

LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT

PINOTAGE



Probably everyone knows now that Pinotage was 'invented' in South Africa in 1929 by Professor Perold. He crossed Pinot Noir with Cinsault (called Hermitage at the time) to create a grape which could handle the hot climate of SA and produce decent amounts of fruit. Over the years, Pinotage has had a bit of a rough ride but today's producers have really got to grips with the variety and modern versions are winning new fans all around the world.

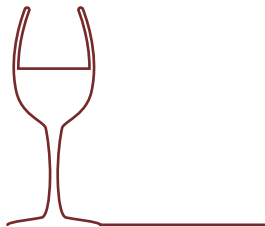
WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Generally-speaking, Pinotage likes a bit of warmth but in recent years, several cooler-climate producers are having a lot of success treating the grape as if it were its parent, Pinot Noir. Stellenbosch remains the heart of Pinotage-country with plenty of warmth and sunshine ripening the grapes nicely whilst the cooler winds from False Bay stop it from becoming overripe. Coastal areas such as Durbanville are also proving successful, making slightly lighter, more elegant versions of the grape as well.

OPTIMAL SERVING TEMPERATURE:

15-20°C

* according to wine.co.za



WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE?

One of the most attractive aspects of Pinotage is its versatility. It can make all styles of wines from sparkling to sweet versions but most versions are made to showcase the upfront, black cherry fruit along with hints of leather and tar. One of the most popular versions of Pinotage is the 'choc-coff' where clever use of toasted oak gives a distinctive chocolate and coffee twist to the wine. These choc-coffs tend to be easy drinkers, whilst wines for the longer term prefer to use traditional oak barrels giving structure and length. When it's well-made, Pinotage is a surprisingly long-lived wine, confusing many a wine expert over the years into thinking they're drinking mature Bordeaux!



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WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

Although there is plenty of Pinotage in SA today, all the cuttings actually came from just four plants which were discovered in Professor Perold's garden!

During apartheid, there was plenty of research taking place around the world into winemaking techniques for all the international grape varieties but nobody bothered to look at SA's Pinotage. When SA's wines were welcomed back into the international fold, there was a lot of criticism of Pinotage with many overseas buyers finding it bitter or tasting of bananas.

The last ten years has seen a meteoric improvement in the wines as winemakers stop treating it as if it were a Shiraz or a Cabernet and started treating it like a Pinotage. And if further proof is needed, the fact that other countries including Australia, the US and even Israel are planting this proudly South African grape suggests that Pinotage really is here to stay.

WHAT SHOULD WE EAT WITH IT?

Perhaps because Pinotage is so proudly South African, it always seems to have a particular affinity with game.

Many Pinotages show lots of smoke and spice, particularly pepper and coriander, and this seems to work really well with meats such as Springbok, Kudu and other bok, whether in the form of steaks, potjies or even as biltong!



How does the flavour develop?

WINE MAKING INFLUENCE:

Black berry, Fruitcake, Red cherry, Raspberry, Strawberry
Violets, Plums, Pepper, Clove, Cinnamon

VINEYARD INFLUENCE:

Cigar box, Pencil shavings, Vanilla, Smoke, Toffee

BOTTLE AGING INFLUENCE:

Chocolate, Coffee, Mushrooms, Ripe fig, Leather