



Wine heroes of the past feature on South Africa's leading premium wine auction

Nederburg Auction

It remains a delicious mystery why particular periods of history delivered the great vintages so strongly represented at the 41st Nederburg Auction. In the sixties and seventies, wines were often made in a more simplistic way, with varieties frequently substituted in a way that today bears remarkable fruit.

Yet this year, vintages from these periods resonated strongly with the selection panel, resulting in a strong classic wine offering on sale at the event this coming September, the 11th and 12th, at Nederburg in Paarl. And perhaps it's fitting to consider these past heroes as inspiration for the icon wines of the future, given the 2015 theme of "Beyond", says Auction manager Dalene Steyn.

She says selection panels of the past few years have put in a concerted effort to search for truly benchmark wines, ones that prove beyond doubt that South African wines are ageworthy.

"This year's selection contains several of these 'heroes of the past', wines that have consistently impressed local and international wine critics, and which we anticipate will create some competitive bidding amongst buyers." Wine judge Roland Peens concurs: "These wines are particularly special in that they weren't made for the intention of ageing, at least not for 40 to 50 years. Therefore very little was kept for maturation and investment. Perfectly stored vintage SA wines are extremely rare, adding to the mystique and auction value..." Some of the older wines of this era that have been selected for inclusion include a **Lanzerac Cabernet 1957**, the first wine bottled under the Lanzerac label.

It was made in small quantities from grapes grown on the estate where the famous Lanzerac hotel is currently situated. These were bushvines with a low yield, hence the delicious Cabernet Sauvignon flavours still prevalent after so many years. Two cases of three 750ml bottles each are on offer at a reserve price of R2 000 per case. Also hailing from the estate via Distell's Tabernacle collection is a **Lanzerac Pinotage 1965**, a vintage celebrating its half century this year. This wine is still very much alive, with good fruit flavours and a touch of sweetness that is due to the generosity of fruit from the variety, "... a substantial chunk of their virtue derived from old-style Cape winemaking", as observed by wine writer Michael Fridjhon following a vertical tasting of Lanzerac Pinotages in 2008.

Six bottles of 1965 Lanzerac Pinotage fetched R5 000 on the 2012 Nederburg Auction. This year buyers have an opportunity to bid on two cases of three 375ml bottles at a reserve price of R1 500 per case.

Another legendary 50-year-old is the **Chateau Libertas 1965**, made by Ronnie Melck and Duimpie Bayly. It featured on the 2011 and 2013 Nederburg Auctions, and exceeded its reserve price by R1 800 to sell for R11 000. It scored 82 at the 2013 Old Mutual Trophy Wine Show in what was then described as "a benchmarking moment for the industry". Two cases of three 750ml bottles are on auction at a reserve price of R1 500 per case.

From the same vintage comes another big earner, the **Zonnebloem Cabernet 1965**, which appeared on the 2012 Nederburg Auction with a reserve price of R3 000, and sold for R22 000 in determined bidding. This year sees two cases of three 750ml bottles at a reserve price of R1 500 per case available to buyers. Tasted by South African wine critic Christian Eedes earlier this year, it scored 93.

A decade younger, a **1975 Alto Cabernet** on offer comes from sea level vineyards harvested at 12 years old for this vintage, and cultivated under dryland conditions by the then winemaker, Piet du Toit, father of former Springbok rugby player Hempies du Toit. The wine was offered at a reserve price of R2 000 per case in 2013, and was eventually knocked down for R7 000. Just one case of three 750ml bottles is available on this year's auction.

Moving forward another decade, a **Meerlust Rubicon 1986**, one of the more famous Rubicon vintages, is on offer and had wine critic Michael Green comment in 2010 that "... the wine still showed a distinguished

character... a very good wine that one could serve anywhere". This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc has been produced since 1980.

Several sweet and fortified wines will almost certainly attract collector attention, not the least South Africa's oldest and most highly prized wine, the **Jaubert Family Muscat 1800**. Making its debut on the Nederburg Auction, this wine, bottled from a single 115-litre barrel that has been in the care of the Joubert family for more than 200 years, is a once-in-a-lifetime buy for any collector, with just two bottles of 275ml at a reserve price of R42 500 each available for sale on Saturday 12th September.

Cobus Joubert, the current custodian, tops up the barrel roughly every five years, using only the best Muscat sourced from Barrydale. The barrel is not topped fully, continuing the tradition of slow oxidation and leading to a partial Solera style. Neal Martin of Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate* tasted a bottle in 2011 and awarded it 99 points, **the highest score ever for a South African wine**

KWV Port has long been a feature on the Auction selection. Two notable wines from the Paarl producer this year still show beautifully: a **Limited Release Port 1948** and a **White Port 1966**. The '48 has a tawny character with a lot of typical nuttiness, its soft, dry tannins well integrated with the alcohol, while the '66 is a lively and fresh wine, with an abundance of fruit aromas and flavours. The wine is persistent on the palate with a sweet finish. Lastly, the **Monis Collectors Marsala 1983** rounds up the collection of vintage sweet and fortified wines on offer this year. Described by wine writer Dave Hughes as "a glorious wine ... magnificently smooth in the mouth with unbelievable thick velvet texture ... incredible long finish," the Collectors Marsala spent 10 years in 300-litre barrels to mature into the rich and sweet fruitcake type of wine it is.

Steyn says modern wines would do well to track the evolution of these classics. "It is our mission therefore to ensure that the legacy of iconic wines, those with long-term ageing potential, continues. And along with it our country's rich, beautiful, rare wine heritage, evident in every bottle purchased at the Nederburg Auction." The complete list of wines on the 2015 Nederburg Auction is available at this

link: <https://www.nederburgauction.co.za/2015-wines-on-auction/>. The official 2015 Auction catalogue, containing detailed information and tasting notes on each wine, is available to view and download here: <https://www.nederburgauction.co.za/auction-catalogues/>

Further information, including details on registering to secure a ticket to this year's event, is published on the official website **www.nederburgauction.co.za**.