

## SOUTH AFRICAN VINTAGE GUIDE

*“South African wines do not exhibit the major vintage variations seen in cooler northern climates. There are, nevertheless, perceptible differences from year to year. Dry, hot summers are the norm but a variety of factors make generalizations difficult and dangerous.”*



- 2009** Perhaps one of the greatest Cape vintages. Late and grueling, but whites and reds both look stellar. Standout sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, riesling, shiraz, cab and merlot.
- 2008** Long, wet, late and challenging but also unusually cool season, favoring elegance in both reds and whites, with ripeness generally achieved at lower alcohols.
- 2007** Elegant, structured whites, notably sauvignon; smaller red-grape berries resulted in intense color and fruit concentration, especially for cab and shiraz, and ultra-supple tannins.
- 2006** Perhaps the best white wine vintage in a decade – particularly expressive sauvignon and Chenin. Fleshy, mild-tanned reds, with lower alcohols all around.
- 2005** Short, early, and particularly challenging. Concentrated if alcoholic reds; mostly average whites, some stellar exceptions.
- 2004** Cooler dry conditions yielded healthy, elegant, often ageworthy wines with lower alcohols and yielding tannins. Chardonnay, merlot and shiraz especially promising.
- 2003** Outstanding, especially for reds – concentrated and structured, and often slow to show their best. Difficulties with late ripeners in some areas.
- 2002** Challenging and patchy; generally, individual producers’ track record rather than variety or terroir should guide the purchase/cellaring decision.
- 2001** Some excellent reds – fruity and concentrated, best are long-lived. White wine producers who picked between heat waves delivered flavorful if alcoholic wines.

\*Source: *Platter’s South African Wine Guide* – 2010 edition

