

Wine of the Week June 30, 2011, 1:46 PM EDT

# The Best South African Wine I've Ever Tasted

**The Anwilka 2005 is like a lush, rich Bordeaux Cab—except it's a Syrah blend from South Africa's Klein Constantia Estate**



When I first put my nose into a glass of this wine, my reaction was, "Ah, Cab ... this is a Bordeaux Cab."

Well, I was about two-thirds right—it is a Cabernet, or primarily so, though I missed the 37 percent of Syrah in the blend, and the Bordeaux connection is very real. Two of the three partners in the project are Bruno Prats, whose family for many years owned Château Cos d'Estournel in the Médoc, and Hubert de Boüard de Laforest of Saint-Émilion's Château Angelus.

I was, however, just a teensy bit off as to the exact geographic location, as the latest wine of the week, the Anwilka 2005 (\$30-\$50), actually comes from the famed Klein Constantia Estate in Constantia, South Africa. O.K., 5,500 miles off, but you get the point.

Prats and de Boüard were looking for a local partner with whom to start producing wine in South Africa and in 1997 teamed up with Klein Constantia's co-owner, Lowell Jooste, to develop the Anwilka vineyard. The result is the best South African wine I have ever tasted.

A little tightly wound at first, the Anwilka had opened up beautifully after an hour. It was mellow, soft, and smoky, with touches of licorice, cocoa, and cinnamon—the Syrah's influence, I expect—set off by bright blackberry and cherry notes.

As de Boüard explains, "This is not a lifestyle venture. We are serious about wine and aim to be a new benchmark of good quality South African red wine." Judging by the Anwilka, they have already set that benchmark—and pretty high it is, too.

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**When to Drink:** Now and for the next five years.

**Breathing/Decanting:** one hour of breathing is essential

**Food Pairing:** Roast meats and game, soft cheeses

**Grapes:** 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Syrah

**Appellation:** Stellenbosch

Region: Stellenbosch

**Country:** South Africa

**Price:** \$30–\$50

[Nick Passmore](#) is an independent wine writer and consultant based in New York. For five years he contributed a widely read monthly wine column to Forbes.com, in addition to which his work has appeared in such publications as *Forbes*, *Discover*, *Town & Country*, the *Robb Report*, the *Wine Enthusiast*, *Saveur*, *Sky*, and *Golf Connoisseur*. He is currently Artisanal Editor for *Four Seasons* magazine and contributes a twice monthly column to BusinessWeek.com. He is also a judge at the widely respected annual Critics' Challenge wine competition.

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