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WINE ENTHUSIAST

MAGAZINE



AMERICA'S STEAKHOUSES SIZZLE

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Secrets of Cognac Revealed
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82 Gôiya 2004 Chardonnay (Western Cape); \$7. Has some tasty elements, ranging from grilled peaches to roasted nuts, but they fail to come together with a true sense of harmony, leaving rough edges behind on the slightly bitter finish. Imported by Hemingway and Hale. —J.C.

82 Serengeti 2004 Sauvignon Blanc (Coastal Region); \$13. Veers a bit too far into the vegetal lane for this reviewer, although others may find it simply herbal. Passion fruit and citrus elements lose out to green pepper and asparagus notes. Short finish. Imported by Hemingway and Hale. —J.C.

84 Webersburg 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon (Stellenbosch); \$35. This plump, medium-bodied wine boasts plenty of briary, blackberry flavors laced with notes of beefy meatiness and vanilla. Despite its age, it's still relatively youthful, with dry tannins on the finish that may never fully integrate. Drink now. Imported by Hemingway and Hale. —J.C.

91 de Trafford 2004 Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$25. A wood-aged style that works, and works well. Balanced with its touch of spice and some vanilla flavors from the American wood, there is fresh fruit, delicious acidity and flavors of apples. De Trafford is a top quality, small-scale producer, high up in the mountains above Stellenbosch. Imported by Boutique Wine Collection. —R.V.

91 Kanu 2004 Limited Release Wooded Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$18. This is Kanu's signature wine, with its soft toast and wooded character layering with perfumed, crisp gooseberry and tropical fruit flavors. New winemaker Richard Kershaw dropped the 2003 vintage while he settled in, but now the wine is back, and very much on form. Imported by Cape Classics. —R.V.

91 L'Avenir 2005 Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$NA. This estate is widely reputed for its Chenin Blanc. And no wonder, with this very dry, ripe character wine spiced with cinnamon and citrus. This is a full, creamy style, which matures well, and will certainly be even more impressive in 8-9 years. Imported by Wingard. —R.V.

91 Black Rock 2004 White Wine (Swardland); \$24. A blend of 75% Chenin Blanc with some Chardonnay and Viognier, the fruit for this wine comes from cool, dry-farmed vineyards in Swardland. It has a great, pure fruit character, and it's ripe, generous, balancing wood and acidity along with white fruit flavors, peaches and green plums. A touch of minerality completes the picture. Imported by Vinovative Imports. —R.V.

91 Winery of Good Hope 2005 Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$9. A delicious example of dry Chenin Blanc. With currant aromas, and a full, fruity palate, this is big, rich and concentrated, with flavors of peaches, white currants and a touch of mint to give it a lift. From the same winery as the Black Rock range, this is a fine wine. Imported by Vinovative Imports. —R.V.

90 Kanu 2004 Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$10. A beautifully crisp, uncoated Chenin that jumps from the glass with its vibrant spicy, floral fruit aromas. Just off dry, this wine's crisp acidity is nicely balanced with just a hint of sweeter Chenin used as part of the blend. Imported by Cape Classics. —R.V.

90 Ken Forrester 2005 Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$15. A wine that shows that, with care, it is possible to make a successful wooded Chenin Blanc. This is currently a little closed up, but the wine shows great potential, with its spice, toast, dried fruits and touch of spicy pepper. This would work as a partner to Thai food. Imported by Boutique Wine Collection. —R.V.

90 Ken Forrester 2004 Petit Chenin (Stellenbosch); \$9. "Petit" in the case of this wine refers to the fact that this is the good-value Chenin from Forrester Vineyards. With its flowery aroma, ripeness, mature fruit, layers of nuts and just a hint of a soft aftertaste, this is a great value wine. Imported by Boutique Wine Collection. —R.V.

90 Tukulu 2005 Papkuilsfontein Chenin Blanc (Darling); \$13. From a black empowerment-managed vineyard, jointly owned with giant winery Distell, this wine comes from the Papkuilsfontein vineyard on the west coast. It is a ripe wine, but its chief attraction is the white fruit and crisp, herbaceous flavors. It already has good balance, but its very dry character promises some good development. Imported by Distell USA Inc. —R.V.

90 Waterford 2005 Pecan Stream Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$14. One of South Africa's star winemakers, Kevin Arnold, has produced an impressive, dry wine, with intense apple and grapefruit flavors. It is crisp, with a delicious lift at the end, and a dry, green aftertaste. Imported by Yellowwood Wine Company. —R.V.

89 Avondale 2004 Chenin Blanc (Coastal Region); \$NA. A fascinating, serious, full-bodied style of wine from this Paarl winery which was founded in 1897. The wine is packed with nutmeg and almond flavors, which join concentrated vibrant fruits. —R.V.

89 Cederberg 2005 Chenin Blanc (Cederberg); \$17. High mountain vineyards in the spectacular Cederberg wilderness produce a great, crisp wine, full of citrus character and fresh, green fruit. This is a delicious, dry wine made from old vines, just pure fruit. Imported by Global Vineyard Importers. —R.V.

89 Raats Family 2004 Original Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$13. Brewer Raats is a Loire wine lover, and he expresses this love in two distinct styles of Chenin Blanc. The unwooded Original is packed with apples, almonds and nuts, as well as flinty mineral character. It is almost bone dry, and is crisp and fresh. Imported by Cape Classics. —R.V.

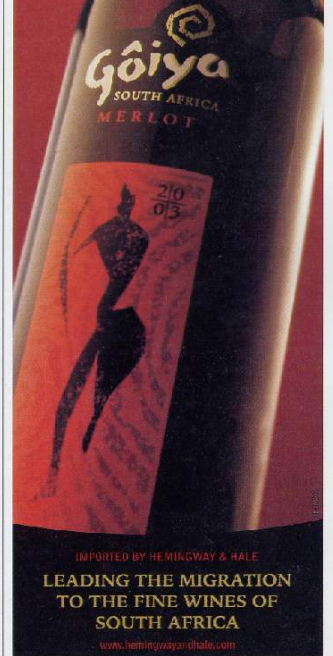
89 Rudera 2004 Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$20. This could be an impressive wine, but the overwhelming wood element makes it hard to taste the fruit. There are just hints of ripe spice and creamy apples, and the aftertaste is just off dry. Imported by Cape Classics. —R.V.

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BEST BUY

Gôiya 2003 Merlot
Light red fruits with herb accents mark this vintage. Not sweet or jammy, it's rather more like a petite-chateau Bordeaux. Has some tang and tannin, and is a refreshing change from other soft, often cloying, inexpressive Merlots.



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