

COLLECTIBLE COOL-CLIMATE CLASSICS: WHALEHAVEN WINS TWO GOLDS FOR TERROIR SERIES PINOT NOIRS

Whalehaven Wines has emerged among the top performers at this year's 2025 Pinot Noir Challenge, earning two gold medals for its 2017 and 2018 Terroir Series vintages. The recognition highlights the winery's ongoing focus on age-worthy collectible classics shaped by the cool-climate Hemel-en-Aarde Valley.

The 2025 Pinot Noir Challenge continues to affirm its place as one of South Africa's most respected single-varietal competitions, dedicated exclusively to showcasing the country's finest expressions of Pinot Noir. Judged by a panel of leading industry experts, the competition places emphasis on balance, varietal integrity, and aging potential - selecting wines not solely for immediate appeal, but for their evolution in bottle.

Whalehaven Terroir Series Pinot Noir: Precision from the Hemel-en-Aarde:

Granite Rock Pinot Noir 2017 - Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley

From the ancient granitic soils of the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley emerges a Pinot Noir of striking clarity and finesse. The palate for a 2017 is still bright and lifted, with pure notes of violets and a fusion of wild strawberry, raspberry, and red fruit pastilles. Aromatically, the wine carries a fine tension between freshness and spice: white pepper, warm spice, and subtle forest earth notes add intrigue without overwhelming. Beneath its restraint lies quiet energy—layered and nuanced, carried by silky, fine-grained tannins into a seamless finish. This is a wine of poise, one that shows immediate elegance but promises even greater reward with time in bottle. The subtle fade at the rim is the quiet reminder of time, deepening its allure rather than lessening it.

Shale Summit Pinot Noir 2018 - Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge

Ruby in hue, the Shale Summit offers a graceful aromatic lift of red cherry, plum, and a whisper of white chocolate. The palate is vivid and juicy, unfolding with raspberry, wild strawberry, and gentle spice. A precise thread of acidity lends both focus and drive, while a supple mid-palate reveals crushed rock, wet stone, and a savoury cherry-pit edge. Subtle oak influence adds warmth and contour, tapering into a long, refined finish tinged with cigar leaf. Medium-bodied and finely etched, this is a wine that balances vibrancy with mineral depth.



Granite, Grace and A Cool-Climate Voice:

Pinot Noir from Hemel-en-Aarde speaks with precision and restraint, shaped by its cool maritime climate. Extended ripening delivers natural acidity, moderate alcohol, and refined tannin structure. Cool nights preserve freshness, while tempered days nurture phenolic ripeness. The result is not overt fruitiness, but purity: red cherry, cranberry, and lifted floral notes layered over chocolate coated - earthy mineral undertones. It is a terroir-driven style - linear, age-worthy, and unapologetically site-specific.

Whalehaven's Quiet Influence

Whalehaven, a small, family owned winery at the gateway to Hemel-en-Aarde, produces limited quantities of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, the property champions minimal intervention and cool-climate precision, giving voice to the valley's coastal terroir. Whalehaven is moving with confidence into its own distinctive voice: elegant, terroir-driven wines that honour the land, the climate, and the quiet pursuit of refinement. Silvana Bottega, spoke about the two wines: "What sets Whalehaven's Pinot Noir apart is not imitation but identity. It is unmistakably Hemel-en-Aarde: cool-climate clarity, ocean-cooled brightness, granite-etched purity that ages well. And yet it possesses that ineffable quality that marks all great Pinot Noir - an ability to be both delicate and profound. I love that both site expressions - one from the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley and one from the Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge - have been recognised with gold awards for their quality and I believe the distinct ways they capture the valley's character."

About Whalehaven

Whalehaven is a boutique winery located in the heart of the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley in South Africa. Known for its artisanal approach and dedication to crafting elegant, expressive wines, Whalehaven celebrates the harmony between nature and winemaking. With a focus on cool-climate varieties and sustainable practices, the winery offers a unique tasting experience that reflects the beauty and character of the Cape South Coast.

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