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from the MD



Welcome

Esh Naidoo
Managing Director

As this year's winemaker edition of *Signature* arrives, we turn our focus to one of the South African wine calendar's most compelling moments - the *Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year* awards. Naturally, we celebrate the winemakers who have been crowned triumphant in both categories, while also paying homage to the finalists whose craft we spotlight, and the accolades' rich history that gives those finalists context.

Since its inception in 1981, the *Winemaker of the Year* award has stood as a mark of excellence in South Africa's wine industry, recognising the individual behind the bottle rather than the bottle alone.

In 2001, the *Young Winemaker of the Year* category was introduced to champion rising talent, encouraging

innovation, authenticity, and ambition from winemakers under 30.

For the 2025 competition, the field is exceptionally strong. Six seasoned winemakers have been shortlisted in the Winemaker of the Year category (Cabernet Sauvignon), while on the Young Winemaker side (White Wine category), five are vying for the prize.

In this edition, we explore these finalists, and in doing so, we continue a proud tradition that celebrates the individuals behind South Africa's finest wines and embodies both heritage and ingenuity.

Thank you for joining us in the discovery of those who shape our wine story. I hope the insights within these pages encourage your next vineyard visit, deepen your appreciation of craft, and lift a glass to tradition and future alike.

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📘 Diners Club SA

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GO THERE

ELEVATING LUXURY TRAVEL

Marvel Tours, the exclusive tour and transfer division of Newmark Hotels & Reserves, has launched a new fleet of luxury vehicles, signalling its expansion into the high-end touring market. The fleet - comprising three BMW X3s and two Hyundai Starias - blends comfort, performance, and elegance for bespoke travel experiences across Cape Town and beyond. From private airport transfers

to guided explorations of the Cape's most iconic destinations, each journey is designed as a seamless extension of Newmark's renowned hospitality. With experienced chauffeurs and tailored itineraries like the Cape Point, Winelands, and City and Table Mountain tours, Marvel Tours delivers comfort, style, and authentic storytelling, creating exceptional experiences from arrival to departure.



WHEELIE TRAVEL BAG

Crafted for the modern traveller, the Wheelie Travel Bag by Thandana combines refined design with everyday functionality. Made from genuine bovine leather, this 60-litre bag is spacious, durable, and beautifully detailed with gunmetal trims and leather zip pulls. The interior features water-resistant Thandana logo lining, a mesh compartment, and a separate zip pocket for organised packing. Designed for effortless travel, this product features a custom aluminium pulley handle system, smooth rubber wheels, and rubber feet for added protection. Finished with YKK zips for long-lasting performance, this piece is the perfect balance of luxury and practicality - your ultimate travel companion. Dimensions: L65cm x H29cm x W32cm. www.thandana.co.za



TAJ EXPANDS INTO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA'S WILDERNESS

Taj, a name synonymous with refined hospitality from Cape Town to destinations across the world, has been recognised by Brand Finance as the world's strongest hotel brand. Now, the group is extending its legendary 'Tajness' into sub-Saharan Africa, inviting discerning travellers to experience the continent's wild beauty through its signature authentic service. Taj Hotels has acquired three remarkable lodges in the Greater Kruger National Park: the Taj Lion Kings Bush Lodge (currently being renovated), the Taj Lion Kings River Lodge, both set to open in early 2026, and the Taj Lion Kings Hilltop Tented Camp later that year. Additional properties will debut in 2027, with future lodges planned for the Maasai Mara, Serengeti, Botswana and Zambia - offering guests an unrivalled luxury safari experience. For more information, contact Mr Mark Wernich on +27 21 819 2000.



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WINE ROUTES REINVENTED

Cheers to Experiential Travel at its Best

Wine tourism is experiencing an unprecedented boom, with the global market projected to more than triple from \$108.3 billion to a staggering \$358.6 billion over the next decade.

Alongside impressive growth, the global wine sector is undergoing a significant renaissance as wine routes around the world transform their traditional offerings - moving far beyond the conventional tasting room model.

"Gone are the days of simple cellar door tastings," says Antoinette Turner, GM of Flight Centre South Africa. "Today's estates are crafting experiences and excursions that blend adventure and appreciation. The result? A fierce competition to create the most unforgettable wine experiences on earth."

And wine lovers are paying attention. Here's a small selection of 2025's top wine experiences - in both iconic and off-the-beaten-track locations around the world.

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA

Argentina's Malbec trail takes wine tourism to astronomical heights - literally. In Mendoza's high-altitude vineyards, visitors can now combine Argentina's world-famous Malbec with some of the

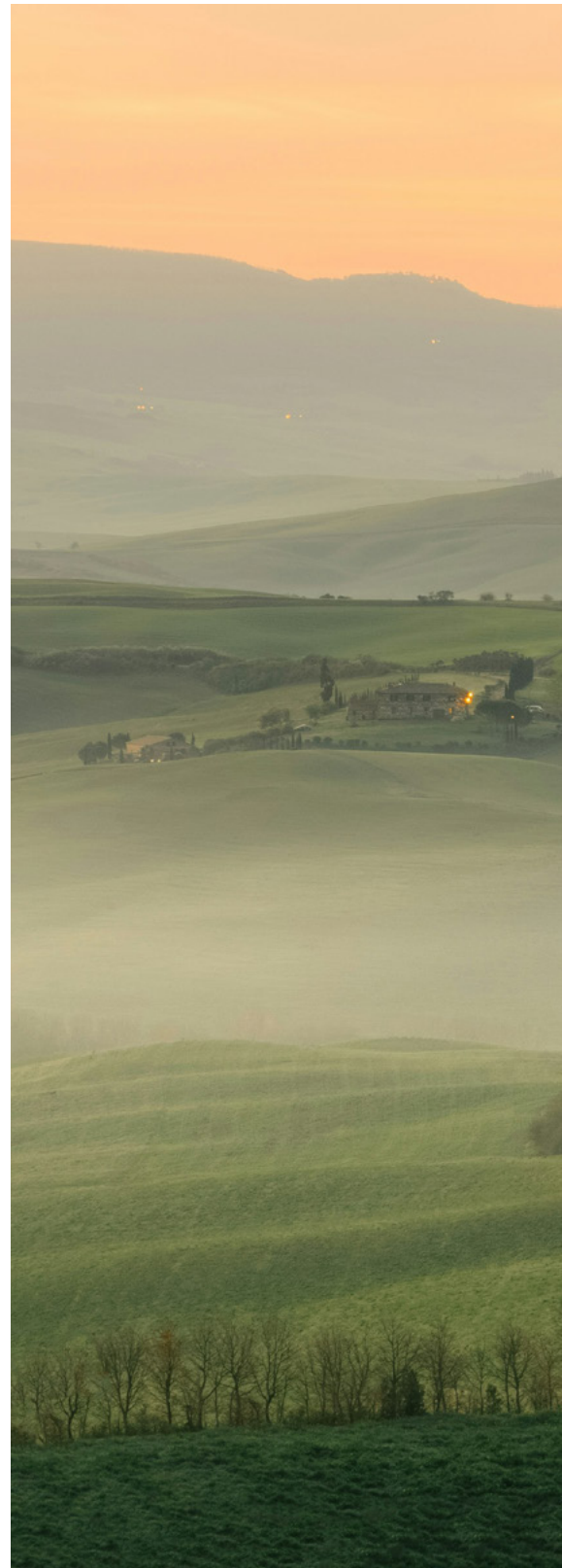
planet's clearest night skies. An exclusive wine and stargazing experience pairs private astronomy sessions with local experts alongside a moonlit tasting among the vines, complete with artisanal cheese platters and a canopy of stars.

Although there are no direct flights from South Africa to Argentina, SAA's new direct flights to São Paulo, Brazil, make onward connections to Buenos Aires fairly straightforward. With no visa required, wine enthusiasts can freely explore not just Mendoza, but also the historic regions of Salta and La Rioja, each boasting centuries of winemaking tradition across Argentina's stunning Andean landscapes.

KOTOR, MONTENEGRO

Increasingly, more South Africans are discovering the wonders of Montenegro. Located on Europe's beautiful Balkan Peninsula, Montenegro offers a more tranquil and budget-friendly experience compared to Croatia.

"Montenegro is known for its stunning coastline, warm water, charming villages,





Tuscany, Italy



food, history and culture,” says Turner. “If you’re looking for a European summer holiday – minus the price tag – Montenegro needs to be on your list.”

And if you’re looking for a very different wine experience, head to Kotor, where Montenegro’s first and only underwater wine cellar began ageing wines on the seabed in 2021. The underwater ageing process accelerates wine maturation, gives the bottles a distinctive appearance (as marine life attaches to them during their time on the ocean floor), and gives visitors a relaxed afternoon on a floating wine bar – complete with fresh fish and impromptu dips in the Adriatic Sea!

TUSCANY, ITALY

Tenuta Torciano, near San Gimignano, offers a magical pairing of wine and truffles. Perfect for foodies,

the estate offers an authentic truffle hunting experience (think truffle dogs, olive groves, vineyards and rolling countryside) followed by a wine tasting – where visitors learn more about ancient truffle-hunting traditions and winemaking while enjoying the fruits of their labour! In fact, Tenuta Torciano offers 45 different experiences, which means you can choose from horse-riding adventures to pasta-making classes – all accompanied by a glass of Tuscany’s best.

NAPA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

Much like Franschhoek’s famous Wine Tram, the Napa Valley’s Wine Trolley trundles between a selection of the valley’s award-winning wineries. Scenic views from the open-sided trolley (a repurposed San Francisco

cable car), commentary from a guide, and a gourmet picnic lunch top off the experience, which also includes a visit to Castello di Amorosa, giving serious 4th-century Tuscan castle vibes in the heart of California’s wine country. This is Napa on a plate, and lucky travellers get to taste the region’s wines, olive oil and other artisanal products along the way!

SWAN VALLEY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Australia’s wine regions are legendary: Barossa Valley, Margaret River, McLaren Vale, Clare Valley, Hunter Valley, Adelaide Hills, Coonawarra, and Yarra Valley, to name a few.

But not only is Swan Valley (about 30 minutes northeast of Perth) WA’s oldest wine region, it’s also the only place you can enjoy a “Bush Tucker Tasting” – learning

Napa Valley, California



Vineyard in Mendoza, Argentina

about local Indigenous food and culture with Noongar Elder, Dale Tilbrook. It's wine paired with storytelling, paired with local ingredients foraged on Noongar land.

"Qantas launches a brand-new direct route between Johannesburg and Perth in December," says Turner. "And with South African Airways already flying non-stop five times a week, travelling 'down under' is easier than ever before."

BONNIEVALE, SOUTH AFRICA

Chardonnay lovers, take note: Weltevrede Wine Estate's two-hour guided chardonnay walk takes you deep underground to experience the estate's history, art and wine on a candlelit cellar tour like no other. This unforgettable tasting journey explores the region's unique terroir – and why Weltevrede is dedicated to producing world-class chardonnay. It's perfect for both Chardonnay devotees (you'll get to sample three of the estate's extraordinary wines, Place of Rocks, Calcrete and Poet's Prayer) and curious wine lovers wanting to understand why this grape variety has captured hearts and palates worldwide. And for those looking for something completely different, why not try your hand at creating, corking and labelling your bottle of Cap Classique? Made from the farm's famous chardonnay grapes, of course!

When it comes to wine tourism, Turner believes that South Africa more than holds its own against the likes of Argentina, Chile, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the US.

"South Africa is most famous for the Western Cape's Winelands, stretching from Constantia all the way up the Garden Route, but we have incredible estates in the Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal too," says Turner. "Domestic travellers need to discover Bezalel Wine & Brandy Estate between the Green Kalahari towns of Upington and Keimoes, or Highgate Wine Estate, Abingdon Wine Estate and Cathedral Peak Wine Estate in KZN – all producing wine in the shadow of the Drakensberg!" 🇿🇦

by **flight centre**
/photography by **unsplash.com**

ROCK SOLID VISION

*Coenie Snyman's "Rock of Eye" Shapes
South African Cabernet's Future*

From the vineyards of Stellenbosch to the top of the 2025 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year podium, veteran winemaker Coenie Snyman proves that instinct, precision, and a deep respect for terroir can still create magic in a bottle.

When you've spent the last three decades working to perfect your craft among the vines and barrels of Stellenbosch, you learn to trust your intuition - or, as Coenie Snyman might put it, your "rock of eye." It's a term borrowed from the world of traditional craftsmanship, where the artisan's skill is measured not by rulers or formulas, but by an instinctive sense of balance and proportion. In 2025, that very instinct has earned Snyman the coveted Diners Club Winemaker of the Year title for his Rock of Eye Cabernet Sauvignon 2022, a wine that marks not only a professional triumph but also a deeply personal milestone.

For Snyman, this isn't his first brush with the spotlight. He first won the same award back in 2009, yet this time feels different. The Rock of







Eye Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 is the first wine released under his own label, his first opportunity to express a philosophy that's been quietly maturing alongside his wines – one rooted in place, people, and patience. It's a Cabernet that embodies the power and sophistication of Stellenbosch while capturing the quiet confidence of a winemaker who knows precisely what he's doing.

A LIFE AMONG THE VINES

Coenie Snyman's story begins, fittingly, in Stellenbosch. His father worked closely with labourers on the surrounding wine farms, meaning that vineyards and cellars were the backdrop of his childhood. It wasn't an unusual upbringing for someone in the region, but what set Snyman apart was his fascination with how the industry worked.

"I grew up in the wine industry when it was still very traditional," he recalls. "I wanted to reform the industry through cellar design."

That spirit of innovation led him to Stellenbosch University, where he earned his BSc in Viticulture and Oenology in 1994, followed by an Honours degree in Oenology in 2000. During those formative years, Snyman discovered that winemaking wasn't just for vineyard owners – it could be a calling, a craft to be mastered by those who had the vision and skill to bring it to life.

Armed with both academic grounding and hands-on experience, Snyman began to make a name for himself in the Stellenbosch wine scene. Over the past 30 years, he's worked with some of the region's most respected



estates, guiding teams, designing cellars, and crafting wines that reflect not only technical mastery but also a deep connection to the land.

THE TURNING POINT

Every winemaker dreams of creating something that feels entirely their own – a wine that isn't shaped by the expectations of a brand or the limitations of a particular estate. For Snyman, that dream took shape in 2022 with the release of Rock of Eye, his debut under his own label.

It's fitting that his first vintage would go on to win the country's most prestigious winemaking award. But beyond the accolades, Rock of Eye

Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 represents something far more personal: an unfiltered reflection of his winemaking philosophy.

"This wine is my interpretation of the vineyards of Stellenbosch," he explains. "It reflects the region's power and sophistication by bringing together vineyards from Simonsberg, Polkadraai Hills, and the Helderberg."

That combination is something special. Simonsberg contributes structure and depth, Polkadraai brings perfume and lift, and Helderberg adds minerality and finesse. The result is a Cabernet that doesn't lean too far into muscularity or showmanship – instead, it's a lesson in balance.



THE CRAFT BEHIND THE CABERNET

The Rock of Eye Cabernet Sauvignon is a wine crafted with meticulous attention to detail. Grapes are handpicked and fermented in open-top fermenters, where manual punch-downs ensure gentle extraction of colour and tannin. It then spends around 18 months in French oak barrels, of which only about 20% are new, allowing the fruit's character to shine rather than be overshadowed by wood.

In the glass, it's unmistakably Stellenbosch: aromas of blackcurrant and graphite leap out first, followed by cedar, pencil shavings, and a whiff of wild fynbos. The palate is full and confident, showing layers of mulberry, cherry, and cassis, all stitched together by fine-grained tannins and a dry, savoury finish. It's a wine of tension and texture – one that balances generosity with restraint.

Snyman's approach is refreshingly

pragmatic. "A wine is the culmination of multiple factors that come together," he says. "It's the people involved, the vineyard and the environment, the transformation that happens in the cellar, and finally, the moment it's opened on someone's table. All of that is facilitated by the winemaker."

It's a statement that captures his entire ethos. For Snyman, wine isn't a solo act; it's a collaboration between nature and human touch, experience and instinct. The winemaker, in his view, isn't the star of the show but rather the conductor, guiding all the elements into harmony.

REWARDING MOMENTS AND HARD LESSONS

Snyman's winemaking journey hasn't been without its challenges, but he's the sort of person who measures success differently. His proudest moments aren't necessarily trophies or ratings, but the satisfaction of seeing a wine sell out, knowing it has found its audience.

"Every time a wine is sold out, it's a proud moment," he admits. "That means it resonated with people."

Still, the 2025 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year title holds special meaning. Having won it once before, this second award is a bookend to a story that began decades ago, when a young man from Stellenbosch set out to modernise a traditional industry. This time, however, he's done it entirely on his own terms.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Even as accolades roll in, Snyman's attention is firmly on the future. His goal now is to build sustainability, not just in the environmental sense, but within his team and among the growers he collaborates with.

"Building a sustainable future through my team and the growers I work with is the most important thing to me," he says. "It's about making wines that reflect the vineyards of Stellenbosch and its people."



This emphasis on community and continuity is what makes Snyman's work stand out. He understands that great wine is rooted in relationships – with the land, with the growers, and with the people who ultimately uncork it.


As South Africa's wine industry evolves, his approach feels like a bridge between old-world craftsmanship and modern sensibility. His wines carry the gravitas of tradition, but they also speak a contemporary language of precision, sustainability, and authenticity.

A WINEMAKER'S SIGNATURE

If you've ever tasted a wine that feels effortless – not because it's simple, but because every element seems to fall perfectly into place – you'll understand what Snyman means by "rock of eye." It's that almost invisible craftsmanship that comes only from experience, where intuition takes over from measurement, and confidence replaces calculation.

There's no flash or gimmickry in the 2022 Rock of Eye Cabernet Sauvignon. Instead, it's a masterclass in proportion – a wine that delivers depth without heaviness, power without aggression. It's the sort of Cabernet that reminds you why Stellenbosch remains one of the world's great red wine regions.

And perhaps that's the ultimate lesson from Coenie Snyman's latest triumph: that true craftsmanship is measured quietly, glass by glass, vineyard by vineyard, vintage after vintage.

The Rock of Eye Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 is both a product of technical skill, and a wine born of trust. Trust in the land, trust in the process, and above all, trust in the "eye" of the winemaker who shaped it. 

*by **bernie hellberg jr**
/photography by **ryan abbott***

SIX MINDS ONE MISSION

Crafting the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year Verdict

Meet the experts defining excellence in the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year and Young Winemaker of the Year competition.

The Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year Awards have long been among South Africa's most respected wine honours, not only because of the trophies and flights to far-flung wine regions, but because they put the spotlight firmly on the people behind the labels. Established in 1981 and expanded in 2001 to recognise emerging talent, the awards celebrate winemakers across the country, with entries open at no cost – a rare level playing field in a fiercely competitive industry.

HOW THE JUDGING WORKS

Each year, the competition homes in on specific categories – in 2025, Cabernet Sauvignon for Winemaker of the Year and White Wine for Young Winemaker. Wines are entered from across South Africa, vetted for compliance with production regulations, and then assessed blind over several rounds. From a substantial pool of entries, the judges narrow the field to a tightly curated shortlist before selecting the overall winners. The focus is not only on technical precision, but also on originality, age-worthiness and that elusive sense of place that separates competent wines from memorable ones.

by *bernie hellberg jr*
/ photography by *ryan abbott*



CARRIE ADAMS

Panel Chair

Carrie Adams brings a rare combination of retail experience, broadcast clarity and a palate honed over decades of tasting. As convenor, she sets the tone for the judging process, keeping the conversation focused, the arguments honest, and the verdicts consistent. Carrie's background in specialist wine retail gives her a sharp sense of value and market relevance, while her broadcasting work has made her a natural translator of technical nuances. She gravitates toward wines that show restraint and a genuine sense of place, and she encourages the panel to interrogate not only what's in the glass, but how convincingly it expresses origin. Her guiding hand ensures the room remains open to discovery while holding each wine to uncompromising standards.



YEGAS NAIDOO

Judge

Yegas Naidoo's international judging experience brings a valuable external lens to the panel. She has a precise, detail-driven approach to tasting, shaped by extensive studies and time spent evaluating wines across various continents. Her affinity for classic styles – particularly sparkling wine – gives her a strong sense of texture, structure, and age-worthiness. Yegas approaches every wine with quiet thoroughness, often focusing on how well a wine will hold its shape over time. She tests a wine's behaviour in practical terms too: whether it complements food, whether it maintains interest in a social setting, and whether it has the subtlety needed for longevity. Her global perspective helps benchmark South African entries against international standards without losing sight of local character.



SHANE MUMBA

Judge

Shane Mumba sits at the intersection of technical knowledge and market intuition. His work in brand advocacy and education – particularly within the brandy and broader luxury beverage space – has given him a clear understanding of how people experience flavour. Shane excels at linking a wine's technical strengths to its storytelling potential, often highlighting which wines carry a narrative that consumers can connect with. His experience in the restaurant and events circuit provides firsthand insight into shifting tastes and trends. On the panel, Shane brings a valuable question to the table: beyond technical polish, does this wine have the character, identity and emotional pull to stand out in a crowded market? His contributions often bridge the gap between cellar precision and real-world appeal.



DENZEL SWARTS

Judge

Denzel Swarts' journey from farm worker's son to wine entrepreneur and community leader adds an authentic, deeply rooted perspective to the panel. He has spent years advocating for storytelling in wine – the belief that true value lies in how convincingly a wine reflects both its land and the people behind it. Through his work in youth development and brand building, Denzel has cultivated a profound respect for sustainability and heritage. In the judging room, he looks closely at how viticulture and winemaking decisions either preserve or dilute a wine's sense of place. He is especially drawn to wines that feel honest: those that communicate soil, climate and intention without unnecessary embellishment. Denzel's presence ensures that the conversation remains grounded in identity, not just technique.



JOHANN FOURIE

Judge

Johann Fourie brings rigorous technical insight shaped by years of experience crafting cool-climate wines and leading large cellar teams. His approach is meticulous – he analyses tannin structure, fermentation detail and oak integration with the precision of someone who lives in both vineyard spreadsheets and barrel halls. Johann has an instinct for balance, particularly in varieties where structure can easily overwhelm fruit. On the panel, he often zeroes in on the fine print: phenolic maturity, purity of fruit, and whether a wine's architecture will support graceful ageing. Yet his perspective is not purely clinical. Johann has a deep respect for terroir expression and frequently highlights when a wine carries a clear signature of its origin. His voice ensures the panel remains anchored to technical integrity while still rewarding character.



WAYNE BUCKLEY

Judge

Wayne Buckley's experience in sales, exports and tasting room leadership means he understands how wines live beyond the cellar. He has spent years guiding visitors, sommeliers and buyers through ranges of premium wines, giving him a sharp sense of what resonates with consumers. Wayne evaluates wines with an eye for completeness, focusing on quality, authenticity, and the ability to stand confidently on both local and international platforms. He thinks about how a wine will read on a restaurant list, how it will be positioned in a tasting, and whether its style aligns with modern drinking trends. His grounding in formal wine studies adds structure to his instinctive feel for market behaviour, making him the panel's barometer for commercial viability without compromising on quality. 🍷

CRAFTING THE PERFECT CABERNET

Celebrating the 2025 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year Finalists

Five remarkable storytellers of South African terroir, each shaping the future of local Cabernet Sauvignon.

South Africa's wine heritage has always been defined by resilience, craft, and the pursuit of excellence. Nowhere is that spirit more evident than in the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year title, the country's most prestigious winemaker accolade and a career milestone for any winemaker who earns a place among the finalists.

The 2025 cohort is a striking group. Five individuals who embody passion, technical mastery, and a deep respect for the vineyards that shape their wines. From Stellenbosch's revered slopes to the expressive valley floors that define our finest Cabernet Sauvignon, each finalist presents a unique interpretation of place, craft, and style. Their stories are as compelling as their wines, offering a rich tapestry of experience, heritage, and forward-thinking vision.

JOHNNIE CALITZ

Glen Carlou Wines

Gravel Quarry Cabernet Sauvignon 2022

Glen Carlou's Johnnie Calitz

brings a quiet confidence to his craft, shaped by childhood lessons on his family's farm in Calitzdorp. His professional journey has been one of continuous learning - from studying Viticulture and Oenology at Stellenbosch University to gaining international experience in France and beyond. The Gravel Quarry Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 draws its power from koffiekliip and weathered granite soils, producing tiny berries packed with concentration. Natural fermentation and 24 months in 100% new French oak give the wine its muscular yet surprisingly refined personality. Layers of cassis, bramble, mint, and dark chocolate unfold in a way that promises exceptional ageing. For Johnnie, the reward lies in the quiet moments - watching a thoughtful consumer savour the wine, or witnessing his team grow with each vintage. His ambition is clear: to keep Glen Carlou firmly on the map as a South African benchmark for world-class Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.



Johnnie Calitz



JOSÉ CONDE

Stark-Condé Wines

Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon 2021

José Conde's route to winemaking is anything but conventional, beginning with a Fine Art degree in New York City and a successful career as a designer in New York and Tokyo. His fascination with wine eventually brought him to South Africa in 1997, where he embraced winemaking as a craft grounded in discipline and creative expression. The Stark-Condé Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 is an ode to both resilience and community: when wildfires

threatened his Jonkershoek Valley vineyards during harvest, José relied on fruit from neighbours to craft a wine that still reflects the classic Stellenbosch identity. His proudest milestone remains the estate's 2022 certification for organic farming – the result of a decade-long journey to healthier soils and more expressive vineyards. The 2021 vintage captures purity, authenticity, and a stylistic signature defined by balance. For José, the future lies in exploring the untapped potential of organic viticulture and continuing to push the farm's biological health to new heights.



LOUIS STRYDOM

Ernie Els Wines

Major Series Cabernet Sauvignon 2022

Few winemakers have shaped modern South African Cabernet Sauvignon as profoundly as Louis Strydom. With 25 years at Ernie Els Wines, his philosophy is grounded in farming first – a belief honed through decades of travel, study, and hands-on experience in cellars across Europe and the United States. The Ernie Els Major Series Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 represents a symbolic milestone: the first single-varietal Cabernet to emerge from the brand's newly renovated cellar. Fermented in Nico Velo concrete tanks before ageing in a split of terracotta amphorae and French oak, it combines Helderberg purity with a mineral edge and depth of structure. Concentrated fruit, clarity, and ageability define the wine's core. Louis views Cabernet as a long game – a vine that demands patience and respect – and his future ambition is to refine his understanding of the Helderberg's intricacies even further. For him, consistency is not a metric but a lifelong pursuit, embedded in the soil itself.



SCHALK OPPERMAN

Quoin Rock Wines

Knorhoek Cabernet Sauvignon 2022

Schalk Opperman's journey began in Stellenbosch, shaped by a deep love of nature and a desire to build a career that blends farming, craftsmanship, and people. After studying at Stellenbosch University, he honed his skills under Coenie Snyman and Louis Strydom, gaining experience at both Rust en Vrede and Engelbrecht Els Wines. The Knorhoek Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 forms part of Quoin Rock's focused Heritage range - just two wines that celebrate the estate's exceptional Simonsberg terroir. True to style, the wine delivers red-berry intensity, firm yet smooth tannins, and classic notes of lead pencil and earthy spice. For Schalk, the reward is in creating something that lasts - a wine that will be opened years from now, sparking a moment of connection. While this nomination is among his proudest achievements, he also dreams of future recognition for Chenin Blanc or Chardonnay, built on unwavering consistency and a fierce commitment to excellence.





WERNER SCHRENK

Peter Falke Wines

Signature Kailani Cabernet Sauvignon 2020

Pretoria-born Werner Schrenk felt drawn to winemaking from the moment a single tasting revealed how powerfully a wine can express a place and its people. Although his studies at Elsenburg were cut short, he pursued the craft with determination, guided by a strong connection to the land and a desire to create wines with identity. At Peter Falke Wines, his finalist entry - the Signature Kailani Cabernet Sauvignon 2020 - reflects precision, balance, and a keen sense of terroir. With aromas of cassis, raspberry, and cedar, the wine opens into layers of dense tannins and lingering red fruit, telling a clear story of vintage and site. Werner thrives on the full arc of winemaking, from vineyard to bottle, and delights in seeing people form a connection with his work. His goal remains consistent: to stand proudly among South Africa's top Cabernet Sauvignon producers and to champion the timeless narrative that each vintage carries. ①

A SYMPHONY OF SERENITY

*Why Heritance Aarah, Maldives, is the Premium All-Inclusive Escape
Travellers Can't Stop Talking About*

There's something quietly transformative about Heritance Aarah, a place where the Maldives' postcard perfection meets an artful kind of indulgence.

Here, premium all-inclusive isn't just a phrase - it's a philosophy woven into every curated detail, from sunrise overwater yoga to the last sip of a perfectly balanced cocktail. This is island living elevated, a Premium All-Inclusive escape that doesn't just promise serenity, but delivers it with thoughtful precision and effortless grace.

Nestled in the enchanting Raa Atoll, just a 40-minute scenic seaplane ride from Malé, Heritance Aarah offers a Premium All-Inclusive escape where every detail is thoughtfully curated and the art of island living comes alive. With seven exceptional restaurants and five vibrant bars, embark on a culinary adventure of epic proportions and indulge in a world-class gastronomic experience that will remain with you long after your journey ends. From immersive culinary journeys to rejuvenating wellness rituals and underwater marvels to exclusive accommodation, every moment at Heritance Aarah invites you to find freedom.

Recognised as the 'Best Beachfront

All-Inclusive Family Resort' in 2024 by Forbes and awarded the 'Best Resort in the World - Indian Ocean' at Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards in 2024, the 'Leading All-Inclusive Resort' at the South Asian Travel Awards in 2025 and the Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice "Best of the Best" award for the fourth year in a row, Heritance Aarah is a world-class destination for those seeking a refined and immersive Maldivian escape that harmoniously blends sophistication and serenity.

A NEW STANDARD OF "PREMIUM ALL-INCLUSIVE"

At Heritance Aarah, "premium all-inclusive" means just that - no second-guessing, no fine print. Every detail, from à la carte dining and signature cocktails,





to curated excursions, non-motorised water sports, and a fully stocked in-villa minibar, is seamlessly included.

If you're looking to elevate your experience even further, the resort offers unforgettable moments like sunrise and sunset cruises, floating breakfasts with a choice of eight menus, dolphin-watching excursions, a high tea experience on a sandbank, private dinners on the beach and barbecues on

the deck, as well as private cookery and cocktail classes. Whether it's indulging in curated experiences or simply unwinding by your private plunge pool, you can make your stay truly exceptional at Heritance Aarah.

ADULTS-ONLY OCEAN SUITES FOR TRANQUILLITY SEEKERS

Overwater living takes on a more serene tone at the adults-only Ocean

Suites at Heritance Aarah. With sweeping views, private decks, and direct access to the lagoon, these suites invite you to slow down and savour the quiet. Separate living spaces, personalised service, and exclusive access to a dedicated bar and restaurant allow for the kind of retreat where privacy isn't a luxury, but a given.

Every Ocean Suite is a secluded, overwater haven featuring an infinity

pool, its very own private deck, a serene plunge pool, a personal wine cellar and full butler service – all designed for ultimate comfort and relaxation in this serene adults-only enclave.

FLAVOURS THAT TELL A STORY

Dining isn't just part of the stay at Heritance Aarah – it's at the heart of the experience.

Whether it's an unforgettable journey through fiery Sri Lankan spices and earthy Maldivian flavours, live stations and bold Asian dishes, seafood kissed by flame, Mediterranean and French classics, or the quiet sophistication of artfully plated gourmet delights reserved exclusively for guests of the Ocean Suites, each of the seven restaurants at Heritance Aarah invite you to slow down, savour, and truly taste the island's cultural richness.

With five bars, each with its own unique ambience and setting, Heritance Aarah is home to a selection of premium whiskies, innovative cocktails including signature smoke cocktails and molecular



cocktails, organic wines, tiki cocktails and the broadest range of rum in the Indian Ocean.

RECLAIMING WELLNESS, THE ISLAND WAY

At Heritance Aarah's IASO Medi Spa, wellness is elevated through a rich blend of ancient traditions and modern science. Guests can enjoy Tai Chi on the beach or yoga in serene overwater pavilions, then explore deeper therapies, such as Reiki (energy healing through gentle touch), Shirodhara (a calming Ayurvedic oil-flow treatment), and Tibetan Kunye healing (a traditional massage using herbal oils and pressure-point techniques).

Each stay includes a complimentary Smart 3D Skin Analysis and a 30-minute wellness consultation, providing valuable insights into skin health and personalised care recommendations. The spa also offers facial therapies, including the Holistic Face Lift, Depigmentation, and Anti-Ageing treatments, as well as personal grooming services such as hairstyling, makeup, and mehndi.

Each moment at Heritance Aarah's spa is crafted to help you reconnect and restore harmony between body, mind, and breath.




A SPECIAL OFFER TRAVELLERS SHOULDN'T MISS

Families can select the Family Getaway Package for stays during this period and revel in having one child under 12 years of age staying and dining for free, and also enjoy three complimentary hours of babysitting per day for children aged 2 to 4 years at the resort's fun-filled Koka Kids Club.

Couples seeking an intimate escape can select the Cherishing Love in Paradise Package for stays during this period and celebrate their getaway in exclusivity and utmost privacy. An in-villa breakfast, a breakfast on the deck or a

floating breakfast awaits couples staying in the overwater Ocean Suites, together with a romantic candlelit dinner on the beach and a 30-minute photoshoot at a designated area or in the villa.

For more information, please visit www.heritancehotels.com/aarah, or scan the QR code below. 



THE MAKING OF A MODERN WINEMAKER

*Marnich Aucamp is the
2025 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year*

This year's Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year trophy has found a deserving owner in Marnich Aucamp, assistant winemaker at Stellenbosch Vineyards. His winning wine, the Credo Chenin Blanc 2024, served as both a statement of his talent and ambition. It was this expression of Chenin Blanc that secured him the 2025 award in the White Wine category.

Marnich Aucamp's journey to the cellar has been somewhat unconventional. Born in Benoni, he spent two years in Somerset West before relocating to Arusha, Tanzania, with his family. From grade eight onward, he boarded near Durban while still living in Tanzania. After matriculating, he initially embarked on a BA in Sport Science at Stellenbosch. It was only after a working gap year – during which he turned his hand to his first harvest, then crossed to the United States to work on a carnival circuit to save up – that he enrolled for a B.Agric in Cellar Technology at Elsenburg.

It was during that first harvest, with zero prior winemaking background, that he discovered a different direction. "When I did my first harvest ... it was the passion and knowledge that Riandri Visser and Adriaan Jacobs had that just rubbed off, and it just snow-balled from there, and I haven't looked back since," Aucamp reflects.

What marks the pivot is that Aucamp realised early on that office work wasn't for him: "I always knew that I am not a person who can sit in an office the whole time and much prefer being outside." With that clarity, he embraced the vineyard-to-bottle process and began to carve his path in winemaking.

This win is significant because



Aucamp was previously nominated as a finalist in the Young Winemaker of the Year category, underscoring the steady progress he has made. His repeated recognition demonstrates both his persistence and the industry's confidence in his talents.

THE WINNER'S WINE: CREDO CHENIN BLANC 2024

While Aucamp submitted two finalist wines in this year's competition, it was the Credo Chenin Blanc 2024 that



sealed his triumph. His second entry, Credo Chenin Blanc Verdelho Viognier 2024, also made the shortlist but played a supporting role in this story.

In his own words, he describes the Chenin Blanc as “an expression of the cultivar in the sense that it is a relatively big wine but still elegant. The wine is matured in French oak barrels, where only the select few are chosen to make the final bottling. What we look for is beautiful maturation from the barrels, but also not being overpowered by the

wood; we don’t want you to feel like you are biting into the barrel itself. This allows us to still showcase how great Chenin Blanc is as a varietal.”

He further notes that the wine is “well structured, bursting with flavour and has a lovely, almost sweet finish that makes it also great to pair with pasta, curries.” That description speaks to a wine with personality, precision and a sense of place.

WHAT LIES BEHIND THE BOTTLE

Aucamp highlights that the most

rewarding part of his job is two-fold. First, “getting the wine in the bottle and enjoying” it; and second, “the people. It’s the stories and getting to know everyone that play a vital role in the process. There are so many people involved throughout the process, no matter how big or small the cellar is. It’s a culmination of so many people’s hard work and dedication.”

By emphasising this collaborative dimension, Aucamp shows a maturity beyond his years: he fully acknowledges

that his achievement is grounded in a team, a vineyard, and the infrastructure of Stellenbosch Vineyards.

His proudest moment to date? “There have been a few very significant moments, but definitely one that still stands out the most is having my first wine bottled, that feeling of having it in the bottle and knowing all the hard work from everyone involved is finally put together in a bottle and to be enjoyed.”

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, Aucamp is both ambitious and grounded: “To make wines that are of a very high standard and enjoyable by everyone and not just wine lovers. But also to keep learning as I think there is so much to learn about wine as it is always evolving and bringing new challenges...”

That humility combined with ambition positions him well not just to build a career, but to contribute meaningfully to the narrative of South African white wines - especially in the premium Chenin Blanc space.





WHY THIS WIN MATTERS

The Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year award is now in its 25th iteration, with the 2025 category focused on White Wines. The competition emphasises the winemaker behind the bottle rather than the bottle alone, acknowledging creativity, skill and vision. Finalists competed among an increased field of entries as the organisers recorded a high level of interest this year. (In fact, this year's nomination list confirmed Aucamp's two entries.)

In this context, Aucamp's win is not just personal - it is symbolic. It tells the story of a new generation of South African winemakers who combine technical training (B.Agric Cellar Technology) with real-world experience and an empathetic understanding of the broader team behind every vintage. His work exemplifies a vibrant, forward-looking South African wine industry.

From Benoni to Arusha, from boarding school in KwaZulu-Natal to harvest hands-on in Stellenbosch vineyards, Aucamp's path has been anything but linear. It is precisely that breadth of experience - including sports science, international work experience, and academic cellar sciences - that informs his approach.

Now, as the winner of the 2025 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year award, he enters a chapter where expectation meets opportunity. The Credo Chenin Blanc 2024 provides a platform, the win offers validation, and the future will demand evolution.

For wine lovers keen to follow a rising star, keep an eye on Aucamp's next vintages - and on Stellenbosch Vineyards' Credo label. It's a story of craft, of place, and of a winemaker who knows that wine is at once personal, communal, and deeply rooted in terroir. 🍷

THE RENAISSANCE OF AN ICONIC ESCAPE

NH Hotel Sandton

Johannesburg's Sandton skyline glints like a promise in the afternoon sun – a shimmering emblem of ambition, sophistication, and reinvention. At its heart towers one of the city's most enduring icons, now reborn with renewed purpose.



As I arrived at NH Hotel Sandton, the air carried that familiar hum of Africa's financial heart, yet something about this place felt different. Celebrating its first-year anniversary, the hotel – once the legendary Hilton Sandton – has reemerged as NH Sandton, a member of the prestigious Newmark Hotels Collection under Minor Hotels, marking not just a rebrand, but a renaissance.

Set just twenty kilometres from O.R. Tambo International Airport, NH Sandton is a convenient sanctuary for both business and leisure travellers. Its 329 rooms and suites range from sleek lead-in rooms to expansive one-bedroom suites, culminating in the luxurious 145-square-metre Royal Suite – a contemporary retreat with panoramic city views.

My suite, bathed in natural light from floor-to-ceiling windows, felt as calming as it was welcoming. The décor blends clean lines with warm, neutral tones and tactile finishes, creating a space that is both elegant and unpretentious. Thoughtful touches – including a Nespresso machine, a generous work area, soundproof windows and a separate bath and shower – reflect Newmark Hotels' commitment to comfort and function.

CULINARY COMPASS OF SANDTON

Home to some of the best restaurants in Sandton, NH Sandton offers a dining experience that celebrates the city's cosmopolitan spirit, featuring two distinctive restaurants and two bars.

At Tradewinds Restaurant, mornings begin at what is quickly becoming Sandton's most sought-after breakfast destination. The generous buffet features everything from freshly baked pastries and continental classics to a dedicated selection of local favorites. Later in the day, Tradewinds transforms, offering à la carte and buffet menus that marry global inspiration with local flair. Dinner feels effortlessly romantic, where Executive Chef Donaldson Madubela curates exquisitely presented dishes that delight both the eye and palate, seamlessly blending international techniques with local finesse. An additional Asian cuisine station provides a thoughtful nod to international guests and those craving the flavors of the Orient.

For a more casual yet refined option, Faces Lounge and Bar is the hotel's social heartbeat. During the day, it hums with quiet productivity, while at night, the mood softens. Guests gather for fine wines, artisanal cocktails, and tapas-style

plates as the sun dips behind the skyline.

And for those seeking poolside perfection, the Pool Gazebo Bar offers cocktails and light bites in a serene outdoor setting, where palm-framed views remind you that even in the city, there's room for stillness.

THE BUSINESS OF BALANCE

Beyond its culinary appeal, NH Sandton excels at creating balance – a space where business, leisure, and wellness coexist. The fully equipped gym offers an energising start to the day, while the expansive outdoor pool invites guests to unwind beneath the African sky.

While relaxation comes easily here, NH Sandton is also designed for connection. With 13 meeting and event spaces that can host up to 1,000 guests, each room bathed in natural light and equipped with state-of-the-art technology; ideal for conferences or celebrations. The Executive Lounge provides an elegant, private setting for smaller meetings, while weddings and galas take on a special glow under the garden lights and the events team ensure that everything is executed with understated sophistication.

On weekends, the rhythm softens.



Guests lounge by the pool with a book and a cocktail, or take a short stroll to Sandton City and Nelson Mandela Square, where high-end boutiques and cafés invite exploration.

THE PINNACLE OF HOSPITALITY

What makes NH Sandton truly special is its sense of direction. In its first year under the NH Collection, the hotel has already earned the Best Hotel Opening Award at the Minor Global Awards of Excellence 2025 – a testament to its innovation and guest satisfaction. But behind the accolades lies something even more meaningful: a dedication to community, sustainability, and authentic service.

From the friendly faces at check-in to the culinary team who remembered my morning cappuccino preference, every interaction carried a quiet sincerity. This is hospitality that goes beyond deserved accolades – it's hospitality with heart.

For travellers seeking more than just a stay, NH Hotel Sandton offers an experience: a story of rebirth told through design, flavour, and the simple pleasure of feeling perfectly at home in the heart of the city. 📍



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LIFESTYLE



FUSING HERITAGE AND MODERN ELEGANCE

Carrol Boyes' new Luxury Leather Handbag Collection elegantly bridges the brand's sculptural heritage with a distinctly modern sensibility. Reimagined by Caro Boyes, each piece is crafted from luxurious full-grain leather and finished with signature metallic hardware inspired by Carrol's iconic designs - Cradle, Toe Touch and Diver. The range, featuring timeless pieces like the City Bag, Chain

Purse and Trifold Wallet, balances artful detailing with everyday functionality. Available in Classic Black and Brown/Mocha Mousse, this collection embodies refined craftsmanship and contemporary elegance - a tactile celebration of form, movement and the enduring spirit of Carrol Boyes design. Now available at carrolboyes.com and in selected Carrol Boyes retail stores.



ILLUMINATE THE SEASON IN RED

Moët & Chandon celebrates the festive season in striking red - the colour of passion, connection, and celebration. The Maison's two limited-edition champagnes embody the warmth and sparkle of the holidays, transforming gatherings into luminous occasions. From the iconic Moët Impérial in its radiant "Red" edition to the refined Grand Vintage and the exceptional Collection Impériale Création N°1, each bottle captures the essence of French savoir-fête. Whether paired with seafood, poultry, or the shimmer of candlelight, Moët & Chandon invites you to toast to love, life, and unforgettable memories this holiday season - with elegance, naturally.

I WANT CHOO LE PARFUM

I Want Choo Le Parfum by Jimmy Choo is a captivating amber floral woody fragrance that embodies glamour, confidence and allure. Created by master perfumers Marie Salamagne and Amandine Clerc-Marie, it opens with notes of pear, golden gardenia and blackberry, unfolding into jasmine, patchouli and ambrette, before settling into sensual moss amber, sandalwood and praline. Housed in a sculptural molten-gold bottle adorned with the JC monogram, it reflects modern opulence and bold femininity. A celebration of freedom and irresistible charm, I Want Choo Le Parfum invites you to embrace your radiance - an indulgent expression of the Jimmy Choo spirit. Available at major retailers.





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AN ADVENTURE INTENSIFIED

Montblanc Explorer Extreme

There is something irresistible about the world's most remote landscapes, the deserts and canyons that seem to stretch into infinity. Montblanc Explorer Extreme captures that exhilaration, turning the thrill of exploration into a scent that is richer, deeper, and more intense than anything the Explorer line has offered before.

Montblanc Explorer has always been a celebration of the spirit of adventure. Each fragrance in the collection tells a story of a different terrain, a different journey, a different kind of explorer. Explorer Extreme takes it a step further, inviting modern adventurers to step into some of the planet's most isolated territories. Woody, ambery, and leathery, this parfum distils the essence of discovery into a single, unforgettable trail.

ADVENTURE AT FULL INTENSITY

The extreme side of exploration comes alive in rugged and arid locations, like the dramatic sandstone canyons and endless dunes of Saudi Arabia's AlUla Desert. These are places that test the boldest, most fearless adventurers. Explorer Extreme channels that same energy, a fragrance born for those who thrive on challenge.

As the first true Parfum in the line, this iteration honours the original Explorer Eau de Parfum

while amplifying its intensity. The top notes of bergamot and clary sage give a burst of green freshness, representing the vitality and courage of the Explorer man. At its heart, patchouli blends with Ambrofix™ to create a hypnotic warmth, evoking faraway lands and the thrill of adventure. The base features rich amber and leather accords, grounded with elegant vetiver, leaving a lingering impression that is both bold and sophisticated.





“Explorer Extreme embodies modern masculinity in its most intense form, a fusion of sophistication and daring. It invites the Explorer man to push limits and conquer new horizons,” explain perfumers Jordi Fernandez and Antoine Maisondieu. “Warm amber and leathery notes elevate the

signature Explorer scent to a new level of intensity.”

A BOTTLE BUILT FOR THE JOURNEY

The design mirrors the spirit of the fragrance. The textured glass reflects Montblanc’s Extreme 3.0



leather collection, built for travel and adventure, while a glossy black gear cap completes the bottle. The small Montblanc emblem on the front signifies the Maison's commitment to fine materials, elegant style, and European craftsmanship.

Every detail is considered. The bottle is assembled at Montblanc's Pelleteria workshop in Florence, the emblem is crafted in Germany, and the final product is conditioned in France. Encased in a folding matte black box, featuring the Extreme Leather pattern and gold lettering, it perfectly embodies the intensity inside.

A NEW CHAPTER OF EXPLORATION

The launch campaign brings this

adventurous spirit to life. Set against the dramatic landscapes of AIUla, Justice Joslin—actor, model, and musician—embodies the modern Explorer man. He scales canyons and ascends cliffs, mapping his ambitions with a Montblanc Meisterstück and gazing across horizons that stretch into infinity. Every step is a testament to courage, curiosity, and the relentless pursuit of discovery.

Montblanc Explorer Extreme is the first parfum in a collection that also includes Montblanc Explorer and Montblanc Explorer Platinum, offering a new level of intensity for those who crave adventure without limits. ⓘ

FROM FIRST SIPS TO FIVE STARS

2026 Platter's by Diners Club South African Wine Guide

The 2026 edition of Platter's by Diners Club continues the legacy of helping newcomers to wine and veteran wine lovers alike find the perfect bottle.

South Africa may be an old nation when it comes to wine production, but it is a young one when it comes to wine consumption.

One reason for this is that it is a nation of beer drinkers – for every litre of wine consumed, close to 9 litres of beer are imbibed. And one particular beer brand alone has the same retail-sales value as the wine industry's 9,000 wine labels combined.

Another reason is that, compared to beer, wine is a complicated beverage. It is mostly 'still' but can be fizzy. It can be white, red, pink or orange, sweet or dry, fortified or unfortified, and nowadays, even de-alcoholised.

For 46 years, Platter's by Diners Club South African Wine Guide, known simply as 'Platters' by its thousands of fans, has been helping South African consumers navigate the local wine world, not only literally, because it features maps showing where the wine estates and brand homes are located,

but assisting them find the perfect bottle, regardless of the occasion.

With its eye-catching cover design (the colour changes with each edition, and guessing what it will be is a popular topic of conversation leading up to the guide's arrival on retail shelves), it has been an industry institution and a best-selling hardcover book for decades.

In addition to reviews and ratings of the current vintages on the shelves, it contains all the information winelovers, young and young-at-heart, need to get to grips with the industry, its geography and legislation, its grape varieties and wine styles, and its vintages, as well as organisations that support the growers and producers.

Most importantly for the industry and Platterati alike, there are the upfront pages listing the wines receiving its highest accolade, a five-star rating.

Annually, Platter's assesses a potential 8,000 wines. Those rated 93 points or more on the 100-point rating scale by the judges are entered into a second round of blind tasting (with





no label showing). Here, two tasters, assisted by a third-opinion taster if necessary, assess the wines to award them their final rating. Bottlings judged to be “Superlative, a South African classic” are given the highest ranking of five stars, equal to 95 points or more. Of the five-star-awarded wines, the top performer within each wine style receives the coveted accolade of Wine of the Year.

Then there are the three Winery of the Year awards: Top Performing

Winery of the Year (the winery that achieves the most five-star results); Newcomer Winery of the Year (the producer debuting in guide and achieving highest ratings at the five-star tasting), and Editor’s Award Winery of the Year (recognising a winegrowing team/teams who are ambassadors par excellence for South African wine). In the 46th edition, these awards go to Diemersdal Estate, Alheit Vineyards and The Saldanha Wine & Spirit Co, respectively.



WHERE TO FIND PLATTER'S BY DINERS CLUB

Distributed nationwide, there's the original, iconic hardcover version. Less visible perhaps, but equally valuable to the wine lover, are the digital versions of the guide - the website (www.wineonaplatter.com), the apps, and e-books.

With a range of value-added features such as advanced search, information about wine country accommodation, specialist tour operators, and dining options among



Philip van Zyl, Editor, Platter's by Diners Club

the vines, the web-based version is the flagship. For those who like the look of the hardcover but prefer a digital experience, there is the e-book. Downloadable to any device that runs the Kindle free e-reader app, it looks exactly like the book, and offers benefits inherent in the electronic format, like bookmarking, search, multiple navigation options, and hyperlinked websites and email addresses.

Serving as your digital sommelier, the apps provide the quickest and most direct access to the wine descriptions and ratings. Also, with a single tap, you can see which wineries are in your area and get directions to the venue of your choice via the built-in map.

For more information, please visit www.wineonaplatter.com. 

platter's in your pocket

Scan to buy the Platter's by Diners Club Wine Guide hardcover book or download the app, for everything you want to know about South African wine. The app is free to download, thereafter an annual subscription applies.



BEYOND IMAGINATION

The Quiet Revolution of the 2025 Japan Mobility Show

At this year's Japan Mobility Show, futurism met restraint in a display that favoured substance over spectacle. The world's most disciplined carmakers revealed a new kind of ambition – one defined by space, silence, and craftsmanship rather than speed alone. Concepts were not designed merely to dazzle but to articulate how Japanese ingenuity is shaping the next era of mobility, where progress feels deliberate, measured, and beautifully human.

The Japan Mobility Show has always been a canvas for imagination, but this year's event felt notably grounded. The 2025 edition abandoned the extravagant, offering instead a study in innovation and measured design. Global automotive giants used the occasion to articulate a collective vision for refined, sustainable mobility. The underlying message was unmistakable: the definition of luxury, performance, and desirability is evolving, led by intelligence, craftsmanship, and restraint. This is Japan in quiet command of the conversation, steering the future with deliberation.

A NEW EXPRESSION OF LUXURY *Century*

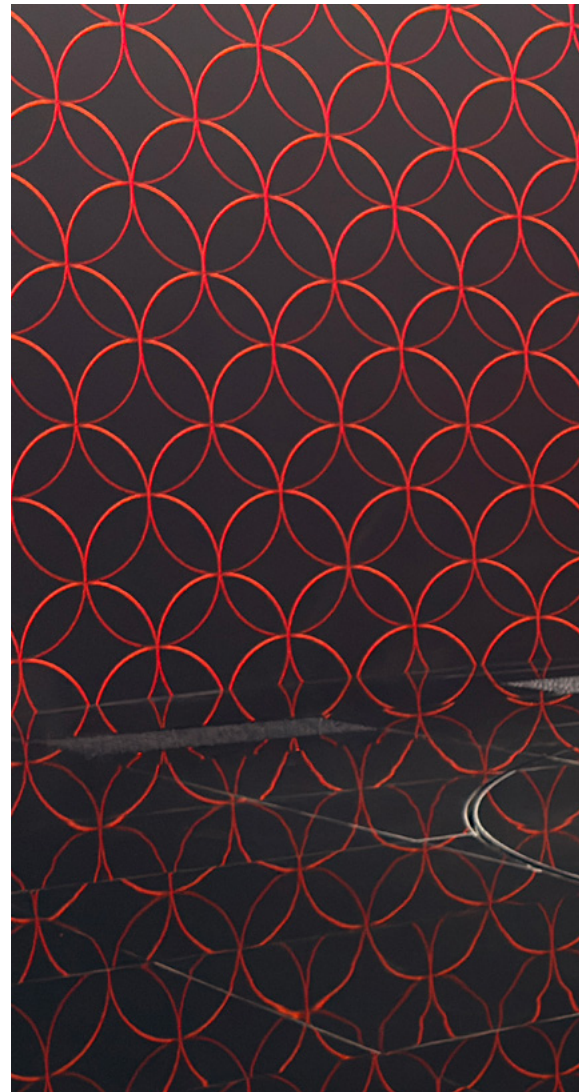
Toyota's decision to elevate the Century from model to marque marks a decisive shift in Japan's luxury landscape. Now positioned as an independent brand, Century will focus on limited-production, hand-crafted vehicles

that embody the highest traditions of Japanese refinement. Expect silk-smooth drivetrains, impeccable tailoring, and quiet exclusivity. This strategic repositioning enables Toyota to operate at the cutting edge of the luxury market, while allowing Lexus to pursue innovation elsewhere. Century thus becomes more than a car – it is a cultural ambassador for the Japanese way of perfection.

NOSTALGIA, REFRAMED

Honda Prelude

Honda's revival of the Prelude name is an exercise in memory and modernity. The compact, electrified coupe channels the spirit of its predecessors while speaking fluently to contemporary values of efficiency and lightness. Its proportions are athletic yet unpretentious, its focus purely on the driver. The Prelude's significance lies less in its numbers than in its intent: to remind the motoring world that connection and control still matter in an era increasingly defined by automation. It is, in essence, a love letter to the art of driving.



THE ARCHITECTURE OF CALM

Lexus LS Concept

The Lexus LS Concept reinterprets the essence of flagship motoring with a daring six-wheel configuration that prioritises interior space over speed. Conceived as a luxury minivan rather than a limousine, it embodies Lexus' belief that true opulence lies in the quality of space, not the quantity of power. Within its six-seat cabin, the ambience is meditative – soft illumination, curated textures, and near-silent mobility. The LS badge here stands for “Luxury Space”, marking a philosophical shift towards serenity as the new measure of prestige. This is not a prototype bound for production, but a manifesto for the future of Lexus design – one where travel becomes ritual rather than routine.

REFINEMENT WITH FAMILIAR ROOTS

Toyota RAV4

A long-standing cornerstone of Toyota's success in South Africa, the RAV4 enters its next generation with a poised and purposeful redesign. Due to be locally introduced in the second quarter of 2026, the new model borrows aesthetic cues from Lexus, featuring sharper lines, richer surfaces, and a greater sense of sophistication. Hybrid and plug-in hybrid powertrains underscore Toyota's continued commitment to accessible electrification, while the cabin's updated materials and technology signal a subtle elevation of character. The RAV4's evolution is not about reinvention; it is about maturity – a compact SUV that wears its reliability with new polish and quiet confidence.



Century One of One

CIVILITY MEETS STRENGTH

Nissan Patrol

The latest Nissan Patrol continues to project authority but does so with newfound finesse. The design remains unmistakably rugged, yet its character has softened where it counts: in refinement, ride comfort, and cabin ambience. Richer materials, quieter acoustics, and an intuitive digital interface mark a shift towards sophistication without compromise to capability. Beneath the surface, improvements to noise suppression and chassis tuning make the Patrol as composed on the boulevard as it is on the trail. It is a study in evolution through restraint - power tempered by grace.

THE ART OF RELEVANCE

Toyota Corolla Concept

The Corolla Concept stands as a reminder that ubiquity need not equate to ordinariness. Its taut proportions and expressive stance hint at a more emotionally resonant direction for Toyota's best-known nameplate. Inside, there is tangible progress in ergonomics and craftsmanship, with materials and interfaces more akin to those of its premium siblings. It represents Toyota's intent to re-infuse its global bestseller with desire as well as traditional dependability - proof that even the most familiar ideas can still surprise and delight.



L.S. (Lexus Space) Concept



Honda Prelude



Toyota Corolla Concept



LS (Lexus Space) Concept



BEAUTY IN SIMPLICITY

Mazda Vision X-Coupé Concept

Mazda continues to refine the relationship between form and emotion, and the Vision X-Coupé Concept might be its most eloquent statement yet. The minimalist exterior surfaces exude quiet confidence, while the interior prioritises tactile connection over digital distraction. Mazda’s engineers speak of “human-machine harmony”, and this concept delivers exactly that: purity, proportion, and purpose, executed with the grace of a master craftsman. In a world of sensory overload, the Vision X-Coupé is a masterclass in restraint. ⑩

by *bernie hellberg jr*

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TO ENTERTAIN

ETERNITY

Cast: Miles Teller, Elizabeth Olsen & Callum Turner
Director: David Freyne

You can only choose one. In an afterlife where souls have one week to decide where to spend eternity, Joan (Olsen) is faced with the impossible choice between the man she spent her life with (Teller) and her first love (Turner), who died when he was young and has waited decades for her to arrive.



YOUR NEW FAVOURITE SUMMER SIPPER

There's something magical about a glass of HER Rosé on a warm summer evening - light, crisp and refreshingly elegant, turning ordinary moments into celebrations. From beachside picnics to rooftop sunsets, this wine brings effortless charm wherever it goes. Delicate fruit notes meet a dry, satisfying finish, making it the crown

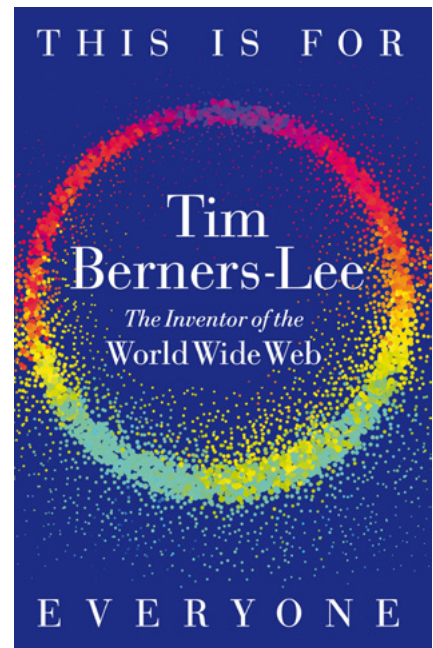
jewel of the HER Summer Sippers collection - perfect for those who sip with style and celebrate with intention. Pour it, share it, and let the sunshine in. For more information, visit www.herwinecollection.co.za, follow @herwinecollection on Instagram and like HER wine collection on Facebook.



THIS IS FOR EVERYONE

By Tim Berners-Lee

The most influential inventor of the modern world, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, is a different kind of visionary. Born in the same year as Bill Gates and Steve Jobs, Berners-Lee famously shared his invention, the World Wide Web, for no commercial reward. Its widespread adoption changed everything, transforming humanity into the first digital species. Through the web, we live, work, dream and connect. In this intimate memoir, Berners-Lee recounts the story of his iconic invention, examining how it launched a new era of creativity and collaboration while sparking a commercial race that today imperils democracies and polarises public debate. As the rapid



development of AI heralds a new era of innovation, Berners-Lee provides the perfect guide to the crucial decisions ahead - and a gripping, in-the-room account of the rise of the online world. Filled with his characteristic optimism, technical insight and wry humour, this is a book about the power of technology - for both good and bad.



Shumbalala Game Lodge - An African Dream

In the vast wilderness of South Africa's hot northern plains, adjacent to the famous Kruger National Park, deep within an ancient tapestry of natural wonder, you will chance upon SHUMBALALA GAME LODGE.

From your early morning game drive or bush walk in the Big 5 Thornybush Game Reserve to lazy afternoons at the pool and a sunset safari, tales of the day are told in the wine cellar as you prepare for a sumptuous dinner fire-side al fresco or candle-lit indoors. Choose from four luxury suites or the Presidential Suite, all of which have private viewing decks and picture window bathrooms. Wake up knowing that each day will allow for the adventure and peace of Africa to enter your soul – in a place where the lion sleeps.



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RISING STARS OF TERROIR

The 2025 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year Finalists

The 2025 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year awards recognise four emerging talents shaping South Africa's next generation of standout wines.

South Africa's future as a winemaking region is bright and full of promise. The Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year title recognises the country's most exciting up-and-coming talent. It highlights young professionals who combine technical skill with curiosity, creativity, and a commitment to excellence. The 2025 finalists showcase four distinct philosophies, four unique sites, and four compelling interpretations of what modern South African wine can be. From amphora-aged Chenin to expressive Robertson Chardonnay, these wines offer a clear sense of place and purpose.

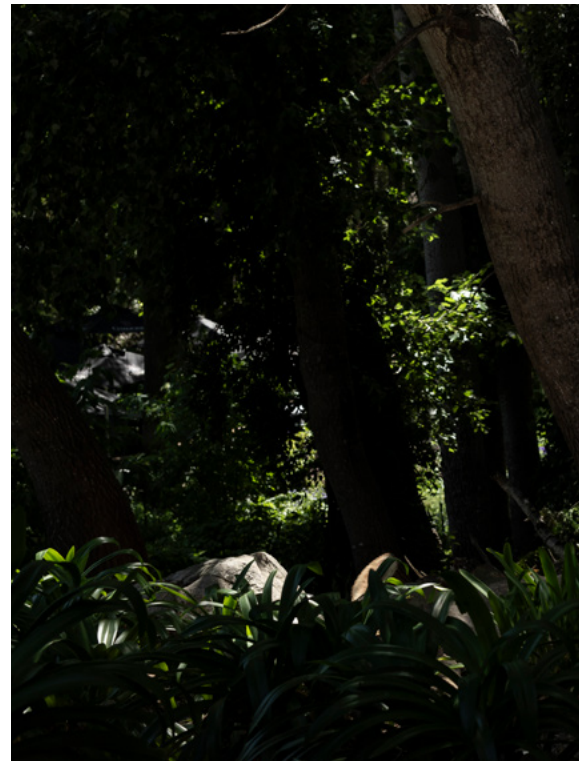
Together, the finalists reveal a new chapter for local wine. Their energy, precision, and adaptability reflect a generation ready to push boundaries while honouring the foundations of the industry.





NARISSA PIETERS
Rustenberg Wild Ferment
Sauvignon Blanc 2024

Curiosity sparked Narissa Pieters's interest in winemaking, and the craft's blend of science and creativity has kept her inspired. Her Wild Ferment Sauvignon Blanc 2024 is produced from one of Stellenbosch's highest-altitude vineyard blocks, where cool mountain air and granite soils shape concentrated fruit. Natural fermentation allows terroir to speak clearly, while careful barrel selection adds texture. Narissa loves the hands-on nature of the job, from vineyard to bottle. Her long-term aspiration is to craft an iconic South African wine defined by authenticity and consistency.



GERNÉ VAN ZYL
Chamonix Old Vine Steen 2024

Gerné van Zyl combines scientific curiosity with a deep respect for heritage vineyards. Her Old Vine Steen 2024 comes from a block planted in 1965, and the wine is produced in amphora to preserve purity and avoid masking

its natural character. Only 1,400 bottles were made. The wine shows minerality, stone fruit, and quiet power. For Gerné, each bottle is a captured moment, a way of sharing a season and a place with someone in the future. Her goal is to honour tradition while continually pushing standards upward.



LOÏC DU TOIT
De Wetshof Finesse
Chardonnay 2024

Raised in Stellenbosch and influenced by a family who appreciated fine wine, Loïc du Toit followed his interest in vineyards to Elsenburg, and later into his role as head winemaker at De Wetshof, a career highlight. His finalist entry, the Finesse Chardonnay 2024, focuses on balance. It expresses Robertson's elegance through a careful blend of fruit and oak, always guided by a philosophy of precision and honesty. Loïc views winemaking as a partnership between people and nature. He hopes to make every vintage count, producing wines that express origin with clarity.







DANIELA JANSEN
Saronsberg Viognier 2023

Saronsberg's Daniela Jansen brings a fresh perspective to Rhône-style whites. After studying Cellar Technology at Elsenburg and completing international harvests, she joined Saronsberg, which she still considers an important milestone. Her finalist wine, the Saronsberg Viognier 2023, delivers balance, refinement, and varietal honesty. Barrel fermentation and 11 months of ageing create structure and complexity, yet the wine remains elegant. Daniela is inspired by the transformation from fruit to bottle, and her ambition is to produce wines that encourage more young women to enter the profession. 🍷

A GLASS HALF FULL

A Little Wine Wisdom Might Just be the Healthiest Advice

Most of us don't drink wine for its health benefits. We drink it because it's delicious, sociable, and occasionally the only thing standing between us and the creeping chaos of the workweek. Yet, for all its indulgent reputation, the humble grape - once crushed, fermented, and bottled - has managed to convince even the most sceptical scientists that it might be doing us a lifestyle favour.

It may come as a surprise to some that credible scientific evidence suggests drinking wine, especially red wine, has specific health benefits that are difficult to ignore. Now, before we go ahead and prescribe a Bordeaux with breakfast, let's be clear: moderation is the operative word. Science, with its usual po-faced caution, defines this as roughly one glass a day, ideally with food. Hardly the stuff of Bacchic revelry, but enough to make your doctor frown a little less when you mention your favourite Cabernet at your next check-up.

THE GRAPE DEBATE

For decades, researchers have been puzzling over what's often called "the French paradox" - the observation that people in France, who consume cheese as if it's a national duty and butter like it's a birthright, have relatively low rates of heart disease. The culprit, or perhaps the hero, appears to be wine. Specifically, red wine, with its heady mix of polyphenols, resveratrol, and antioxidants, sounds like something

you'd find on a luxury skincare label.

These compounds, it turns out, can help increase good cholesterol, lower blood pressure, and generally maintain cardiovascular health. Think of it as the body's way of rewarding you for making a sophisticated beverage choice. Of course, it's not an open invitation to turn every evening into a tasting session - more a gentle nod that life's too short to drink bad wine, and perhaps too long to drink none at all.

A TOAST TO THE HEART

Studies have shown that those who enjoy a small glass of wine with a meal may have marginally better heart health than teetotallers. Whether that's due to the wine itself, or the Mediterranean habit of lingering over dinner rather than inhaling it between emails, is up for debate. But it's a lovely excuse, isn't it? After all, "doctor's orders" sounds much better when it involves a velvety Merlot and a plate of lamb chops.

Even the more rigorous corners of academia have conceded that moderate wine drinkers sometimes fare better in





the longevity stakes than abstainers. Granted, this might say more about the personalities of wine drinkers than the properties of wine – after all, these are people who tend to take time to savour, to share, and to unwind. If mindfulness could be bottled, it might smell faintly of oak and cherries.

THE FINE PRINT

Of course, the scientific community also insists on pointing out the fine print: alcohol remains a double-edged sword. The same glass that may help your heart could, in excess, be your undoing. There are risks – liver disease, cancer, and an increased chance of regrettable karaoke. But here's the catch: it's not about what you drink; it's about how. Regular, small amounts enjoyed with good food and better company – that's where the magic seems to lie.

A REASON TO RAISE YOUR GLASS

In an age where every pleasure comes with a warning label, it's oddly comforting to know that one of life's simplest joys still holds a little scientific merit. Wine has always been more than a drink; it's an experience, a story in a bottle. It connects people, places, and

history – from the ancient vineyards of Burgundy to the Cape's wind-swept slopes. And if it happens to make our hearts a touch healthier while lifting our spirits, well, that's just clever winemaking.

So, the next time you find yourself swirling a glass at dinner, remember: you're not indulging – you're engaging in a minor act of wellness. Pour modestly, sip slowly, and smile knowingly. After all, as the evidence suggests, a life lived well may just pair best with a good glass of red. 🍷

by **bernie hellberg jr**
/photography by **unsplash.com**