

# Wine country South Africa



**Top Magazin:** You're a wine connoisseur and South Africa expert. Where do your experiences originate from?

**Podzun:** I've been involved with the subject of wine for 50 years. I visited countless countries across the world in my role as Founder and President of the German Wine and Sommelier School. And I looked after the Mittelrhein section of the Gault Millau wine guide for 18 years.

**Top Magazin:** What do you find so fascinating about South Africa?

**Podzun:** Its nature, climate and friendly people. And of course the wine.

**Top Magazin:** The overall size of the wine growing area in South Africa is similar to that of Germany. Where does the difference between the two of them lie?

**Podzun:** South Africa is about 50/50 white wine and red wine, and the vineyards are on average a lot bigger. It's therefore quite common that grapes are bought and sold by farmers. Almost every vineyard offers professional wine tasting for a fee, sometimes with cheese or sausage on the side; in Germany that is a lot rarer. Lots of the larger vineyards also offer their own restaurant and even overnight accommodation. And another thing I've noticed is how professional



the website designs are, with all their facts about each wine. Germany can still learn something there.

**Top Magazin:** And what about the wine quality?

**Podzun:** For each of the last five years I've visited 17 vineyards across five months to do professional tasting and so I've got a good overview. I'm impressed by the variety and the quality of wines. The Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Shiraz can hold their own internationally. And the main grape variety here, Pinotage, is improving year on year.

**Top Magazin:** You're a fan of Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and, as initiator of the "chamber wine of the year", you've tasted lots of Spätburgunder and Frühburgunder along the Ahr river in Germany. What is the state of Pinot Noir in South Africa?

**Podzun:** Pinot Noir is very rare there. For the most part the climate is too hot. Exceptions are the Heemel en Aarde Valley with exceptional Pinot Noir and Chardonnay; as well as Elgin Valley and Robertson Valley with their cooler climates. They are about an hour and a half drive from Cape Town.

**Top Magazin:** What role does South Africa's wine play in Germany?

**Podzun:** Germany is the second-most important export country, after the UK. However, it's mostly ever-

yday wine. It's called "bulk wine" because it's shipped in large containers and then bottled and labelled in Europe. At discounters it's always less than €5. The renowned vineyards have experienced importers and a different customer base.



Podzun mit einer Riesling Raritäten Probe in Südafrika

**Top Magazin:** Does South Africa grow Riesling?

**Podzun:** Riesling is very rare indeed. Neither climate nor soil are suitable. Each year I invite the winemakers to a Riesling rarity wine tasting. I present the latest champion wines from the Vinum Wine Guide and top-ranking sweet rarities and auction wines from the last four decades. Each time it's a real highlight.

**Top Magazin:** Where can we learn more?

**Podzun:** [www.podzun-wein.de](http://www.podzun-wein.de), [www.suedafrika-wein.de](http://www.suedafrika-wein.de)