





WINE ON A PLATTER

Guiding the Palates of Wine Lovers Since 1980

Meet the card that curates your life, maximising your every day with personalised content and experiences, time-saving conveniences, and a connection to the causes that matter most to you.

The *Platter's Guide* is a jewel in the wine portfolio of Diners Club, having joined the annual Diners Club Winemaker of the Year Award and Diners Club Winelist Award in the prestigious array of titles in 2013.

The *Platter's* story begins several years prior, in the late 1970s, with seasoned Johannesburg print journalists and wine lovers, John and Erica Platter, yielding to John's hankering after his family's farming roots in Northern Italy and Kenya, and buying a small vineyard in Franschhoek.

Inspired by UK wine writer, Hugh Johnson's classic book, *Wine*, they made their own wine and named it La Platitude. Then Johnson launched his *Pocket Wine Book*, an innovative and brilliantly executed overview of the wines and wine-producing regions of the world. The Platters recall reading it admiringly and thinking: "Let's try to do something like this!".

Their enthusiasm was tempered by

a variety of challenges, not least from a sceptical bank manager and employee of the company they had appointed to print their guide, who called Erica one night to say, "John is wasting his time - and your money!".

Regardless, *John Platter's Book of South African Wines* appeared in 1980 to much acclaim. Aside from a hiatus in 1981, when an Afrikaans translation of the debut book appeared, an English-language edition of *Platter's* has since appeared every year.

GROWING WITH THE INDUSTRY

The extent of the guide has increased significantly over the decades, from 120 pages to more than 700, mirroring the expansion of the wine industry. However, the founding objective of tasting, rating and describing all of the wines produced in South Africa remains unchanged.

Now, as then, the country's wine producers and merchants are profiled by means of a winery overview and summary of their location, visitor amenities,

vineyards, production facilities, owners and key personnel.

Each edition also includes Wineland maps, profiles of the main wine-producing areas, details about restaurants and accommodation establishments in Cape Town and the Winelands, wine-tour operators, as well as wine-route and tourism offices tasked with facilitating travel in the major winegrowing regions.

The wines entered for tasting are reviewed by a team of thirteen tasters. Unlike wine competitions, which are primarily conducted “blind” (without sight of the label), Platter’s assessments are done sighted, with access to detailed technical information supplied by the producers. The reason for this tasting methodology is to understand as much about the wine and the winemaker’s intention as possible in order to provide informed guidance to the reader.

For the benefit of wine lovers in South Africa, the book’s traditional rating system of zero to five stars is now supplemented by the internationally prevalent 100-point scale. Wines that achieve a rating of 93 points or more are entered into a second round of tasting, conducted “blind”, from which emerges a trio of sought-after awards: Wines of the Year (the top-scoring wines in their categories), Five Star Wines (95 points or more) and Highly Recommended Wines (94 points).

The other pinnacle awards made by the guide are the Top Performing Winery of the Year (achiever of the most five-star results), Newcomer Winery of the Year (the producer who debuts with the highest ratings), and the Editor’s Award Winery of the Year (the winegrowing team or teams who, based on current performance and track record, are deemed ambassadors par excellence for South African wine by the guide’s editor).

While Android and iOS apps, a website, and versions for the Amazon Kindle e-reader have been added to the Platter’s product portfolio, the hardcover book, which appears on retail shelves countrywide around November, and is distributed internationally, remains the flagship product.

Each year brings a different cover colour, making it even more eagerly-awaited. The 2021 colour, a vivid green hue named Fresh Leaves, was voted for by followers on social media, who saw it as a sign of hope and revival after arguably the most challenging year of their lives.

FUTURE PERFECT

“Guided into bottle by a younger generation of cellar masters and viticulturists, South Africa’s wines have never been more delicious, diverse or beguiling,” says Platter’s Acting Managing Director, Philip van Zyl. “The upwelling of quality and enjoyment is reflected in our book and apps, and with Diners Club at our side, we look forward to continuing as the prime source of information and advice about our country’s vinous gems.

For more information on the Platter’s Guide, or to download the app on your favourite platform, visit www.wineonaplatter.com.

