



What's your tippie?

by Matt Nixon

Wave hello to some great coastal wines

SOUTH Africa's Coastal Region is the historical birthplace of the country's wine industry – dating back to the 17th Century – and its most important wine-producing area. It encompasses several districts, each contributing to the country's wine reputation. The Coastal Region is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the west and Indian Ocean to the south – the combination of cool ocean breezes and nearby mountain ranges moderating temperature and promoting a longer growing season. Its terroir is diverse in terms of soils, microclimates and altitudes, allowing for a wide range of grape varieties.

White varieties such as sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, and chenin blanc thrive in the cooler climates, producing wines with crisp acidity and vibrant fruit flavours. Reds, including cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, and merlot, benefit from warm, sunny days and cool nights, resulting in well-structured wines. South Africa's signature grape Pinotage, a cross between pinot noir and cinsault, typically produces wine heavy in red fruit, earthiness, and a hint of spice.

The main wine districts are Stellenbosch, arguably the most famous within the Coastal Region; Paarl, renowned for its diverse styles and innovative winemakers; Franschhoek, often referred to as the "French Corner", which owes its name and winemaking heritage to the French Huguenots; and Swartland, meaning "black land" – known for commitment to sustainable viticulture. All offer a remarkable range of quality wines that are great value for money.

FRESHER THAN A SEA BREEZE

1 Vergelegen Mill Race Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot (£13.99, 14%)

This stunning blend is an intense black in the glass with complex flavours and aromas to match. Blackberries, blueberries and a hit of woodiness combine in a long, nuanced finish. Medium-bodied. Available from Majestic.

2 Wild Child Rosé 2023 (£14.50, 12.5%)

From Stellenbosch's Journey's end vineyards and winery, this light pink, dry grenache boasts strawberries, raspberries and cherries on the palate and a subtle floral nose. Available from Noble Green,

3 Spier Seaward Sauvignon Blanc 2022 (£14.95, 13%)

Seaward by name, seawards by nature, this bone-dry white carries the sensation of cool maritime breezes in every sip. With plenty of zesty tropical fruit, including fresh figs, and just a hint of sea-salt on the palate. Available from Slurp.

4 Kleine Zalze Cellar Selection Chenin Blanc (From £9.95, 13.5%)

A go-to Coastal Region white at a decent price, aromatic, off-dry and fruity, with plenty of peaches on the palate and a refreshing citrus tang. Available from Luvians, Cheers Wine Merchants and The Shenfield Wine Company.

5 Babylonstoren Babel 2022 £17, 14%

This dry red blend of 11 grapes, majority shiraz, is beautifully full-bodied, soft and juicy with a mouth-watering finish. Think blackberry and plum with a hint of leather for a savoury finish. Available from Ocado and Waitrose.

6 The Society's South African Pinotage-Syrah, Coastal Region 2023 (£9.95, 13%)

Enjoy this pinotage-syrah blend chilled to release its flavours. Fresh and fruit-driven with a medium finish that will have you reaching for another glass. Available from The Wine Society.

