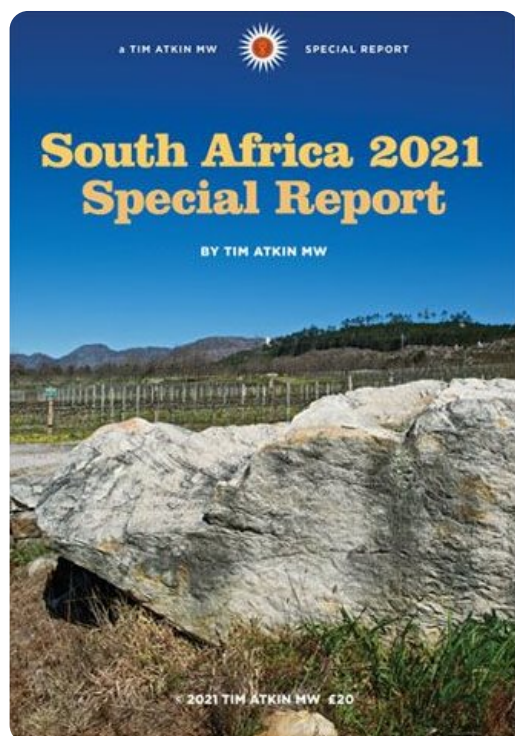
This is the fourth time since the inception of the South African guide that a wine has earned full marks, and the second time for Sadie Family. In 2020, its 2019 Skurfberg Chenin Blanc achieved a perfect score. This year, Sadie Family's 2020 Skurfberg Chenin Blanc took 99.

Two other wines also achieved scores of 99 this year. They are Alheit Vineyards Magnetic North Chenin Blanc 2020, and Porseleinberg Syrah 2019. (Last year, the 2018 Porseleinberg Syrah rated 100 points).

Both 99-point Chenins, he says, are sourced from the same old vine farm in the Citrusdal Mountains.

There were 23 wines in total that scored at least 97 points, with Syrah in the lead, taking five of the top spots.

"I take my hat off to the winemakers and viticulturists whose wines have achieved such high scores, especially in these protracted times of turbulence for the SA wine industry!"



Winemaker of the Year

This year, the title of Winemaker of the Year goes to Peter-Allan Finlayson of Crystallum and Gabriëlskloof. "Last year, his dad, Peter Finlayson was crowned Winemaking Legend. There is something particularly moving about a tradition of family excellence."

Atkin calls the 2021 Winemaking legend, Charles Back "one of the country's most visionary, courageous & pioneering wine personalities. It was he who led the revolutionary move into the Swartland, becoming the catalyst for significant change in winegrowing and winemaking.

He helped introduce new cultivars to the Cape, set new standards in wine tourism and he is also one of the most progressive employers. Plus, he gave Eben Sadie a job when he was relatively unknown."

Elizma Visser, who has been making wines at Olifantsberg in the Breedekloof since 2015, is the Young Winemaker of the Year.

"Compiling my ninth SA report was a continuation of the same remote judging process I followed last year with the generous help of Wines of South Africa (WOSA) and other industry players, not to mention around 70 Zoom calls with local producers."

Atkin tasted 1,783 wines from 311 producers, substantially more than last year's 1,381.

Tim Atkin MW South Africa Report: The Podium 2021

Winemaker of the Year: Peter-Allan Finlayson of Crystallum and Gabriëlskloof

Young Winemaker of the Year: Elizma Visser of Olifantsberg

Viticulturist of the Year: Marco Ventrella of the KWV

Co-operative of the Year: Koelenhof Winery

Winemaking Legend: Charles Back of Fairview and Spice Route

Best Cellar Door Experience: Waterford Estate

Overall White Wine of the Year: 2020 Alheit Vineyards Magnetic North, Citrusdal Mountain

Overall Red Wine of the Year: 2019 Sadie Family Columella, Swartland

Overall Rosé of the Year: 2020 Bellingham Founders' Series Quintessential Couple, Stellenbosch

Overall Sparkling Wine of the Year: Colmant Brut Absolu Zero Dosage Non-Vintage, Western Cape

Overall Sweet Wine of the Year: 2018 Klein Constantia Vin de Constance, Constantia

Overall Fortified Wine of the Year: 2004 Boplaas Cape Vintage Reserve, Calitzdorp

Red Wine Discovery of the Year: 2018 Taaibosch Crescendo, Stellenbosch

White Wine Discovery of the Year: 2020 Mullineux Iron Chenin Blanc, Swartland

Best Value White of the Year: 2020 Cape Dreams Chardonnay, Robertson

Best Value Red of the Year: 2019 Mountain Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon, Bredekloof

Best Value Rosé of the Year: 2021 AA Badenhorst Secateurs Rosé, Piekenierskloof

Best Value Sparkling Wine of the Year: Saltare Brut Rosé Non-Vintage, Stellenbosch

value Sweet Wine of the Year: 2020 Joostenberg Noble Late Harvest Chenin Blanc, Paarl

Best value Fortified Wine of the Year: 2019 Du Toitskloof Red Muscadel, Bredekloof

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