South Africa

Location
- The wine lands are widely dispersed throughout the Western and Northern Cape some 420 miles from north to south and over 300 miles across, between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

Soils
- Soils tend to be low in pH (4.5), with a predominance of clay (25% and more), but are well-drained and moisture retentive
- In Stellenbosch district, more than 50 soil types prevail
- On the hillsides, decomposing granite
- In Robertson there are some calcareous lime-rich outcrops like the calcareous soil of the Cote d’Or
- However, in the cooler coastal areas, these soils must be man-made with substantial lime additions

Climate - Variable but Mediterranean in general
- Annual rainfall rises from 9.7 inches in the near-desert Klein Karoo to 60 inches in the lee of the Worcester Mountains about 75 miles from Cape Town.
- Average summer daily temperatures often exceed 73 F during the February and March harvest months, and maximum summer temps can rise to nearly 40 C / 105 F.
- The Benguela current from Antarctica makes the Cape cooler than its latitude suggests
- Warm summer from November to April; cold, wet, blustery winters with snowfalls on the higher mountains
- Late frosts and un-seasonally heavy summer rains are rare.
- ‘Cape Doctor’ – gale-force summer south-easter wind that reduces humidity, mildew, and other fungal diseases, but also sometimes batters vines
- Wine regions range from (Winkler Scale) region III (like Oakville in Napa), IV (like Sydney and Florence), and V (Perth in Western Australia).
- A growing number of areas experience cooler region II conditions, especially in high-altitude or sea-cooled vineyards
Wine of Origin Scheme

Six main regions in the geographical unit of the Western Cape

- Breede River Valley
- Cape South Coast
- Coastal Region
- Klein Karoo
- Olifants River
- Boberg - for use in respect of fortified wines from Paarl, Franschhoek and Tulbagh,
Wine of Origin and Labeling

- The larger units are broadly geographical and/or political
- A ward is based on shared soils, climate, etc (terroir)
- Registered Estate wines must be grown, made and bottled on a single property
- Single vineyards may be indicated as such on labels provided they are registered in accordance with the legal provisions
- Vintage – 85% comes from one harvest
- Varietal – 85% of variety stated
  - Varieties in a blend may be indicated only if they are vinified separately
- Wines may state a single origin but be blends of the products of several region
  - Local critics call this the Wine of Mixed Origin system
- Traditional Method Cape sparkling wine is labeled Methode Cap Classique
- There are no rulings on crop yields, fertilizer quantities, or irrigation levels
- Chaptalization and all other forms of enrichment are banned
- Acidification is permitted

Classified Wine Production Zones From Largest to Smallest

- Geographic Unit
  - Ex – Western Cape
- Region
  - Ex – Coastal
- District
  - Ex – Stellenbosch
- Ward
  - Ex – Simonsberg-Stellenbosch
The Boberg regional WO is restricted to fortified wine made within the Franschhoek, Paarl, and Tulbagh districts. Non-fortified wines from these districts come under the Coastal Region WO.
Breedekloof WO

- Includes the wine wards of Goudini and Slanghoek
- The vineyards that flourish on alluvial valley soils with adequate drainage as they rest on a bed of river stones. It covers a large proportion of the Breede River Valley and its tributaries. There are marked variations between the soils and mesoclimates in the different river valleys. There are some 23 wineries on the Breedekloof Wine Route.
Robertson WO

- Includes the wine wards of Agterkliphoogt, Bonnievale, Boesmansrivier, Eilandia, Hoopsrivier, Klaasvoogds, Le Chasseur, McGregor, and Vinkrivier
- Dubbed the ‘valley of vines and roses’,
- Soils
  - Most vineyards fringe the Breede river, which provides irrigation and alluvial soils although calcium-rich outcrops are also found
- Climate
  - Although summer temperatures can be high, cooling south-easterly winds channel moisture-laden air into the valley
  - Warm and dry, the river is the lifeblood of this lower rainfall region
  - Average daily growing season temps are about 22 C
  - Rainfall is less than 400 mm / over 15 inches annually
- Grape Varieties
  - Traditionally considered white wine territory and known mainly for its Chardonnays and more recently for the quality of its Sauvignon Blanc, it is also the source of some of the Cape’s finest red wines, particularly Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon
  - The distinctive fortified dessert wines for which it was originally famed continue to be produced
    - Muscats, fortified Muscadels, off dry Colombards, and Chardonnays.
- Bonnievale is the best known of the district’s wards
- **Worcester WO**
  - Fertile district beyond the Du Toitskloof Mountains delivering a big percentage of the national crop, mainly bulk varieties for distillation or fortification. Still dominated by co-ops
  - Largest region in terms of winegrowing area and volume with around 19,560 ha planted, it accounts for nearly 20% of the national vineyards and produces close on 27% of South Africa's total volume of wine and spirits
  - It is the most important brandy producing area and home to the KWV Brandy Cellar, the largest of its kind in the world
  - Climate – warm and needing irrigation
  - Varieties
    - Colombard and Chenin Blanc, Semillon, and Ruby Cabernet
    - Well-known for fortified Muscadel and dessert Hanepoot
  - Slanghoek ward has had success with SB and botrytized wines
Cape South Coast Region
Wine Districts

- Cape Agulhas WO - includes the Elim ward
  - Varieties – cool summer winds preserve the acidity and aromas of late-ripening varieties such as SB, Semillon, and Syrah
  - Most of these maritime vineyards are situated in the ward of Elim
- Overberg WO - includes the wine wards of Elgin, Greyton, Klein River, and Theewater
  - Climate – high altitude vineyards where the daytime temps are tempered, even at the height of summer, by a cold wind known as the Black Southeaster
  - The southeaster often brings rain, which can increase rot and other fungal diseases
  - Varieties – big potential for Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, SB, and even Riesling
  - The Elgin Ward
    - Cool, high vineyards east of Cape Town
- Plettenberg WO
  - First vines were planted in 2000
  - Location - newest and furthest appellation up the east coast, in mountainous terrain some 20km east of Plettenberg Bay (vineyards are around 3 km from the sea)
  - Varieties – mostly planted to SB (makes a pure Sauvignon Cap Classic); Pinot Noir is also showing potential
- Swellendam WO - includes Buffeljags, Malgas, and Stormsvlet
  - Mediterranean-type climate
  - Varieties – climate suited to Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon
  - Climate – Relatively cool maritime
  - Varieties – very promising wines from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir
- Two wine wards that are outside of any District Wines of Origin
  - Herbetsdale
  - Stilhaai East
Coastal Region
Wine Districts

- Cape Point WO
  - Cool-climate district is recognized for its Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Semillon.
  - Location – western and southern slopes of the Cape Peninsula
  - Notable Producer – Cape Point Vineyards
- Darling WO – includes the wine ward of Groenekloof
  - Location - hour’s drive away from Cape Town.
  - Groenekloof ward, which benefits from being one of the closest to the cooling Atlantic is known for the exceptional quality of its Sauvignon Blanc
    - The ward occupies a large part of Darling
    - Soils – red, decomposed granite hills running parallel to the ocean
  - Varieties – SB, Pinotage, Shiraz, and Merlot
- Franschhoek (Valley) WO
  - Culture – known as the gourmet capital of South Africa thanks to its restaurants and wineries
  - Location - southeast of Paarl and is enclosed on three sides by towering mountains: the Groot Drakenstein and Franschhoek mountains which meet at the top of the valley and the Klein Drakenstein and Simonsberg mountains, found further down towards Paarl
  - Varieties – Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, and Cap Classique
Paarl WO – includes the wine wards of Simonsberg-Paarl, Voor Paardeberg, and Wellington
- Home of the KWV
- Climate – warm Mediterranean
- Soil – three main types of soil – granite in the Paarl district, Table Mountain sandstone along the Berg River, and Malmesbury slate to the north
- Varieties – more red-wine country (used to be more white); Cabernet Sauvignon is top performer

Stellenbosch WO – including the wine wards of Banghoek, Bottelary, Devon Valley, Jonkershoek Valley, Paapeeaiberg, Polkadraai Hills, and Simonsberg-Stellenbosch
- Location – east of Cape Town between False Bay to the south and Paarl to the north and is centered around the university town of Stellenbosch
- Climate – tempered by the Atlantic
  - Average daily summer temps are about 20 C
- Soil – three types: granite-based in the east (considered best for red wines), Table Mountain sandstone in the west (favored for white wines), and alluvial soils around the Eerste River.
- After Constantia, it is the oldest wine region, established in 1679
- The governmental Oenological and Viticultural Research Institute (OVRI), the Stellenbosch University Oenology Department, the Wine and Spirit Board, government experimental vineyards, the biggest wine wholesaler Distell with its 10,000 barrel maturation cellars are all located here.
- Varieties – best known for Cab Sauv, Merlot, Shiraz, and Pinotage, Chardonnay, and SB
- Boasts the greatest concentration of leading estates including Hartenberg, Jordan, Delheim, Simonsig, Warwick, Meerlust, Morgenhof, etc.
- **Swartland WO** – including the wine wards of Malmesbury and Riebeekberg
  - Means ‘the black land’
  - Viticulture is confined to the southern section around Darling, Malmesbury, and Riebeek
  - Soils – Table Mountain sandstone and Malmesbury slate
  - Climate – rainfall is light enough to make irrigation generally necessary
  - Varieties - traditionally a source of robust, full-bodied red wines and high quality, fortified wines. In recent times, some exciting award-winning wines have emerged, both red and white, and the area continues to produce top port-style wines. Increasing percentages of Pinotage, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon are being grown here, as well as Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc and Sauvignon Blanc

- **Tulbagh WO**
  - Surrounded on three sides by the Groot Winterhoek, Witsenberg and Obiekwaberg mountains
  - Climate - The area is characterized by extreme differences in day and night temperatures. Mountainous terrain creates numerous different mesoclimates that can be used to great advantage. Unique to the valley’s geographical composition is the ‘cold trap’, a phenomenon which occurs as a result of the encapsulating mountains, shaped like a horseshoe, with Tulbagh situated at the north of the ‘bowl’. The result is relatively cool average daily temperatures.
  - The district is associate with Cap Classique, but all styles are produced

- **Tygerberg WO** – includes the wards of Durbanville and Philadelphia
  - Location – starts just north east of Cape Town with Durbanville city at the base and heads north along the coast
  - Soil – Rich, red soils combine with moderated temps and airflow from the cool summer winds. In Durbanville has deep, well-weathered, red granite-based soils with good water retention. The wines are cooled and dried by the sea breezes coming in from Table Bay.
Constantia and Hout Bay are two external wine wards outside the 8 districts

- Constantia Ward
  - Location – In Cape Town’s southern suburbs, on the slim peninsula pointing into the south Atlantic
  - Climate – cooled by the sea on two sides for relatively slow summer ripening with average daily temps of 18-19 C, and very wet but moderate winters
    - Average annual rainfall is over 39 inches
  - Soil – rich, loamy Table Mountain sandstone and decomposed granite
    - Very fertile
Klein Karoo

- Long, narrow strip that stretches from Montagu in the west to De Rust in the east. Vineyards require irrigation to survive the hot and arid climate.
- Famous red, shale-based Karoo soil and the deep alluvium closer to the various rivers are very fertile and well suited to the Jerepigo, Muscadel, and other dessert wines for which this area is known.
- Wine wards unattached to any district Wine of Origin
  - Montagu, Outenique, Tradouw, Tradouw Highlands, and Upper Langkloof
Wine Districts

- Calitzdorp WO
  - Climate – semi-arid desert region, with summer temps of up to 40 C / 104 F moderated by afternoon sea breezes, and cool nights providing a beneficial diurnal effect.
  - Varieties – Port varieties such as Tinta Barroca and Touriga Nacional
    - Boplaas Estate is famous for its Port-style fortifieds.

- Langeberg-Garcia WO
  - New district to emerge in the Klein Karoo
  - Location – north of the Langeberg mountain range, between the Gourits and Brand rivers
  - Wine styles – produces everyday red, white, and sparkling wines under the Virgin Earth label
Olifants River Region
Wine Districts

- Citrusdal Mountain WO – includes the wine ward of Piekenierskloof
- Citrusdal Valley WO
- Lutzville Valley WO – includes the wine ward of Koekenaap
  - Location – most northerly wine district in the Western Cape
  - Wine styles – large volumes of every day red and white wines from several varieties including: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Chenin Blanc, Colombard, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinotage, and Shiraz
- Wine Wards unattached to any district Wine of Origin
  - Bamhoes Bay, Vredendal, Spruitdrift
Recent Vintages of South Africa

- **2007**: Heat wave at the end of January was balanced by cool nights and cooler February, resulting in fresh, fruity whites and intense, well-structured reds.
- **2008**: A cool and challenging year, rather than a difficult one, with a long veraison, a late start to the harvest, and an unusually simultaneous ripening of different varieties creating logistical problems.
- **2009**: A great vintage for both red and white wines from both early and late-ripening varieties.
- **2010**: A very difficult year climatically, with ripening patterns gone astray. Some dilute wines.
- **2011**: An early, small harvest. Wines are concentrated, but still fresh and racy.
- **2012**: Reds show polish and ripeness, with lower alcohols, while whites are fresh and delineated; similar in style to 2011, with an extra bit of concentration.