



BROADBENT

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FOOD & WINE

5 Wines From a South African Wine Star

If there's actually a time machine that works, it's wine." That's a quote from Eben Sadie, arguably South Africa's brightest young winemaking talent, and certainly one of its most quotable. The occasion was a vertical tasting recently of Columella, the game-changing Syrah blend that put both Sadie and the Swartland region on the world's wine radar.

Swartland, northwest of Cape Town, is a rugged region with a wide variety of soil types and microclimates—that's what drew Sadie there, together with the fact that "there were no people." Sadie, an outspoken, articulate guy, spends (it seems) about half his time making some of South Africa's

best wines, and the other half looking for ideal places to surf. Columella was a risk when he first produced it, in 2000: The Swartland was effectively unknown, the stylistic approach he was taking was at odds with most South African reds, and he put every penny he had (and more) into the project. "If Columella didn't work, I would have ended up making swimming pools of cheap Sauvignon Blanc, probably," he says.

Luckily, it did work. Here's a snapshot of the Sadie Family Wines portfolio. These wines are expensive, and produced in small quantities, but they are extraordinary examples of South Africa's winemaking potential.

SADIE FAMILY 2013 Skerpioen

Sadie's focus is sourcing grapes from the many decades-old vineyards that survive in Swartland. This full-bodied white comes from a 60-year-old plot planted with Chenin Blanc and Palomino. It's a substantial white, full of spiced apple and mango notes, but the focused acidity keeps it vibrant.

\$45

SADIE FAMILY 2013 Skurfberg

One hundred percent Chenin Blanc—South Africa's premier white grape—this is a savory, complex white with a distinctive aroma somewhere between wet wool and cheese rind (yes: that sounds weird, but it's really gorgeous), and a prickly, mineral finish..

\$45

SADIE FAMILY 2013 'T Voetpad

The third in a trio of terrific whites, this unlikely blend of Semillon, Semillon Gris, Palomino, Chenin Blanc and Muscat comes from a remote old vineyard planted in the early 1900s (clearly by a farmer who liked variety). From the waxy lemon skin aroma to the layers of creamy citrus flavor, it's remarkable stuff..

\$60

SADIE FAMILY 2012 Columella

Exuberant, wild berry flavors with an earthy undertone mark this finely detailed Syrah blend (this is the current release). The wine isn't a powerhouse: That isn't Sadie's style. More, it's a winemaker's attempt to capture the character of a region, in this case the mountain slopes of Swartland.

\$130

SADIE FAMILY 2010 Columella

This isn't the current vintage of Columella, but if you come across a bottle on a restaurant wine list (and are feeling flush with cash) buy it. Sadie says 2010 is his favorite of the vintages he's made, and it's easy to see why. Incredibly fresh, elegant and alive, with bright red fruit notes and a wild floral-lime-berry aroma, it's almost impossible not to drink this now, even when you know it's going to be even better in a few years' time.

\$130