

SOUTH AFRICA
SURVIVOR

SURVIVOR WINES WRAPS UP A STELLAR 2022

It has been an eventful year filled with pleasant surprises and successes, one that we can genuinely look back on with gratitude. Since its inception in 2014, **SURVIVOR** Wines has grown into a progressive premium brand decorated with deserving accolades, led by Ben Snyman, the Head Winemaker at Overhex. While Snyman is thrilled about its trajectory of accomplishments, he is also excited about the new chapter for Survivor.

"It was time to strategize and assign a particular winemaker to individual brands. So, in January, we welcomed Pierre Wahl to the team who now heads up the SURVIVOR brand. While Pierre is a Chenin and Pinotage legend, this will also be an opportunity for him to move into a new realm of smaller vineyard pockets and new cultivars. He is the perfect match to boost the brand's dynamic and take it forward."

Snyman started his Overhex journey in 2010 as an assistant winemaker and progressed to winemaker within the same year. In 2015 he became Head Winemaker overseeing all the brands, including developing Survivor as a new premium brand. Travelling to Bordeaux in France in earlier years instilled a passion for bringing a classic approach alive in South Africa while meshing it with a modern twist to make regional blends even more attractive.

"I love developing wine styles - from everyday drinking wines to staunch premium wines that make people sit up and pay attention. Making wine is the easier part. The challenge lies in understanding different terroirs and express these different characters in each wine; the art is blending them to achieve perfect harmony.

A recent tasting of five consecutive **SURVIVOR** vintages (2015 - 2020) highlighted their past, present, and future strategies. "Every year is different," explains Snyman. The impact of the drought also compelled us to adjust our practices. We depend on our environment and constantly need to adapt to remain consistent. In addition, consumers are more entuned with what they want than ever before, keeping us on our toes to always overdeliver on quality. Pierre and I will, therefore, remain soundboards for one another, although I have handed him the **SURVIVOR** baton to continue the legacy we have started.

A trajectory of Excellence

Another affirmation that Snyman steered **SURVIVOR** in an illustrious direction was the Platter's by Diners Club South African Wine Guide announcing the recipients of the five-star winners of its 2023 Edition. It is the 43rd edition of South Africa's favourite wine guide. Snyman and his team can be immensely proud of SURVIVOR'S first five-star achievement, earned by no other wine than the Survivor Pinotage Reserve 2020. It leads the success with seven of the ten SURVIVOR Wines in the stable, scoring an impressive 4.5*. It includes the Sauvignon Blanc 2021, Chenin Blanc 2021, Chardonnay 2021, Chenin Blanc Reserve 2021, Syrah 2020, Cabernet Sauvignon 2020 and the latest edition, Cellar Master Pendulum 2019.

This achievement follows **SURVIVOR** Wines in being party to South Africa's progressive Pinotage journey with two wines represented under the Top 20 candidates this year: Survivor Pinotage 2020 and Survivor Pinotage Reserve 2020, selected from 130 stellar entries across South Africa. This year's chairing judge, Samarie Smith-Meletiou DipWSET, concurred that minuscule margins separated what she believed was an uncanny line-up of captivating wines.

"The rare opportunity to sit behind a display of South Africa's finest Pinotage in the final round, scoring 90 points and above, is an exceptional experience. Getting to this point alone was a vigorous process as Pinotage has reached an aesthetic that wine lovers globally recognized for its quality and individuality. Each of the Top 20 wines is a true ambassador of place, made with focus and precision."

Snyman agrees: **"Pinotage is South Africa's ambassadorial cultivar, a survivor in its own right that, against all odds, entered the world stage with grace and confidence."** He believes consistency is vital and acknowledging the consumers' need to enjoy delicious everyday drinking wine and explore more complex wines is as essential.

"We must excel in both and never become complacent to create new and exciting wines that exude character and finesse. I am delighted that I could play an integral part in the **SURVIVOR** story and that I can entrust Wahl with its future accomplishments. I do not doubt that he will continue the trajectory of excellence as every vintage produces new and intriguing tales for sharing with friends at many a dinner table!"

Snyman championed a new wine category for South Africa that was approved by SAWIS (South African Wine Industry Information and Systems) earlier this year.

After experimenting with orange wines for two years, a style still perceived as foreign to most consumers, he believed that adding sparkle to these orange-coloured skin-fermented wines would make them more accessible. Again, his ingenuity has paid off, adding the range Get Lost to the Overhex family.

So, it is up and onwards as Snyman continues as Head Winemaker of Overhex Wines, in charge of all the wines sold locally and exported to more than 56 countries globally.

