

14 Value Reds from South Africa

New reviews of Cabernets, Syrahs and more, all priced at \$25 or less



The Rustenberg winery, in the Stellenbosch region of South Africa.

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

Following our look at newly released South African white wine values, here are 14 delicious South African reds, all priced at \$25 or less. This batch is dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah bottlings.

At Ernie Els Wines, winemaker Louis Strydom has expanded the portfolio with a rock-solid Cabernet as well as a fun blend of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Mourvèdre, Grenache and Viognier. Rustenberg's Brampton line continues to provide consistently very good value, along with Charles Back's cheeky-labeled but always tasty Goats do Roam wines. The De Morgenzon Syrah is a buy-by-the-case bottling that offers a lot of bang for its \$15 price tag.

There's more here from the new L'Ormarins Protea line as well as from Six Hats, two labels that are making their debuts here in the United States.

ERNIE ELS Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch 2009 Score: 89 | \$25

This is rock-solid, with dark, winery red and black currant fruit laced with licorice and sweet spice. There's nice grip on the finish. Drink now through 2012. 2,400 cases made. —*J.M.*

DE MORGENZON Syrah Western Cape DMZ 2009 Score: 88 | \$15

Mouthfilling, with a juicy core of blackberry, currant and dark tobacco notes. Toasty, but nicely integrated on the finish. Solid. Drink now. 600 cases imported. —*J.M.*

ERNIE ELS Big Easy Western Cape 2009 Score: 88 | \$20

Offers a friendly, direct beam of sweet spice, melted licorice and dark, juicy plum and linzer torte flavors that carry through on the toast-tinged finish. A crowd-pleasing style. Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Mourvèdre, Grenache and Viognier. Drink now. 2,400 cases made. —*J.M.*

FAIRVIEW Shiraz Coastal Region 2008 Score: 88 | \$17

This has a juicy core of dark plum, roasted fig and blackberry fruit, backed by graphite and cocoa on the medium-weight finish. Drink now. 4,500 cases made. —*J.M.*

GLEN CARLOU Grand Classique Paarl 2008 Score: 88 | \$20

Quite toasty, with ample mocha and roasted fig notes up front, followed by cassis, bacon and mesquite on the back end. The toasty edge holds sway on the lightly firm finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now. 3,450 cases imported. —*J.M.*

GOATS DO ROAM WINE COMPANY Goat-Roti Coastal Region 2008 Score: 88 | \$20

Up front, with a hefty dose of toasty vanilla leading the way for plum sauce and dark licorice notes, followed by a polished finish. Syrah and Viognier. Drink now. 3,000 cases made. —*J.M.*

MULDERBOSCH Faithful Hound Stellenbosch 2007 Score: 88 | \$22

This shows grilled herb and tobacco notes up front, followed by a medium-weight core of red currant, licorice and damson plum fruit. The tangy finish lets herb and mineral notes hang. Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Petit Verdot, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now. 2,500 cases imported. —*J.M.*

RUSTENBERG Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch Brampton 2008 Score: 88 | \$14

Offers a solid beam of raspberry and blackberry fruit, with well-integrated toast and a lingering black licorice note on the finish. Drink now. 1,500 cases imported. —*J.M.*

SPICE ROUTE Shiraz Swartland 2008 Score: 88 | \$18

Quite ripe, with fig paste and warm currant preserves laced with melted licorice and apple wood notes. A lightly mulled raisin edge on the finish lacks some freshness, but this has good range and length. Drink now. 2,500 cases made. —*J.M.*

BOEKENHOUTSKLOOF Syrah Coastal Region Porcupine Ridge 2009 Score: 87 | \$13

This has a nice winery core of dark plum and fig fruit laced with bittersweet cocoa and tobacco. Drink now. 1,500 cases imported. —*J.M.*

FAIRVIEW Cabernet Sauvignon Coastal Region La Capra 2009 Score: 87 | \$11

This has a solid core of black cherry and black currant fruit liberally laced with tobacco leaf and sage notes. A touch old-school in profile, but stays supple enough through the finish. Drink now. 2,500 cases made. —*J.M.*

GOATS DO ROAM WINE COMPANY Goats do Roam Red Western Cape 2009 Score: 87 | \$10

Shows an inviting mix of white pepper, violet and roasted plum fruit, with a dash of licorice on the finish. Drink now. 45,000 cases made. —*J.M.*

L'ORMARINS Shiraz Western Cape Protea 2008 Score: 87 | \$20

A ripe, forward style, with a blast of linzer torte and mocha giving way to licorice and raisin on the finish. For fans of the style. Drink now. 1,500 cases made. —*J.M.*

SIX HATS Cabernet Sauvignon Western Cape 2010 Score: 87 | \$10

Offers a nice beam of juicy raspberry and black cherry fruit laced with sweet spice and modest toast.

Drink now. 1,000 cases imported. —*J.M.*