Standard bank 2026 Chenin Blanc Top 10 challenge winners announced

Celebrating 13 years of partnership, the 2026 Standard Bank Chenin Blanc Top 10 Challenge honoured South Africa's national heritage white grape variety. Each winning producer receives R25,000 to invest in a social upliftment or community initiative.

Standard Bank and the Chenin Blanc Association have announced the winners of the 2026 Standard Bank Chenin Blanc Top 10 Challenge, recognising the exceptional quality, diversity and continued evolution of South Africa's national heritage white grape variety.

The 2026 Challenge attracted 150 entries from 97 producers, representing 36 Wine of Origin (WO) classifications. Following three days of rigorous blind judging, the Top 10 were selected, with six wines originating from certified heritage vineyards of 35 years or older.

The 2026 Standard Bank Chenin Blanc Top 10 are:

1. Beaumont Family Wines Hope Marguerite 2025 – WO Bot River, Walker Bay
2. City on a Hill Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2024 – WO Swartland
3. DaschBosch Mossiesdrift Steen 2025 – WO Breedekloof
4. Groot Phesantekraal Anna de Koning 2024 – WO Cape Town (Durbanville)



Representatives from the winning wineries with their certificates are (back, from left): Beaumont Family Wines (Hope Marguerite 2025); Groot Phesantekraal (Anna de Koning 2024); Stellenrust (61 Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 2025); Wildeberg (Terroirs Chenin Blanc 2024); City on a Hill (Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2024); and Stellenrust (ArtiSons Family Winery Mothership Chenin Blanc 2025). Front, from left: Zoetendal (Chenin Blanc 2022); Daschbosh (Mossiesdrift Steen 2025); Painted Wolf Wines (Lightning Chenin Blanc 2024); and Stettyn (Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2025).



The full range of winning wines is available from retailer Brice & Burnett. PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

5. Painted Wolf Wines Lightning Chenin Blanc 2024 – WO Wellington
6. Stellenrust ArtiSons Family Winery Mothership Chenin Blanc 2025 – WO Stellenbosch
7. Stellenrust 61 Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 2025 – WO Stellenbosch
8. Stettyn Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2025 – WO Stettyn
9. Wildeberg Terroirs Chenin Blanc 2024 – WO Paarl
10. Zoetendal Chenin Blanc 2022 – WO Coastal

Chenin Blanc accounts for 18,4% of South Africa's vineyard area, with 15 948,58ha planted nationally according to 2025 South African Wine Industry Statistics. Some 2 008 of South Africa's 2 176 grape growers (around 92,3%) grow Chenin Blanc.

Founded in 2000, the Chenin Blanc Association is dedicated to promoting, protecting and developing the variety, with the Standard Bank Chenin Blanc Top 10 Challenge providing an important annual platform for recognising excellence and demonstrating the diversity and potential of South African Chenin Blanc.

Ginette de Fleuriot, chair judge, Cape Wine Master and Wine and Training Manager at Vinimark, says the 2026 entries demonstrated the quality, diversity and individuality of the category. "The strongest wines combined pure fruit, freshness and elegance with enough restraint to allow minerality and site expression to come through. Collectively, they reaffirm South Africa's reputation as a world leader in Chenin Blanc."

A LONG-STANDING PARTNERSHIP

The 2026 Challenge marks 13 years of partnership between Standard Bank and the Chenin Blanc Association, with Standard Bank serving as headline sponsor since 2014.

The partnership has helped create a platform that not only celebrates excellence, but provides producers with valuable exposure, market access and commercial opportunities.

Community upliftment remains a fundamental part of the challenge. Each winning producer receives R25 000 to invest in a social upliftment or community initiative. Over the past 13 years, more than R3 million has been directed towards projects supporting wine-growing communities, including education, food security, children's development, worker well-being, improved living conditions and community infrastructure.



Stephan van der Merwe, executive head of Standard Bank Business and Commercial Banking (Eastern and Western Cape).

Ken Forrester, chairperson of the Chenin Blanc Association, says the challenge is about more than simply winning a cash prize.

"From the outset, it was important that the prize money was invested back into the farming communities that underpin our wine industry, rather than being spent on an arbitrary item. Thirteen years on, we are incredibly proud that more than R3 million has gone towards initiatives making a real difference to people's lives."

Stephan van der Merwe, head of Commercial Banking (Western and Eastern Cape) at Business and Commercial Banking, Standard Bank South Africa, says the challenge is also not just about recognising exceptional wines.

"It is about supporting an industry that contributes to employment, exports and economic growth, while creating opportunities for producers and their communities to thrive.

"Through our longstanding partnership with the Chenin Blanc Association, we are proud to help elevate South African Chenin Blanc, creating greater visibility for producers and showcasing the quality of our wines," says Van der Merwe.

BUYING THE WINNING WINES

For the first time, the challenge has partnered with Brice & Burnett as its exclusive retail partner, giving wine lovers across South Africa access to all 10 of this year's winning wines through a single specialist retailer.

Brice & Burnett has an exclusive allocation of each of the Top 10 wines, providing consumers with access to the complete collection following the announcement. The complete Top 10 collection is available through Brice & Burnett at bit.ly/4rs93Lw.

The collaboration gives the challenge an important commercial and consumer dimension, extending the reach of the winning wines and introducing a wider audience to the quality and diversity of South African Chenin Blanc.

The Standard Bank Chenin Blanc Top 10 Challenge continues to provide an annual benchmark for the category, celebrating outstanding wines while supporting the growers, winemakers, workers and communities behind South Africa's flagship white grape.

Visit standardbank.co.za, or chenin.co.za.