

# Tim Atkin<sup>MW</sup>

## 2024 SOUTH AFRICA SPECIAL REPORT

### WINES OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Tokara and Jordan Wine Estate for placing in Wines of the Year

#### WHITE BORDEAUX BLENDS



**Tokara Director's Reserve White 2021 - 95 points**

Stellenbosch (13.9%) Tokara's Director's Reserve White is consistently one of the best white Bordeaux style blends in the country. Made with Sauvignon Blanc and 32% Semillon, fermented in 37% new oak, it's savoury, spicy and mouth-wateringly fresh, showing flavours of sourdough bread, lemongrass and pink grapefruit and a flinty finish. 2025-35



**Jordan Timepiece OVP Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 - 95 Points**

Stellenbosch (14%) Block 38 supplies the raw material for this superb old-vine Cabernet Sauvignon from Sjaak Nelson and Gary and Kathy Jordan. Elegant yet concentrated, it has aromas of dried herbs and fynbos, some spice from 20% added stems, a touch of vanilla oak, cassis and blackcurrant leaf flavours and a spine of tannin and acidity. 2025-35

#### RED BORDEAUX BLENDS



**Jordan Sophia 2020 - 95 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.5%) Sophia is among the best red blends in Stellenbosch these days, made from a cuvée of Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Back after a break in 2019, it's a subtly oaked, densely structured red that's built for the long haul. Graphite, chocolate and wild herb aromas segue into a palate of damson and blackcurrant pastille supported by sinewy tannins. 2025-35



**Tokara Director's Reserve Red 2021 - 95 Points**

Stellenbosch (14.5%) The aim here is "elegance", according to Stuart Botha, and there's no denying that he's achieved it with this brilliant new Director's Reserve release. Partnering Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Petit Verdot, 10% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 2% Malbec. Focused and aromatic, it has layers of mint, pepper and subtle spices, granular tannins and a core of bramble, cassis and redcurrant. 2025-30

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## WHITE WINES

### **Cape Chamonix Prestige White blend 2022 - 94 Points**

Franschhoek (13.6%) It's great to see this blend of Sauvignon Blanc and 36% Semillon back to its best under winemaker Neil Bruwer. Fermented and aged in 30% new Austrian barrels - Stockinger, no doubt - this is a fine, flinty, subtly wooded number with greengage, lemongrass and vanilla spice flavours and a tangy, lingering finish. 2024-28

### **Jordan Nine Yards Chardonnay 2022 - 94 Points**

Stellenbosch (13%) Way less Californian in style than it used to be, with none of the toffee fudge sweetness it often showed, this is a refreshing, structured, stylishly oaked Chardonnay that combines 77% new wood and 90% malolactic. Pear, toast, clementine and vanilla spice flavours combine appealingly on the palate. 2025-30

### **Jordan Timepiece OVP Chenin Blanc 2022 - 94 Points**

Stellenbosch (14%) Timepiece is a complex, old-vine Stellenbosch Chenin Blanc from Sjaak Nelson, fermented in a combination of older oak and 25% clay amphoras. Waxy, layered and very subtle, it has notes of petrichor, citrus and fresh bread, lots of tangy acidity and a hint of patisserie sweetness. 2024-28

### **Jordan Timepiece OVP Sauvignon Blanc 2022 - 94 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.5%) The Timepiece Sauvignon Blanc is one of the best whites in the Jordans' range, made with grapes from a parcel planted in 1983. Fermented in older barrels and 37% clay amphoras, it combines aromas of kelp, saffron and wet stones with a palate of lemongrass, lime and grapefruit and a touch of oak sweetness. 2024-32

### **David Finlayson Camino Africana Chenin Blanc 2023 - 93 Points**

Stellenbosch (14%) Camino Africana comes from a handful of old-vine parcels in Bottelary, the Helderberg and Stellenbosch Mountain and is always among the most assured wines from David Finlayson and Pieter van der Merwe. A hint of stony reduction and sweet patisserie oak aromas segue into a layered, textured palate of pear, citrus and green fig. Shows the freshness of the year. 2024-28

### **Jordan Assyrtiko 2023 - 93 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.5%) Part of the future of South Africa, Assyrtiko is a Greek grape that copes very well in dry conditions. Produced from four-year-old vines, this is very promising indeed, unfurling flavours of green olive, lime and wet stones, racy acidity, some tannic grip and a salty finish. 2024-27

### **Jordan Barrel-Fermented Chardonnay 2023 - 93 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.5%) The style of the Jordans' Chardonnay has been moving towards freshness and focus over the last few years, and the trend continues here. Fermented with 80% malolactic, this has subtle, scented 21% new oak, citrus zest and tangerine flavours and a mineral-etched core. 2024-28

### **Jordan Inspector Péringuey Chenin Blanc 2023 - 93 Points**

Stellenbosch (14%) There was no Timepiece Chenin Blanc release in 2023, so the grapes went into this wine instead. Produced with the Montpellier clone planted, it shows the concentration of its 40-year-old vines, flavours of pear and yellow apple, some lees-derived weight, vanilla spicy oak and a focused, mouth-watering finish. 2024-29



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## **Jordan The Outlier Sauvignon Blanc 2023 - 93 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.5%) The Outlier uses tank, amphora and barrel-fermented components to weave its magic. Sourced from a 38-year-old vineyard on the estate, it's herbal, intense and complex with flavours of pink grapefruit, toast and rock salt, a touch of flinty reduction and a long, tapering finish. 2024-28

## **Tokara Limited Release Chardonnay 2022 - 93 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.9%) "An attempt to make something that tastes like Burgundy that I can afford to drink," jokes Stuart Botha. Showcasing the 95 Dijon clone, with full malolactic and 100% new oak, this has layers of banana, crème brûlée and vanilla spice, tangy acidity and a smoky finish. 2025-30

## **Jordan The Real McCoy Riesling 2023 - 92 Points**

Western Cape (12%) Just off-dry at 7.3 grams of residual sugar, this is always a very enjoyable expression of a grape that doesn't get enough attention in the Cape. Mineral, taut and well balanced, it has layers of lime and lemongrass, subtle bitterness and an appealing undertone of kerosene. 2024-29

## **Tokara Reserve Collection Chardonnay 2022 - 92 Points**

Stellenbosch (14%) Clones 95 and 76 supply the raw material for this well-judged, modern Chardonnay from Stuart Botha. Fermented in 28% new oak with 80% malolactic, it segues from a nose of aniseed and cinnamon to a palate of brown toast, pear and citrus and a dollop of cream. 2024-29

## **Tokara Reserve Collection Sauvignon Blanc 2023 - 92 Points**

Elgin (13.3%) Aged on lees in stainless steel for five months, this pithy, unwooded Sauvignon Blanc comes from Tokara's estate in Elgin. Green herb and mangetout flavours are complemented by mouth-watering acidity and a stony, mineral-etched finish. 2024-26

## **Chamonix Estate Chardonnay Reserve 2022 - 91 Points**

Franschhoek (13.5%) Showing the toastiness that often seems to come with François Frères barrels, this Franschhoek Chardonnay was fermented in 45% new oak with 20% malolactic. Leesy, worked and well-balanced, it has some struck match reduction, peach, citrus and nectarine fruit and refreshing supporting acidity. 2024-28

## **David Finlayson Camino Africana Shale Terraces Chardonnay 2023 - 90 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.8%) No prizes for guessing the soil type here. The new French oak is pretty clamorous here, but there's enough weight, texture and concentration to cope. Peach, nectarine and orange zest flavours are complemented by bright, stony acidity and ginger and cinnamon spices. 2024-27



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## RED WINES

### **Tokara Reserve Collection Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 - 94 Points**

Stellenbosch (14.4%) Further proof - if any were needed - that Tokara is a fantastic site for Cabernet Sauvignon, this is an enticingly perfumed, opulent red with a textbook combination of acidity and tannins, mountain herb and cedarwood top notes and a tangy core of cranberry and blackcurrant. 2024-35

### **Tokara Reserve Collection Syrah 2021 - 94 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.5%) Tokara is not readily associated with Syrah - the Simonsberg is Bordeaux variety territory - but this is very smart indeed. Fermented with 30% whole clusters and aged in 50% new wood, it's savoury, stony and intense, with layers of oregano, pine and cracked pepper and a core of liquorice and black olive. 2025-30

### **Tokara Simonsberg Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 - 94 Points**

Stellenbosch (14.3%) New to the range at Tokara, this is a five-barrel, new oak-aged Cabernet Sauvignon that all hails from parcels on decomposed granite and quartz. Bold, intense, concentrated and built to age, it has aromas of tobacco pouch and Asian spices, focused acidity and flavours of damson and blackcurrant and a stony finish. 2026-38

### **Jordan Cobblers Hill 2021 - 93 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.5%) Cobblers Hill - a reference to the Jordan family's past business in the shoe trade - is a finely judged assemblage of Cabernet Sauvignon, 32% Merlot and 8% Cabernet Franc. Leafy, focused and comparatively refreshing, it shows the freshness and precision of the 2021 vintage, with lots of minerality, plum, redcurrant and blackberry flavours and fine-grained tannins. 2025-32

### **Jordan The Long Fuse Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 - 93 Points**

Stellenbosch (13.5%) The Long Fuse has a splash of Petit Verdot to add some extra backbone to its Cabernet Sauvignon base. Aged in 18% new oak, it has plenty of grip and intensity, damson, blueberry and coffee bean flavours, refreshing acidity and a tangy, focused finish. 2025-30

### **David Finlayson GS Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 - 92 Points**

Stellenbosch (14.4%) Clay and gravel soils that are well suited to Cabernet Sauvignon are the source of this Stellenbosch red, made as a tribute to the legendary 1960s winemaker, George Spies. Fleshy, textured, concentrated and built to last, it has appealing mocha and dark chocolate aromas, fine-grained tannins, bright acidity and the typical balance of the vintage. 2025-30

### **Jordan Black Magic Merlot 2022 - 92 Points**

Stellenbosch (14%) Recently renamed as Black Magic - it used to be plain old Jordan Merlot - this is a structured red that "we try to make like a Cabernet Sauvignon", according to Sjaak Nelson. Floral and intense, with notes of violet, bramble and cassis, good underlying minerality and the faintest hint of oak sweetness. 2025-30

### **Chamonix Estate Cabernet Franc 2022 - 91 Points**

Franschhoek (14.3%) One of those wines that you'd love to get in a blind tasting, this is a textbook cool climate Cabernet Franc with classic graphite and green salad aromas, subtle 20% new oak, lots of zip, energy and acidity and a palate of black cherry, bramble and coffee bean. 2024-29



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## **Chamonix Estate Greywacke Pinotage 2021 - 91 Points**

Franschhoek (13.5%) No longer made in a semi-ripasso style with a portion of dried grapes, this is serious, wellstructured Pinotage from Neil Bruwer, with aromas of fennel and mint, stylish 10% new oak, flavours of tarragon, plum and summer berries, savoury tannins and a bright, refreshing finish. Very much a cooler climate style. 2024-29

## **Tokara Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 - 91 Points**

Stellenbosch (14.8%) Fantastic value from Stuart Botha - he calls it "everyone's house wine" - this varietal Cabernet Sauvignon uses grapes from various parcels on the Simonsberg. Matured in 20% new wood, it has engaging fennel and graphite aromas, some coffee bean notes from 20% new wood, cassis and red berry flavours and a spine of tannins. 2025-30

## **Chamonix Estate Feldspar Pinot Noir 2023 - 90 Points**

Cape Coast (14.5%) Grapes from the Chamonix estate are supplemented with purchased material from Elgin, Franschhoek and Stellenbosch to make a bright, easy-going, loose-limbed expression of Pinot Noir. Bright and perfumed, with rose petal and summer pudding aromas, granular tannins and strawberry and pomegranate fruit. 2024-28

## **Chamonix Estate Pinot Noir Reserve 2022 - 90 Points**

Franschhoek (13.5%) This will be the last vintage of the Estate Pinot Noir for a while, as the virused vines were pulled out in 2022. Light, savoury, spicy and nicely evolved, it has subtle 30% whole bunch notes, firmish tannins, wild strawberry and tomato leaf flavours and scented 40% new oak. 2024-28

## **SPARKLING WINES**

### **Bon Courage Jacques Bruère Blanc de Blancs CC 2013 - 94 Points**

Robertson (11.1%) I've reviewed this wine before, but it's a new disgorgement, so I'm happy to include it again, especially given the value for money it delivers. Showcasing Robertson Chardonnay, it has the nutty, toasty autolysis of 100 months on lees, a rich, mouth-filling mousse, tangy acidity and a hint of patisserie. 2024-28

### **Tokara Blanc de Blancs CC 2017 - 94 Points**

Elgin (12.6%) This is the sixth vintage of a bubbly from Tokara since the maiden release in 2011 - there was no 2017 - and it's well up to the standards of its predecessor. Made with a wooded base wine before 72 months' ageing on lees, it has flavours of aniseed, waxed lemons and pistachio, a hint of dried mushroom and 5.2 grams of dosage. 2024-28

## **SWEET WINES**

### **Tokara Reserve Collection Chenin Blanc Straw Wine 2023 - 94 Points**

Stellenbosch (7.43%) Stuart Botha made this very impressive Chenin Blanc with Simonsberg Chenin Blanc dried on mats for five weeks. Intensely concentrated yet refreshing, it has flavours of quince, honey, toffee apple and salted caramel, 299 grams of residual sugar and a volatile lift. 2025-29

