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## A RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA



A MONTHLY WINE JOURNEY  
CURATED FOR ADVENTUROUS SOULS

# thebacklabel®

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THIS MONTH'S RECIPE PAIRINGS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

## **MADIBA** RESTAURANT

*Since 1999, Madiba Restaurant has been bringing the home cooking of South African Kitchens to New York tables. From Portuguese spice to Indian Curries and African legumes Madiba Restaurant tips a hat to South African street food - from inner city market to harbor landing.*

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# WELCOME TO SOUTH AFRICA

BY SAM TIMBERG

**THERE IS NOT A MORE EXCITING** wine region on the planet right now than the Western Cape of South Africa. Don't be alarmed if this is news to you. In the world of wine, change occurs at a glacial pace, but the rapid advancement in South Africa's wine industry occurred in the proverbial blink of an eye. Since the first democratic elections of April 1994, South African wine has undergone a revolution that has propelled the industry to the forefront of fine wine production. South African wine is now on par with the world's most heralded wine producing countries like France, Italy and the United States. If you like wine, you'll love South African wine, you just might not know it yet.

I learned about the South African wine revolution in 2005 on my first visit to Cape Town and the incomparably beautiful South African wine country (a short drive from Cape Town). This trip was five years before the World Cup was held in South Africa and a decade before the New York Times would honor "the Mother City" as its top travel destination of the year. I was only 21 and my appreciation for wine was measured in volume rather than quality. On that trip I visited Stellenbosch, the heart of South Africa's fine wine country (pg. 15), I tasted incredible wines, both red and white, all of which I could afford on a college kid's budget, I met winemakers that were brimming with energy, enthusiasm and optimism about the prospects of industry growth, and I realized there really is something to the whole wine thing.

While that trip was a revelation for me, South African winemakers have been striving for centuries to produce high quality wine. In fact, South Africa has been producing wine since 1659, when parts of Bordeaux were still salt marshes. However, in my opinion, the modern era of South African winemaking took off with the end of the brutal apartheid regime in the early 1990s.

Today, South Africa is the world's seventh largest producer of wine. It's no surprise really, boasting a landscape of mountain slopes and valleys in close proximity to

the two oceans (Atlantic and Indian), along with long, sun-drenched summers and mild, wet winters, South Africa has ideal conditions for diverse viticulture.

Because of these favorable and varied conditions, South Africa does not rely on a single dominant varietal like many other popular wine destinations such as Argentina with Malbec, Australia with Shiraz or New Zealand with Sauvignon Blanc. For me, this meant I could learn about the world of wine in one country. And, after over a decade in the wine industry, the foundation of my wine knowledge is still what I learned by drinking my way through South Africa. This diversity of terroir is why South African wine is equally acclaimed for red and white wine production. Ultimately, I realized that what defines South African wine is diversity.

I was so taken with my first trip to South Africa over a decade ago that I have made it my job to educate American wine drinkers on the pleasures of South African wine. That is why I am so excited to have the opportunity to share these wines with you that I have cultivated through my travels in South Africa. For me, South African wine is so much more than the juice in the bottle. It's about travel, it's about great food with great friends, it is about trying new things, it is about understanding the past and toasting to the future. The bottles in this month's box represent a great overview of the South African industry today and should be just the beginning of your South African wine journey - ideally you can continue your education in Cape Town soon!

# LEKKER: A DELICIOUS FAMILY

BY MORGAN KATZ

**SOUTH AFRICA HOLDS** a special place in our hearts here at WA. Three years ago things looked a little different here, and South Africa is a pretty big reason why we have changed for the better. At the time, the fate of thebacklabel magazine was undecided, but after the decision to make South Africa our first themed box, the magazine was forever changed, and so were we.

Three years later, our love for South Africa has amplified to the point that we decided to go there ourselves to source our own line of wines. South African wine importer, Sam Timberg, steered us to three winemakers to participate in the creation of our Lekker wines - a family consisting of red, white and rosé - all of which are produced by a different winemaker.

When we launched that first South African box, Nico Grobler was one of the featured winemakers, and today he is part of our Lekker project as the producer of Lekker Rosé, but winemaking was not his original career path.

Nico was raised on his family farm of six generations, but because his father had no interest in continuing the family tradition, they sold the farm and moved. But Nico had farming in his blood. He attended law school, but couldn't fight his passion to plant and grow life, so he went back to school follow his dream and study viticulture and enology.

Currently on his twelfth year of winemaking, Nico, like us, loves wine because of the stories and "being able to discover the areas and history" behind wine.

Nico isn't the only one who feels a connection to the earth through wine. Winemaker Adam Mason, creator of Lekker Red, has always been fascinated with plants and what one can do with them.

"When I was a teenager, I started experimenting with making my own wine, and wanted to learn more about winemaking," Adam said.

And learn more he did. Adam attended Stellenbosch University for viticulture and enology and went on to work in France

as a contract winemaker for four years. Twenty years later, Adam still loves wine for being everchanging.

"It always makes me think about the bigger questions in life. I think wine is intellectual more than other alcohol. It's a time capsule because it can last hundreds of years. It's so much more than just an alcoholic beverage," Adam said.

Winemaker Reenen Borman - the creator of Lekker White - also took an interest in wine at a young age, a very young age.

"My first memory of wine was growing up on a wine farm and I remember going into the tasting room and drinking all the leftover glasses at 5 or 6 years old," Reenen said.

That interest in wine never faded and after high school, Reenen went on to study viticulture and enology and also spent time studying in the Rhone Valley. Now on his seventh year of winemaking, he has joined his father, a winemaker of 20 years, and the family project of Boschkloof Estate just outside of Stellenbosch.

When deciding what varietals to use for Lekker White, he knew he wanted something fresh and crisp that also has a unique South African ambiance, which led him to an unoaked Chenin Blanc.

"It's one of the old forgotten grapes local to South Africa. It's a grape that didn't really have premium status back in the day, it's like a phoenix rising from the ashes in its comeback," Reenen said.

Reenen also chose Chenin because it complements food well but is also easy to enjoy on its own, and is a great example of a grape that shows its region very well.

Although the country of South Africa has been making wine for hundreds of years, it's still full of discovery, which is why we love it so much and why it is our goal to be the loud speaker for South Africa and to discover amazing wines with meaningful stories for our readers to fall in love with.

## 2016 LEKKER RED

Cinsaut, Grenache, Mourvedre, Syrah, Viognier



- Western Cape, South Africa
- Looking out the window pretending you're trapped in a snow globe.
- Ostrich Tartare
- Still Beating - Mac Demarco



- Dark bitter chocolate-covered espresso beans. The smell of fresh milled pepper.
- Round and lush with intricate webs of spice. Chalky, grippy tannins and black cherry your cheeks.
- These bold tannins are the perfect complement to a gamey ostrich tartare.

This wine glows beautifully ruby red in the glass and is topped full of snappy bell peppers and wet earth notes. Crunchy deep brown soil and dried bay leaves, the fruit that is present is very dark with notes of black plums and black cherry. Packing serious tannins, this is the kind of wine that makes your insides feel like they are wearing flannel pajamas.

"Lekker" has several meanings. It is a common term for anything that is delicious or particularly luscious. In South Africa, it is most often used where Americans would say cool, great or awesome! Lekker Red is the perfect way to unwind after a long day. Light and fresh on the palate, this wine is like a bear hug for your soul.



### OSTRICH TARTARE

Madiba Restaurant

MAKES 3-4 SERVINGS

- 1 lb ostrich fillet/steak
- 1 tbsp olive oil (to taste)
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar (to taste)
- ½ tsp kosher salt, plus more for seasoning extra
- ½ tsp fresh ground black pepper
- 4 quail eggs
- Toast, to serve
- Minced shallots, to serve
- Pickled vegetables, to serve

**RINSE** ostrich and dry it off well. Salt liberally on all sides. Cover and let sit in the fridge for an hour or two. Don't let it sit for longer than a few hours or it will start to cure. Rinse off and dry again.

**TRIM** off any large tendons or pieces of fat. If you start with a lean steak, you shouldn't need to trim off much. Then portion out about 4 ounces. You can eyeball it.

**MINCE** the filet finely (or to a texture you like). Take your time here.

**ADD** the filet to a bowl and stir vigorously with oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Taste a bit of it and adjust the seasoning to your liking. We like a little more vinegar and salt in mine.

**CHILL** until you're ready to eat. Prepare your plate with toast, egg yolk (lightly poached if you want), pickled vegetables, capers, and minced shallot.

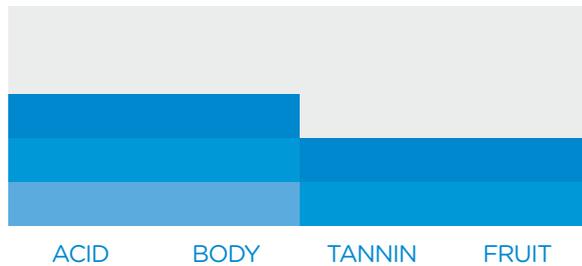
**PRESS** the tartare into a mold on the plate so it holds its shape and make a small well in the center. Slide in the egg yolk. Serve.

## 2016 EIKENDAL VINEYARDS ROUGE

78% Shiraz, 22% Petit Verdot



- Stellenbosch, South Africa
- Slow dancing your way to relaxation after hours of work.
- Peri Peri African Chicken
- Slow Dancing In a Burning Room - John Mayer



- Juicy, raisin-like fruit, plum, dates, prunes, lots of black tea and a touch of nutmeg.
- Bold tannins that brush every inch of your mouth. Mulled fruit, star anise and allspice.
- With notes of anise and allspice, this wine stands up well to flavorful Peri Peri Chicken.

With its proximity to the ocean and mountainous climate, Eikendal Vineyards is situated in a prime location for winemaking. The misty ocean breeze keeps the vineyard cool, which creates an optimal climate for growing grapes that are turned into some extremely tasty wine. The winemaker behind our very own Lekker Rosé, Nico Grobler, has been producing quality, award-winning juice at Eikendal Vineyards for over eight years.

This big-boned juice is perfect for the cooler months. These types of wines keep you warm when the snow is falling, they touch your heart and give your body an extra layer of heat. It's a bold, stain your gums kind of wine. Extremely intricate and complex fruit notes intertwined with a touch of caramel and cinnamon. A velvety combination of Shiraz, Petit Verdot and long johns, if you will.



### PERI PERI AFRICAN CHICKEN

Madiba Restaurant

#### MAKES 3-4 SERVINGS

- ¼ cup paprika
- 2 tbsps hot chili powder
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice
- 4 bone-in chicken breast (or thigh) halves
- 1½ tpsps fresh ginger, chopped
- 1½ tpsps salt

**STIR** together the paprika, chili powder, lemon juice, garlic, ginger and salt in a large bowl.

**RUB** chicken with the mixture, place in a dish, and marinate for 3 hours.

**PREHEAT** a grill to medium heat.

**PLACE** chicken onto the grill and discard the marinade. Cook for about 30 minutes, turning occasionally, until the skin is slightly charred and juices run clear.

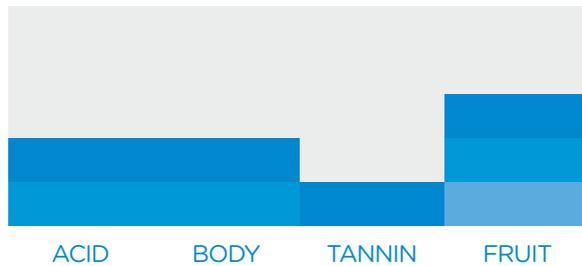
**SERVE** with a side of your choosing (also awesome for sandwiches!).

## 2016 BALANCE CABERNET SAUVIGNON

100% Cabernet Sauvignon



- Western Cape, South Africa
- Holding the hand of your lover and feeling their warm skin.
- Pap & Boerewors
- Dive - Tim Atlas



- Smells like fresh pine wreaths laced with candy-coated cherries and smashed raspberries.
- Light, with lots of black cherry and mulled wine notes. Easy tannins that quickly fade.
- This light but flavorful red allows the unique flavors of the sausage to really shine.

Balance Wines was launched in 2004 and is the product of winemakers Natalie van Rooyen and Ben Snyman, who select their grapes from a variety of vineyards across the valleys of South Africa's Cape Winelands, capturing the diversity of South African wines. Following in the theme of their brand, they believe no matter what happens in life, it's always important to have balance in order to stay grounded and happy.

This wine is light on the palate, but drenched in bold flavors. A fiery fresh red that is brimming with notes of ginger snap crumbs and smashed raspberries. Vibrant red fruit keeps the palate lifted. Clean ginger spice notes are reminiscent of youthful IKEA trips that were spent munching on Swedish spiced cookies. A great wine that doesn't need much.



### PAP & BOEREWORS

Madiba Restaurant

MAKES 3-4 SERVINGS

#### PAP

- 6 cups maize meal
- 1 tbsp salt
- 3¼ cups boiling water

#### BOEREWORS

- 1 boerewor sausage

**GRILL** boerewor until juices start escaping the sausage casing - you don't want to overcook it.

**BRING** 3¼ cups water to a boil in an aluminum pot.

**ADD** 1 tbsp salt, then pour maize meal into the boiling water. If cooking on a stove, lower the heat to medium and stir the maize meal with a wooden spoon until it becomes one lump.

**KEEP** stirring the pap every 10 minutes. Switch off the stove after 30 minutes and allow it to cook in the pot's warmth for about 20 minutes. Serve.

Get some authentic boerewors from braaitime in New Jersey - made by south africans for everybody <https://braaitime.com/index.php/boerewors.html>

# SOUTH AFRICAN WINE REGIONS 101

BY VICKI DENIG



**FOR FAR TOO LONG**, South Africa was considered low man on the totem pole of the wine world. Grocery store shelves and dusty back sections of wine shops housed mediocre bottles of cheap swill, simply to fill their New World wine gaps or 'Bottles Under \$10' sections. However, over the last couple of decades, South Africa has put itself back on the wine world's radar - and has done so with a serious bang.

What used to be the go-to region for jug wine and subpar juice has become a mecca for unique, terroir-driven vino. Whether rich, round Chenin or plush Cabernet Sauvignon is your thing, there's something for every palate in the vast viticultural world of South Africa.

It all started back in the 1650s, when the Dutch East India Company founded a supply station in present-day Cape Town. Jan Van Riebeeck, a Dutch surgeon, was given the responsibility of planting grapes and producing wine in South Africa, mainly for ailing sailors dealing with drawn out voyages to India.

The first successful harvest occurred in 1659; though after a brief viticultural boom, many farmers chose to replace

grapevines with other crops. At the turn of the 20th century, millions of vines were replanted - especially high yielding varieties - causing an excess of wine in the region. Protests against South African products in response to Apartheid didn't help the region's viticultural reputation either, though when the market finally opened up again in the early 1990s, South Africa was back on the map - and ready to produce wine better than ever. New viticultural techniques, international grape varieties, and an influx of foreign producers was just what the region needed for its late 20th century facelift.

In 1973, just prior to this renaissance, South Africa established its Wine of Origin (WO) program, officially defining how wine regions appear on South African wine labels. Some portions of the WO system are similar to that of France's AOP or Italy's DOC systems, though the main focus of South Africa's WO system is to ensure that proper geographical information is conveyed on labels.

Grape varieties, yields and other strict laws enforced in other systems are not regulated within South Africa's WO system. In short, the WO system breaks

the country down into four geographical units, then further down into regions, districts and wards. Of all classifications, wards are the smallest - and most similar to French-style appellations - with a unique sense of place present in each bottle.

About 270,000 hectares are under vines across South Africa, producing nearly 265 million gallons of wine per year. Most of the nation's wine production takes place in the southwestern part of the country, near the Cape Peninsula. Within the Cape Peninsula lies some of South Africa's most popular grape growing regions, including Paarl, Constantia and Stellenbosch. Appellations dot the Breede Valley, with cooler climate regions such as Elgin and Walker Bay found bordering the coastline of the Indian Ocean.

With such an array of appellations comes an even broader scope of climate conditions and terroirs. Regions with coastal influence generally exhibit a Mediterranean climate, with abundant sunshine and heat, and cooler, wetter winters. Irrigation is necessary for many of the country's appellations; wind

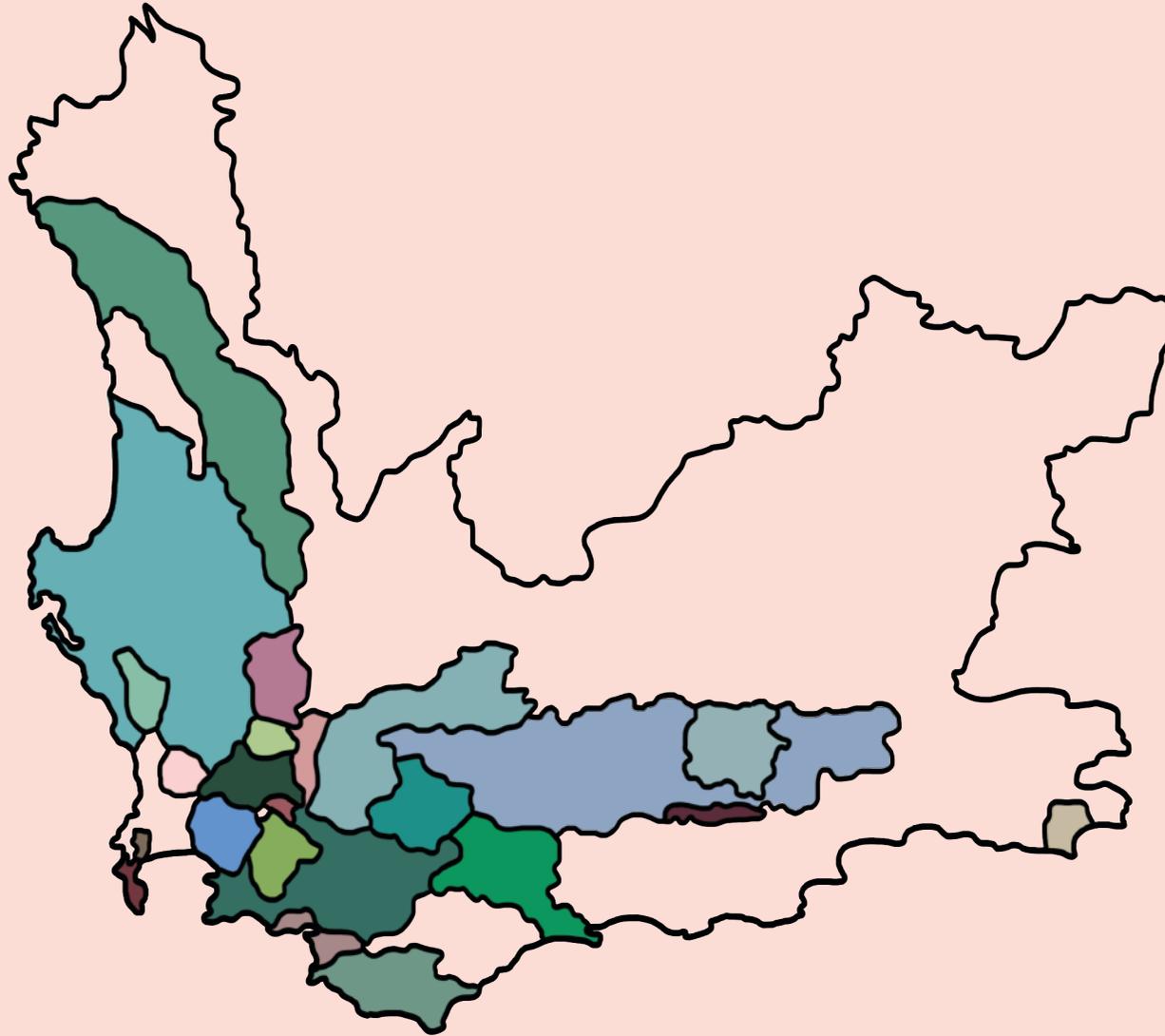
currents, such as the 'Cape Doctor,' aid in fighting against disease and rot. Soil types are extremely variant, though most regions' soils have a high amount of clay. Granite, shale and sandstone are also widespread soil types throughout the country.

Locally known as Steen, Chenin Blanc remains the country's most widely planted grape varietal. Other white grapes with a strong presence in South Africa include Chardonnay and Riesling also have a strong presence in South Africa. For red varieties, Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz are the most frequently planted, though the country has become synonymous with Pinotage production, a unique crossing between Pinot Noir and Cinsaut.

Red or white, dry or sweet, rustic or 'New World' style, there's something for everyone to enjoy in the world of South African wine. Best of all, your palate - and wallet - will thank you. We'll raise a glass to that.

# SOUTH AFRICAN WINE REGIONS

ILLUSTRATION TAMARA RAHOUMI



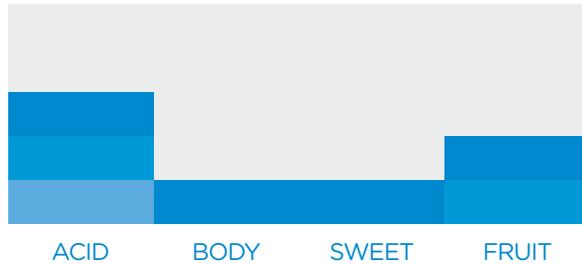
- SWARTLAND
- DARLING
- TULBALGH
- TYGERBERG
- CONSTANTIA
- CAPE POINT
- STELLENBOSH
- PAARL
- WELLINGTON
- FRANSCHHOEK VALLEY
- ROBERTSON
- WORCESTER
- BREDEKLOOF
- ELGIN
- OVERBERG
- WALKER BAY
- CAPE AGULHAS
- SWELLENDAM
- PLETTENBERG BAY
- KLEIN KAROO
- CALITZDORP
- LANGE BERG - GARCIA
- OLIFANTS RIVER

## 2017 LEKKER WHITE

100% Chenin Blanc



-  Stellenbosch, South Africa
-  Day dreaming of sun on your skin and sand under your toes.
-  Grilled Calamari
-  Where'd You Go - Fort Minor



-  Light, zippy lemon curd, pineapple chunks, baked apples and pre-packaged fruit cocktails.
-  High acidity that stings the back of your gums. Loads of citrus and underripe peach.
-  When pairing seafood, what could possibly be better than a light and crisp Chenin?!

"Lekker" has several meanings. It is a common term for anything that is delicious or particularly luscious. In South Africa, it is most often used where Americans would say cool, great or awesome! Lekker White is a lovely wine just before (and after!) the sun sets. Bursting with fresh tropical flavors, this bottle will put a smile on your face and keep you coming back for another sip.

Delightful mouth feel, like licking early morning sunshine when it's pouring through your windows with a vengeance. Warm beams touching your cool, supple skin. Smells of slightly bruised golden pears and baked yellow apples. Prevalent notes of honeydew and cantaloupe rinds, light and extremely laid back, clean and fresh. Significant minerality that tastes sandy and clean, like sprawling out on a white sand-covered desert island.



### GRILLED CALAMARI

Madiba Restaurant

#### MAKES 3-4 SERVINGS

- ½ lb calamari/squid
- ½ cup of white wine
- ¼ oz of pernod
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 bunch parsley

#### FOR REDUCTION

**BLEND** white wine, pernod and olive oil, then add finely chopped garlic and parsley to balance wine, oil and pernod.

#### FOR CALAMARI

**LIGHTLY BASTE** calamari with white wine, pernod and olive oil.

**GRILL** to medium over very hot grill then place the calamari in full reduction bath and serve.

## 2017 SURVIVOR OFFSPRING, CAPE WHITE BLEND

70% Chenin Blanc, 27% Sauvignon Blanc, 3% Viognier



-  Swartland, South Africa
-  Prepping for a networking event and promising you'll behave.
-  Cape Seafood Soup
-  Nancy Mulligan - Ed Sheeran



-  Papaya, white flowers, citrus. Minerality like granite, white rocks and sandy seashells.
-  Kind of chubby and round but has a brightness that lifts it. Nice honey pineapple notes.
-  The sweetness and minerality in this blend complement and keep a hearty seafood soup balanced.

This wine was named after a Nguni cow, (the traditional livestock of the Zulu people in South Africa,) who jumped off a truck and into the vineyards. She not only survived the daring jump but also had many offspring. This wine speaks to her success and children. As in, it will make you feel like you are jumping around vineyards with beautiful South Africa as a backdrop.

White blends are always a great idea. Bright, starry acidity but round and citrus-driven, they are the perfect pairing wines. This bottle would be a perfect pair with some cheese and bread. This is the kind of bottle that will make you feel like it's July in just one sip. This wine is toting a medium to full body, with a mid level acidity, but manages to stay light on the palate.



### CAPE SEAFOOD SOUP

Madiba Restaurant

MAKES 3-4 SERVINGS

- 3 large fish bones (any fatty or white fish will do)
- 2 onions
- 1 bulb of garlic
- 1 red pepper
- 1 green pepper
- 1 stalk celery
- 1 pinch of saffron
- 4-5 medium tiger prawns
- 5 calamari tubes
- 6 mussels

ROAST fish bones.

ROAST onion, garlic, celery, red and green pepper.

ADD saffron

BOIL roasted fish bones and vegetables in water for 1½ hours to make stock.

REMOVE bones, place stock base and vegetables in blender on a coarse medium blend.

GRILL calamari, mussels and prawns to medium.

COMBINE soup base together with grilled seafood into a large pot and bring to simmer for about 15 minutes.

SERVE in a large bowl.

## 2017 BALANCE, CHARDONNAY

100% Chardonnay



- Western Cape, South Africa
- Looking at the stars wrapped up in blue flannel blankets.
- Prawns Peri-Peri
- Maps - Yeah Yeah Yeahs



- Fresh, mineral-driven nose, sandy seashells and lemon rinds. Peach pits and salty air.
- A crisp Chardonnay, with clean and bright acidity. Canned pineapple and a pinch of ginger.
- Garlicky and spicy prawns need to be balanced out with crisp acidity. Oh, hello there, Chard.

Balance Wines was launched in 2004 and is the product of winemakers Natalie van Rooyen and Ben Snyman, who select their grapes from a variety of vineyards across the valleys of South Africa's Cape Winelands, capturing the diversity of South African wines. Following in the theme of their brand, they believe no matter what happens in life, it's always important to have balance in order to stay grounded and happy.

Clean, and bright like a nightlight through the scariness of the night. A South African wine that is a great expression of what is coming out of an up-and-coming region. On the nose, some notes of peach pits and salty air lace a tropical wonderland of pineapple and golden apples. Any sign of sweet sugary stickiness is pulled away by the bright acidity. So put on a movie and grab a glass.



### PRAWNS PERI-PERI

Madiba Restaurant

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

- 18-24 large prawns
- ¾ cup butter
- 2 tsps crushed garlic
- 2 tbsps lemon juice
- 2 tbsps peri-peri sauce
- Salt and milled black pepper, to taste
- Rice or bread, for serving

#### PERI-PERI SAUCE

- 1½ oz red chillies, very finely chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 cups olive oil
- Rind of 1 small lemon, pared

**MIX** the ingredients for peri-peri sauce together in a bottle and shake well. You can make the sauce ahead and store it in the fridge; the flavour improves with age, reaching its peak at two weeks.

**SLIT** prawns down their backs and de-vein. Leave heads on (or remove them if you prefer).

**HEAT** the butter gently and add the garlic and lemon juice. Don't let the garlic burn. Add prawns and peri-peri sauce. (Cook in one or two batches, depending on the size of your frying pan) Shake to make sure you get some of the chili and garlic.

**SIZZLE** for 4-5 minutes, turning frequently, until cooked. Season with salt and pepper and tip into a warm serving bowl.

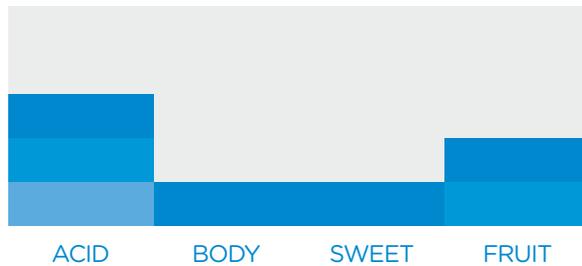
**GARNISH**, if you wish, with chopped fresh parsley. Serve with rice or bread and butter.

## 2017 LEKKER ROSÉ

52% Grenache, 48% Merlot



- Western Cape, South Africa
- Jumping into the ocean for the first time in summer.
- Pickled Rainbow Beets
- All My Friends - LCD Soundsystem



- Tangy guava and grilled hibiscus-coated watermelon. Stemmy, green, tart strawberries and cold steel.
- An acid that acts like a bee sting to the back of your tongue, causing your mouth to pucker.
- Don't fight the feeling - this bodacious wine is going to fall right in with your Pickled Rainbow Beets..

Lekker Rosé was handcrafted by winemaker Nico Grobler, of Eikendal Vineyards & La Brune Wines, in collaboration with Wine Awesomeness - and we're super excited about it! It was the first 2017 rosé on the market, making it one of the freshest, most easy-drinking wine you can possibly get your hands on.

This wine is pure energy, like shooting stars drenched in lemon juice. This is the kind of wine that stains your summer memories. The kind of wine you will cling to the memory of when you're trudging through the snow. Once in your glass, you will find a nose of fresh Herbes de Provence, watermelon and orange zest. Electrified pink lemonade, red pepper flakes and grapefruit rinds.



### PICKLED RAINBOW BEETS

Madiba Restaurant

- 2 cups white sugar
- 10 lbs fresh small beets, stems removed
- 4 cups white vinegar
- ¼ cup whole cloves
- 1 tbsp pickling salt
- Crumbled goat cheese, for serving
- Dill, for serving
- Microgreens, for serving

**PLACE** beets in a large stockpot with water to cover. Bring to a boil, and cook until tender, about 15 minutes depending on the size of the beets. If beets are large, cut them into quarters.

**DRAIN** reserving 2 cups of the beet water, cool and peel.

**STERILIZE** jars and lids by immersing in boiling water for at least 10 minutes. Fill each jar with beets and add several whole cloves to each jar.

**COMBINE** the sugar, beet water, vinegar, and pickling salt in a large saucepan.

**BRING** to a rapid boil.

**POUR** the hot brine over the beets in the jars, and seal lids.

**PLACE** a rack in the bottom of a large stockpot and fill halfway with water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then carefully lower the jars into the pot using a holder. Leave a 2 inch space between the jars.

**POUR** in more boiling water if necessary until the water level is at least 1 inch above the tops of the jars. Bring the water to a full boil, cover the pot, and process for 10 minutes.

**PLACE** the beets on a plate, dress with crumbled goat cheese, dill and microgreens. Serve.

# DIY SAFARI TIME

BY LOGAN LEE

**AS SAM TIMBERG MENTIONED** in the introduction to this month's thebacklabel, South Africa is now one of the most kickass places to visit here on Mother Earth. It is popular and the flights are always cheap, but signing up for a Safari can be super pricey, and in the busy season, they are always sold out.

South Africa has 21 national wildlife parks. Passes to these reserves are affordable, and fully equipped cottages are widely available. Plus, the wildlife is unreal! So let's do safari on a budget! Here is everything you need to know to plot out your very own safari without the waitlists and extreme prices.



First off, you need a vehicle. The roads are very well maintained, but getting something with four-wheel drive is ideal. This is a safari after all!

Second, make sure to snag an African animal guide. You're gonna have a chance to see the big five (lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant and Cape buffalo) and the little five (antlion, leopard tortoise, elephant shrew, buffalo weaver and rhino beetle) all in the same park.

Third, choose your park!

## **Addo Elephant National Park**

**Why?:** The park holds more than 450 elephants and it is located on the Eastern Cape so you can even do some whale watching on this leg of your Safari!

**Stay:** Addo Rest Camp. This camp is centrally located for exploring the park and the accommodations range from a luxury guest house to basic safari tents.

**Pro Tip:** Check out one of the guided safaris by horseback.

## **Kruger National Park**

**Why?:** The park is over two million hectares (bigger than some countries) and is super biodiverse with countless species calling it home: 147 mammals, 49 fish, 34 amphibians, 114 reptiles, 507 birds and 336 trees. You can spend weeks here 'on Safari.'

**Stay:** Kruger showcases 12 main rest camps, two lodges and four satellite camps. The Skukuza camp is one of the most popular because it is adjacent to the Sabie River, which is a prime spot for animal watching. These main camps are like little Safari villages with ATMs, grocery stores, pools, etc.

**Pro Tip:** Plot out a journey to stay in a handful of the different camps around the park.

## **Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park**

**Why?:** The terrain in this park is more like a desert and you're sure to run in to meerkats, lions and very large birds of prey. This is the most adventurous of the three parks. Roads are nearly all gravel, so four-wheel drive is required and thrill-seeking drivers can tackle special four-wheel trails.

**Stay:** Really go off the grid by staying in one of the unfenced camps like Grootkolk or Bitterpan. Cabins include gas and solar energy and fully equipped kitchens (they even have barbecues!). Just be sure to double check your shoes in the AM for scorpions.

**Pro Tip:** Driving after dark is not allowed, but sign up for one of the guided night drives through the park!

*This DIY is just a starting point, check out [sanparks.org](http://sanparks.org) for a lot more information.*



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