

LIQUID ASSETS: *BEST BUYS*

Is the controversial pinotage grape worthy of flying the flag for South Africa?
By Ingrid Casson



Pinotage is South Africa's born-and-bred variety, a cross between pinot noir and cinsault grapes. Conceived by Stellenbosch Professor A Peroldt in 1925, smaller plantings have since seeped into pockets of California, Canada and New Zealand, but South Africa's number of vines trounce their plantings by a vineyard mile.

Despite its cult status in South Africa, pinotage has shaky popularity. While Peroldt aspired to merge the best qualities of both

grapes to make a superior wine, there is a yawning chasm between the quality of pinotages. The best examples are medium- to full-bodied and full of berry fruit, often with hints of gaminess and banana. However, sometimes unpleasant characters develop in the wine, such as bitterness, an acetone nose and candyfloss sweetness, leading many to turn their backs on this local grape variety.

While patriotic supporters

consider home-grown pinotages a marketing plus for the SA wine industry, sceptics suggest we are flogging a dead horse and insist that more promising strengths for our winemaking future lie in fashionable sauvignon blancs, Rhône-style shirazes and classic red blends.

PINOTAGE LOVES...

- Its meaty, gamey and sometimes smoky flavours make pinotage a great match with venison and boerewors on the braai.
- Try light, spicy and lightly unoaked styles with red meat curries.
- Chilled rosés lend themselves to cold meat in an antipasti platter or substantial salad.

A FEW TO TRY...

- **Graham Beck Pinno 2008** is a good value, easy drinker that is light and juicy due to no oak treatment. R42.
- **Kaapzicht 2006** is a gravelly, restrained drop with hints of black chocolate, mulberries and black cherries – perfect for those who prefer a European style. R75.
- **Bilton 2007** has a medium-bodied style with rounded, juicy fruit. It's a great option for braaied meat. R80.
- **Diemersfontein 2008** has a cult following for those who like their reds rich and robust. It's full of chocolate, coffee and sweet red and black fruit. R80.
- **Dornier 2007** is well balanced yet fruit driven – full of ripe, black cherries and mulberries with a pleasing dry finish. R94.
- **Grangehurst 2001** is one of SA's most refined examples with good ageing potential. It's elegant and silky, and full of red fruit with a dry finish. R110.
- **Bellevue PK Morkel 2005** is rich, delicious and boasts classic mint and olive characters that are typical in reds from this Stellenbosch estate. R160.