

4 wine trends to look out for in 2020

By [Kristen Duff](#) and [Gosia Young](#)

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As we start another year (yup, when did that happen?!), it's time to reflect on the current trends within the wine industry. From both a micro and macro perspective, times are certainly a-changin'.

With South Africa facing one of the most devastating debt crisis yet, the economy does not favour 'non-essential' items such as wine in the common marketplace. Thankfully, the Cape Winelands has seen some respite with substantial rainfall quenching the drought-stricken province, and moves towards sustainable wine farm and making practices have seen an increase in interest from potential new markets.



Kristen Duff Gosia Young

Here's our round-up of wine trends for 2020:

1. Regionality

Having completed our shared thesis on location branding in regions such as Champagne and Burgundy, we've always been a little dumbfounded at why the Cape approaches winemaking in such an 'each wine farm is an island' approach. After all, isn't the whole greater than the sum of its parts?

Luckily, there seems to be a shift in the me-myself-and-I viewpoint, with industry players such as Wade Bales pushing for a focus on regionality.

In an attempt to do as the French do, Wade Bales' latest project, the Regional Series, aims to identify SA's premium wine-producing regions and shine a spotlight on the style which best defines that specific area. Starting on his home turf in Constantia, Bales invited winemakers from all the estates that were members of the Constantia Wine Route to produce one Constantia White Blend.

His second project, in which top Stellenbosch producers were invited to collaborate around a Cabernet Sauvignon, has just been awarded five stars from Platter's *Wine Guide* (one of only six Cabernets to do so in this edition).

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First-ever Stellenbosch collaboration scoops a coveted John Platter 5 stars - Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon 2017. - Second release in the Regional Series. (First was the Constantia White 2018). - Collaboration between 5 iconic Stellenbosch producers. - Abrie Beeslaar @kanonkopwineestate Jose Conde @starkconde Louis Strydom @ernieelswines Morne Vrey @delairegraff Nico Van Der Merwe @nicovandermerwewines - Release date Monday 11th November 2019. - @stellenboschcabernet @stellwineroute @stellenboschtourism @sbosvisio - #southafricanwine #platterguide #platterswineguide #wineonaplatter #platter2020 #fivestars

A post shared by [Wade Bales Wine Co.](#) (@wade.bales.wine.co) on Nov 8, 2019 at 10:31am PST

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Bales is not alone in his goal as a project led by Andre Morgenthal of Old Vines recently identified and helped create an entirely new region called the Cape Agulhas Wine Triangle. After years of being stand-alone wine farms dotted around the coast, Morgenthal is helping to develop a sense of community and region-specific wine style to, quite literally, put the region on the map.

This rise in regionality is encouraging as, internationally, there's often some confusion about where South African wine is positioned. While our wines might get noteworthy accolades, there is also a jack-of-all-trades perception that needs to change in order to increase the overall perceived value of our wine.

2. Vegan Wine

First, there was organic wine. Then biodynamic. And now, vegan wine seems to be the next big thing.

Let's begin by asking the question: How do you make a vegan wine? In case you don't know, in order to make wines clear and bright, many wineries use animal-derived fining agents. The most popular of these are milk (casein), eggs (albumen), fish (isinglass) and even gelatin.

Whether you knew this or not, this limits the number of wines available to vegans and vegetarians.

Until August of this year, no vegan wine certification even existed. Until Spier Wine Estate made headlines, being titled as the first winery in the world to receive Control Union Vegan Standard certification by the accredited certifying body Control Union.

While this is still a hotly-contested topic among winemakers, the truth is that by being transparent and committing to a greener, animal-friendly future, wineries can open themselves up to a previously inaccessible market segment.

3. Old Vines

“How do we keep Old Vines sexy?” was Old Vine Project manager André Morgethal's recent question to Jancis Robinson, one of the world's most renowned wine experts. Her answer? “Internationalise it.”

It's a movement spearheaded by legendary vineyard manager Rosa Kruger, who spent years painstakingly mapping out SA's old vineyards and working to have them protected. Now, together with Morgenthal and project coordinator Nadia Hefer, the team has made incredible strides in doing so, including the introduction of a bottleneck seal to certify wines produced from old vines (35 years or older).

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There's something deeply compelling about an old vine, even just on a visual level, in the way its gnarly, weather-beaten trunk looks like a caricature from a Tim Burton movie. But do old vines produce better wine? We caught up with @oldvineproject Project Manager André Morgenthal to get his take. Link in bio + on the latest edition of @port2port stories 💎💎 #wine #winetasting #wineover #winecountry #winestagram #wineblogger #wineblog #glouglou #winegeek #winelife #winereview #womenwholovewine #winetime #wineoclock #winesofinstagram #wineoftheday #sommilife #pourthis #winelife #wineporn #forthe love of wine #instawine #wineo #winefolly #oldvines #oldvineproject

A post shared by Glou Glou (@glouglouwine) on Nov 4, 2019 at 9:07pm PST

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But why does this matter? Well, not only are these old vines part of our national heritage, but they are often known to produce exceptionally interesting and complex wines that have the potential to elevate SA's international standing. Old vineyards are often threatened due to declining yields, making them less profitable for farmers to keep in the ground, but the Old Vine Project has brought attention and interest to the category, resulting in these wines being able to fetch higher prices and truly be valued for what they are.

Expect to hear a lot more about the Old Vine Project in 2020, especially as the project is rolled out internationally.

4. Canned Wines

The South African wine industry has long resisted alternative forms of packaging, but it would appear that the humble can is finally having its moment in the sun. Canned wine is a rapidly growing category in markets like Canada, the US and Scandinavia, and is beginning to creep onto the scene in SA with brands like Ben Wren and Uncanny Wine.

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THAT'S UNCANNY Wine in a can? It's a thing. Last week Uncanny, South Africa's first certified wines in a can launched - a premium, proudly South African product that comes in a single serve portion of 250ml. Why, we hear you asking? Because they CAN! No, we joke. It's because it's environmentally friendly. Owner Arnold Vlok explains that the significantly lighter packaging goes a long way towards reducing the product's carbon footprint. It's easy to stack and can be recycled. Now for the question: how does it taste? No one wants to taste tin in their wine. But much like beer and cool drink, the wine doesn't take on the taste of the can. For now, while our views are still out on the jury for this one, we can't deny that this is certainly making wine more accessible and fun - and that can only be a good thing in our books! 💎💎

A post shared by Glou Glou (@gloulouwine) on Nov 4, 2019 at 7:28am PST

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While perhaps not the most romantic form of packaging, the can makes sense on a number of levels in terms of convenience, cost, size and its environmental impact – not only can it be recycled, but it's also lightweight, reducing its carbon footprint during transport.

While we're unlikely to find Paul Sauer in a can any time soon, it's a great packaging choice for everyday drinking wines.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kristen Duff and Gosia Young are the founders of <http://www.glouglou.co.za/> Glou Glou] ('glug glug' in French), an online platform that talks wine for real human beings. Following their shared studies in media and wine business, they work independently in the Cape wine industry and pursue their love for wine in myriad avenues.

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