

LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT

WHITE BLENDS



If South Africa is going to make a world-class wine, universally-acknowledged as such, acclaimed across all platforms, the chances are very good that it will be a white blend. Despite SA's love of red wines (and how good so many of them are), white wines have generally been the ones most praised in recent years by international critics and wine pundits. The Chenin Blancs and Chardonnays from the Cape have done extremely well in competitions and when we started combining them and adding in other varieties, it seems as if the sky really is the limit when it comes to white blends.

WHAT SORT OF BLENDS ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

There are several different categories of 'white Cape blends.' Starting at entry level, we have great glugging blends, generally of Chenin and Sauvignon Blancs, which make fabulous, fresh, crisp and juicy everyday drinking wines. Stepping up in quality finds classic Bordeaux white blends of Sauvignon and Semillon, sometimes using judicious amounts of oak. But the cream of the crop are those blends based on Chenin Blanc, generally in combination with varieties such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Viognier, Roussanne and more.

WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE?

The temptation here is just to say 'sublime' but that isn't particularly helpful! Top-end Cape white blends come in a variety of combinations so it's hard to say exactly what flavours you should expect. The best ones are very sensitively-wooded, allowing the fruit to shine first and foremost, backed up by creamy spice from older barrels rather than butterscotch smokiness from new ones. Because the Cape has a generally warm climate, expect riper fruit flavours such as stone fruits, pineapples, orange citrus and melons. But part of the fun of wines in this category is experimentation and having the chance to try something new and unique.



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WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

The first thing to realise is that unlike European winemakers, there are no restrictions on which grapes we can blend together. In France, for example, it's against the law to combine Chardonnay and Viognier, or to mix Chenin with Sauvignon except at the very lowest quality levels. This flexibility is one of SA's strongest points and enthusiastic winemakers have picked up this ball and are running away with it. Add in some Italian varieties? Sure, why not. Tweak it up with a touch of Germanic flavours? Absolutely. Some of these blends use as little as 2 or 5% of a grape variety but that extra little amount is what makes white Cape blends so special and so enjoyable.

WHAT SHOULD WE EAT WITH IT?

The world is your oyster when it comes to white Cape Blends. Classic Bordeaux blends work well with smoked, fresh and raw fish as well as goats' cheese and hard cheddars. The more eccentric and exciting blends work with almost any type of food – go forth and experiment, you're in for a LOT of fun!

**OPTIMAL SERVING
TEMPERATURE:**

7-12°C

* according to wine.co.za

