



[Anoraque eruptions and duck logic](#)

15 August 2008, 16:21 GMT + 2

The **Platter** wine guide is a bit like **Bill Clinton**: a cheerful face that has been around for ages but not someone you'd consider hiring as a babysitter. On the very day the Platter Pundits assembled for their annual game of Five Star Russian Roulette, *the Times* runs a [story](#) *Wine makers sour over stars*. Platter publisher, avuncular **Andrew McDowell**, attempts to defend the indefensible with the comment "blind tasting is essential for competitions, but the Platter guide is exactly that, a guide — not a competition."



Duck logic insists that "if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck", then as **James Whitcomb Riley** notes, "I would call it a duck." If Platter is indeed not a competition, then why the focus on five star stunners, the flurry of press releases and breaking news reports on the Platter-proxy website **Grape?** SA wine consumers would far rather a list of affordable pleasures, something I was trying to suggest in this week's *Financial Mail*.

Meanwhile, a totally scurrilous wine [blog](#) has started broadcasting that has the industry in uproar. Commentators, lawyers and anoraques will be watching with interest.

The *Financial Mail* story:

WINE magazine may have raised the maximum retail price for inclusion in its annual *Best Value Wine Guide* by 20% to R60, but at the same time a red tide of quality wines is being discounted by retailers such as www.getwine.co.za.

The online "shop" is clearing out the cellars of **Tokyo Sexwale's** latest Durbanville acquisition: **Bloemendal Estate**.

The 2002 cabernet and shiraz are both marked down from R72/bottle to R49, and both were rated four (out of five) stars by the Platter guide (four stars translates from anorak to English as "excellent").

In 2004, CBS's **60 Minutes** reported that "ten years ago, he was rallying the masses toward victory for the Communist Party. Today SA has a burgeoning black bourgeoisie with Tokyo Sexwale its most promising member." Now, Sexwale is discounting reds to the masses. And he's not the only one.

A marathon tasting trip around the winelands at the end of June - 4 000 km driven, 75 wineries visited, more than 500 wines tasted - revealed an embarrassment of riches in the national cellar.

The *Financial Mail* favourites:

A case of off-the-beaten-track reds (sorted by price):

- Slanghoek Winery Camerca 2007: R21/bottle. Light, easy drinking cabernet/merlot blend. Tel: (023) 344-3026.
- Riebeek Cellars Barbarossa Cabernet 2005: R25. Big and hairy like its pirate namesake. Tel: (022) 448-1213.
- Rooiberg Winery African Dawn Cabernet 2006: R26. Fresh and fruity with excellent intensity. Tel: (023) 626-1663.
- Wamakersvallei Winery Bain's Way Merlot 2007: R27,50. Spice, olives and meat, very fruity. Tel: (021) 873-1582.
- Mooiplaas Berry Red 2007: R27,50. Blerry good house red. Tel: (021) 903-6273.
- Simonsig Adelberg 2006: R30. Serious kuierwyn (wine for socialising), savoury with plenty of vanilla. Tel: (021) 888-4900.
- Doolhof Cape Roan 2006: R35. Powerful in-your-face shiraz blend. Tel: (021) 873-6911.
- De Meye Little River Cabernet 2005: R38. Super intensity with good balance. Tel: (021) 884-4131.
- Overgaauw Shepherd's Cottage 2006: R39. Entry-level Overgaauw cabernet/merlot with grip and chewy tannins. Tel: (021) 881-3815.
- De Krans Tempranillo 2006: R40. Upside-down exclamation marks galore for Spain's wild grape, grown in the Klein Karoo. Tel: (044) 213-3314.
- Kranskop Merlot 2006: R45. Impressive intensity and grip. Tel: (023) 626-3200.
- Goedverwacht Triangle 2005: R50. Classic Bordeaux blend with an exotic nose and intense red berry flavours. Tel: (021) 646-3430.

PS. I have no commercial connections with any of the above producers, distributors or retailers.