

Uiterwyk–De Waal Wines these days -, Vriesenhof, Waterford) are not represented. Is this because they did not make the cut, or were they just not entered?

Apart from the judging protocol, the front matter includes a resume of each of the judges, a listing of the winners (the top 100 wines) by cultivar and style, and approximate prices for white wines that sell for less than R100 (about \$12 at the current exchange rate) and R120 for red wines. Each entry provides information about the winery, about the grapes, the wine making process and the wine itself (including the alcohol level), and extracts from the judges' comments and the winemaker notes. The judges are evidently fond of higher alcohol wines: only 11 of the 39 whites have an alcohol level of below 13.5% and only 15 of the 51 reds have an alcohol level of below 14.25%. A full 80 of the top 100 wines come off irrigated vineyards.

The last part of the book reports on a "Wine list challenge" where 32 restaurants throughout the country are singled out for their meritorious wine lists. This is followed by some interesting essays on a wide range of wine related topics, some general industry information and maps of the wine producing regions and a glossary of wine terms.

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ELMARIE SWART AND IZAK SMIT: *The Essential Guide to South African Wines: Terroir and Travel*. Wine Appreciation Guild, San Francisco, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 2008 (first published in 2006 by Cheviot Publishing: Cape Town, SA, updated in 2009), 201 pp., ISBN 978-0-620-35500-1, \$29.95.

Authors Elmarie Swart and Izak Smit have produced a 200-page book whose purpose is to provide a one-volume overview of the South African industry with a very specific focus on *terroir*, using the concept of geographical 'pockets' to describe sub-districts of South Africa's Wine of Origin classification of regions.

The book comes in five chapters, starting with an overview of the industry, then the descriptions of the 'pockets', a chapter on wine tasting, one on wine buying, and finally a short chapter on selected aspects of 'local knowledge'.

Chapter 1 (A recent overview of the South African wine industry) contains some useful information that explains the industry in its historical context and in the current context with its focus on social upliftment and environmentally responsible wine production. Most useful, however, is the sections on the unique geographical, climate and grape variety combinations that make up *terroir* in the South African industry, and the description of the timeline as the grapes grow and ripen and become ready for harvesting.

There are two things I don't like about Chapter 2, with its description of the different wine regions. First, as mentioned, the authors refer to sub-district demarcations as geographical 'pockets' (so, for example, the Stellenbosch region consists of the 'Polkadraai pocket' the 'Stellenbosch Kloof pocket' and 10 more. As a quick look at Google will attest, this is not a term that has caught on in South Africa, nor is it used anywhere else in the world. Second, in each 'pocket' the 'top producers' and their 'flagship wines' are identified and named. However, the reader is not told on what basis this selection is made.

Nevertheless, this chapter has many strengths, not least of which is the magnificent photographs (not confined only to this chapter – they are a feature of the whole book). Then there is the advice to travellers (along with GPS coordinates) and the very knowledgeable descriptions of each area and its wines. This description makes up the bulk of the book, and the chapter is rounded off with a description of *garagiste* wine making in South Africa, of brandy production, and of sparkling wine.

Chapter 3 has a section on wine tasting and understanding of wine styles, and a short description of the prevalent styles for the different wine cultivars. Chapter 4 is a bit more of a potpourri of issues with some tips on wine collecting – but nothing on wine selling, probably because the writer assumes all wines that are collected are primarily for own consumption rather than as an investment. This despite the title of the chapter: Profit and Pleasure. The obligatory 'food and wine pairing' section follows. Chapter 5 contains some useful tips for travellers.

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PHILIP VAN ZYL (ed.): *Platter's South African Wine Guide 2013*. John Platter Ltd: Hermanus, South Africa, 2012, 600 pp., ISBN 978-0987004611. Not available in the U.S.; Kalahari.com (South Africa), R 169.00; SA Wines Online (United Kingdom), £ 14.99; Namibiana Buchdepot (Germany), €19.95.

Of course any book that covers wines and wineries in South Africa has to compete with the Platter Guide, an annual offering that scores and provides tasting notes on every wine that is commercially available in the country and provides useful information on each of the wine farms, where to stay and where to eat in the winelands. First published in 1980 by John Platter under the title *John Platter's Book of South African Wines*, the first edition provided tasting notes on "over 1000 wines", and came in at 156 pages. Now, 30 years later, the book is over 600 pages and covers literally thousands of different wines. The Platter Guide is not without controversy, as tasting is not blind until award winners are selected. During this process, the members of the tasting team identify what they regard as the best wines,