

CBA Annual General Meeting: 25 November 2022 Chairman's Report



The Chenin Blanc Association (CBA) has been promoting and raising the image of Chenin Blanc for the past 22 years!

During this period, Chenin Blanc was initially the humble 'workhorse grape', responsible for the country's most popular branded white wines but earning very little in returns or recognition for Chenin and perhaps even less for the farmer. Currently, however, it has the largest reach and impact of all varieties planted. We can be very proud of our achievements!

The 2nd International Chenin Congress held in Stellenbosch 01–03 November 2022

Undoubtedly, the highlight of this year's events was the recent congress entitled *Chenin: Revealer of Place*. The conference followed after extensive collaboration between wine and academic bodies in France and South Africa. The conference was attended by growers, producers, academics, researchers and marketers from South Africa and the Loire, France, as well as from Australia.

It was in a hybridised format with in-person and digital tickets available. The three-day event included a wide range of academic and general interest presentations, as well as vineyard visits.

The accent was on sustainability and innovation, with speakers and workshops focusing on three key areas: the full genome sequencing of the Chenin Blanc grape variety to establish a scientific base for intra-varietal clone diversity; winegrowing and winemaking in the face of climate change; and responding to consumer tastes and lifestyle trends in a variety of cultures.

Among the presenters was Dr Jamie Goode, UK plant biologist and wine writer. He spoke about regenerative viticulture and noted how attention is shifting away from the idea of farming vineyards, to one of farming soils.

Please refer to the links below and please also follow the IG profile of the Chenin Congress:

en.chenincongress.com

en.chenincongress.com/liensvideo (password: CBIC2022_pass)

en.chenincongress.com/photos

www.instagram.com/chenincongress

There were many obstacles, challenges and budget restrictions, but also such a wonderful feeling of accomplishment! A huge thank you to Nolene Nel, who was the project manager for the congress.

Please diarise the date of the third edition, which will take place in Angers, France, from **3–5 July 2024**.

CapeWine 05–07 October 2022

The Standard Bank Chenin Blanc Top 10 Challenge winners of 2022 were showcased at CapeWine. On the eve of CapeWine, a very successful Chenin Party was held at The Grand Africa Café & Beach for a total of 300 guests, including 80 international WoSA guests.

World's first multi-language aroma wheel

A partnership with the University of Stellenbosch and Winetech going back to 2010, with ongoing research projects in many spheres, including organoleptic taste, consumer perceptions, clonal research and marketing, as well as academic pursuits and collaborations with other bodies and international universities too, resulted in Chenin Blanc being surely the most studied grape and wine. This resulted in the development of a multi-language flavour wheel – a world first. The chosen languages were Shona, Xhosa and Zulu.

Three workshops were held late last year. The groups comprised mainly sommeliers but also included winemakers, and people in the wine trade and from the Pinotage Youth Development Academy. Dr. Helene Nieuwoudt and Dr. Jeanne Brand of the US were also involved, together with Nolene Nel as the project manager.

About the Chenin Blanc style indicator

Diversity in styles can be seen, with Chenin ranging from a wine that is fresh and easy drinking to full and rich with oak barrel fermentation making complex, powerful wines. Addressing this diversity has led to the development of the style indicator – the scale will be able to give guidance as to what you can expect when tasting the wine, be that a fresh style with green apple and lime flavours, a more complex, fruity wine with stone and tropical fruit flavours, or a rich wine with baked pineapple and marmalade notes, and creamy undertones. More info available on: www.chenin.co.za/style-indicator.html

Many thanks to the project manager, Christina Harvett.

Karoo Stoep Tasting in Graaff-Reinet 26–28 May 2022

For the third time, we attended the Karoo Stoep Tasting in Graaff-Reinet, where we showcased the 2021 Top 10 Challenge winners. Again, it was a very successful weekend with two evening events for Standard Bank clients. We will attend the event again in 2023 (25–27 May).

#DrinkChenin Day 17 June 2022

Once a year, #DrinkChenin Day shines a spotlight on South African Chenin Blanc by engaging millions of wine consumers from around the world across industry events, at cellar doors and on social media.

In the winter of 2022, the CBA launched the first ever 'Chenin Safari' – a six-week long challenge that kicked off on #DrinkChenin Day. The challenge offered an opportunity for the fast-growing sport of mountain biking to intersect with a passion for Chenin Blanc. Two subcultures collided in an engaging, self-paced event where participants were challenged to see how many of the 17 Chenin Safari stops across several Western Cape wine regions they could visit between 18 June and 30 July 2022.

The #DrinkChenin cycling shirt (designed by Sumi Gous) was a hit. Again, many thanks to the campaign manager, Christina Harvett.

The Annual Standard Bank Chenin Blanc Top 10 Challenge

It was back to business as usual after two years of Covid protocols. The judging at the Standard Bank Chenin Blanc Top 10 Challenge 2022 was conducted according to standard tasting protocols, detailing both the logistics and tasting procedures as before. This is not only for good governance but also ensures consistency and is a guarantee that the same procedures will be followed each year. Once again, we included some highly rated non-entrants as blind benchmarks for further calibration, enhancing the rigour of this competition.

After the first round of judging of the 137 entered wines was concluded, 23 wines were considered to show merit and went through to a second round where the panel could give them more detailed examination. After the scores were tallied in the final round of tasting, there were 10 wines that clearly achieved scores to take them into the Top 10.

What stands out is the incredible quality of SA Chenin Blanc. We are the benchmark for this variety on the global stage and, as such, we see greater competition, leading to greater innovation with each new release! This is evident in the winemakers' exploration of new regions, the use of skin contact, natural fermentation, and a myriad of fermentation and maturation vessels.

Judges were impressed with the even greater style variation, especially the use of amphorae, 'natural winemaking', and various combinations of maturation vessels playing a role in adding nuance and complexity. We saw a range of styles from fresh acidity-driven wines to fuller, fleshier-bodied wines with distinctive oak influences leading to creamy buttery wines. This is a return to an older style of Chenin.

The Top 10 Challenge list for 2022 includes (in alphabetical order):

- Alvi's Drift Private Cellar 221 Chenin Blanc 2021
- Kaapzicht Wine Estate Kliprug Chenin Blanc 2021
- Nabygelegen Private Cellar Chenin Blanc 2021
- Piekenierskloof Wine Company Bergendal Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2021
- Rascallion Devonian Chenin Blanc 2021
- Rijk's Cellar Touch Chenin Blanc 2020
- Spier Wines Seaward Chenin Blanc 2021
- Stellenbosch Vineyards Bushvine Chenin Blanc 2021
- Stellenrust Wine Estate Stellenbosch Manor Fermented Chenin Blanc 2020 Barrel??
- Stellenrust Wine Estate Old Bushvine Chenin Blanc 2021

This brings the total number of producers to have made an appearance over the seven-year history to 39, as there are four producers debuting in this year's Top 10 (Nabygelegen, Piekenierskloof Wine Company, Rascallion Wines and Stellenbosch Vineyards). There is also one producer making its ninth appearance (Stellenrust), with two top 10 positions for the third time!

Standard Bank awards a cash prize of R25 000 for each of the winning wines, to be spent by producers on projects that reinforce economic and social benefits in the workplace. To date, a total of R2.1m has been utilised for these projects.

The accolades

Platter's by Diners Club South African Wine Guide's five-star wines were announced last week and, with 28 five-star wines, Chenin Blanc continues its remarkable performance of recent years and, in a significant development, now not only equals the number of five-star red blends but also surpasses the white blends category's 21 maximum ratings.

Among the other many accolades the past year, the Ken Forrester Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2021 was awarded a Best in Show Award at the 2022 Decanter World Wine Awards.

Finances/membership

We now have 140 members. We have a healthy bank balance and our financials are now taken care of by Lizette van Schoor.

Support partners

WoSA, as always, has been a wonderful supporter of the CBA. In the past few years, we have also been liaising more with the Old Vine Project, as 54% of all old vines are Chenin.

Thanks also to all the members of the working committee, manager Ina Smith and Christina Harvett, who assisted with many of the events/campaigns. Thanks also to Nolene Nel (project manager of the Chenin congress), Tessa de Kock (Tessa de Kock PR), and the August Collective, which assisted with the news releases and PR campaign.

2023 will again be a busy year with a few changes on the horizon.

Kind regards,

Ken

Ken Forrester Vineyards: 22 November 2022