

YOU BE THE JUDGE

WINE READER POLL 2006

Everyone agrees that wine appreciation is subjective. It's what *you* like that matters most when you're choosing what to drink – which is why we regularly conduct a poll to compare WINE readers' preferences with those of our professional tasters and wine writers. **Fiona McDonald** and **Christian Eedes** report on the findings.

WHICH DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE SOUTH AFRICA'S BEST WINERY?

WINE received one e-mailed response to the poll from a winemaker who said the result would be a foregone conclusion. "Vergelegen will take it again..." was his prediction, refusing to participate any further.

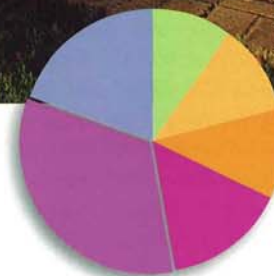
It's interesting to note that while Vergelegen HAS come out tops – for the third year in a row – there's been a shuffle among the top five. Thelema's percentage figure has slipped since last year, as has Kanonkop's, with Rust en Vrede and De Trafford dropping out and Hamilton Russell and Rustenberg moving in.

Managing Director of Vergelegen, Don Tooth, said the news was "fantastic as well as humbling".

"This is validation not [only] of what we do on the business side or what André [van Rensburg] does on the winemaking side, but of all the people who make up the team: the guys in the cellar and the people in the vineyards. They're the ones who ultimately make it all happen and they're carrying Vergelegen and its reputation in their hands."

Humbling was that the affirmation came from consumers of Vergelegen's wines. "That recognition," said Tooth, "really helps to give us more credibility when we go abroad and market not just Vergelegen but the wines of South Africa. We wave that flag and do so very proudly – and to have the validation from people who not only respect but love the wine is fantastic. Thank you."

Leading the pack of "others" voted for were Fairview and the KVV, closely followed by Boekenhoutskloof and Springfield.



- Vergelegen – 34%
- Thelema
- Mountain Vineyards – 15%
- Hamilton Russell Vineyards – 11%
- Rustenberg Wines – 11%
- Kanonkop Estate – 10%
- Others – 19%

The WINE magazine reader poll was conducted in-house. The poll appeared in the March 2006 issue of the magazine with participants asked to return their answers by either post or fax. In addition, the poll appeared online from 17 February until 14 April. It attracted over 600 replies, a sample adequate for valid reporting. The margin of error is $\pm 2\%$.