

“Peter-Allan Finlayson is a young winemaker-cum-surfer dude who is fashioning a few barrels of delectable Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in Hemel-en-Aarde. The wines showed dramatic improvement in quality between debut and sophomore vintages, an upward trajectory that should continue as Peter hones his craft. There is a lot of talk about this boutique producer and I suspect it is only a matter of time before someone has the idea to bring them into the US.”

2009 Crystallum The Agnes Chardonnay | RATING: 88 points | PRODUCER:Crystallum
The 2009 The Agnes Chardonnay is a blend of four different vineyards. The nose is lacking a little definition on the nose and needs more vigour. The palate is better with ripe tropical fruit on the entry and a lively, dried apricot and lemon curd tinged finish. Drink now.

2008 Crystallum Peter Max Pinot Noir | RATING: 89 points | PRODUCER:Crystallum
The 2008 Peter Max Pinot Noir is a blend of 50% Elgin and 50% Walker Bay fruit with 15% whole bunch. It has a light red cherry and red currant scented, Burgundian nose. The palate has a soft entry with soft red-berries, citrus peel and a touch of wild strawberry on the soft, elegant finish.

2009 Crystallum Peter Max Pinot Noir | RATING:90 points | PRODUCER:Crystallum
The 2009 Peter Max Pinot Noir shows a marked improvement with a light herbaceous red cherry and red currant fruit on the nose. The palate is soft and seductive on the entry with good acidity and much better fruit concentration than the 2008. Plush and generous on the finish it is understated, refined and beautifully poised. Drink now-2015.

2008 Crystallum Cuvee Cinema Pinot Noir | RATING: 85 points | PRODUCER: Crystallum
Seven barrels were produced of 2008 Cuvee Cinema Pinot Noir and to be honest it is already lacking a little vigour but again, the sophomore vintage is better.

2009 Crystallum Cuvee Cinema Pinot Noir | RATING: 91 points | PRODUCER: Crystallum
The 2009 Cuvee Cinema Pinot Noir has a precise, understated Burgundy-like nose with red cherries and a touch of crushed strawberry. The palate is imbued with silky smooth tannins with good definition and poise, leading to a wonderful finish with just a hint of oyster shell. It is a beautiful Pinot Noir that South Africa should make more of.

2008 Crystallum Clay Shales Chardonnay | RATING: 86 points | PRODUCER:Crystallum
The debut 2008 Clay Shales Chardonnay is sourced from Hemel-en-Aarde ridge north of Ataraxia; whole-bunch pressed and raised in 50% new oak. The nose is little introverted at first and demands some coaxing from the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with creamy oak and good fruit purity, but the oak is too conspicuous on the finish.

2009 Crystallum Clay Shales Chardonnay | RATING: 92 points | PRODUCER:Crystallum
Far better is the 2009 Clay Shales Chardonnay that was raised in barrel for 14 months. Despite struggling through malo, it has better definition on the nose than the 2008 with light hazelnut and almond aromas. The palate is well balanced with touches of vanilla and spice on the entry, and there's good depth with a well-defined, edgy finish that lingers beautifully in the mouth. Drink now-2015.