

HEALTHY DRINKS | Mar 12, 2015

## Is This the Healthiest Wine in the World?

This South African wine has higher antioxidant levels and lower allergy-causing sulfites and tannins because



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If you had any reservations about how healthy wine really is, a vineyard in South Africa is helping to convert even the most skeptical: The [Audacia winery](#) on the Western Cape has developed a wine made from rooibos and honeybush that may be the healthiest we've seen yet. (Don't ruin your glass of red: [5 Red Wine Mistakes You're Probably Making.](#))

Traditionally used for tea, rooibos and honeybush have been grown in the region for centuries. Winery owner

Trevor Strydom took this traditional crop and developed a new way to produce wine that replaces the traditional oak wood with indigenous rooibos and honeybush wood.

Here's the exciting part: that antioxidant-boost red wine is so well-known for is actually *increased* in this South African variety, thanks to the rooibos itself. A [study](#) in *Food Chemistry* found that rooibos is not only rich in antioxidants, but also significantly increases our blood's capacity to absorb the nutrient. This study found this boosts the body's natural defenses too, and [previous studies](#) have linked higher antioxidant levels to reduced risk of certain cancers and heart disease, among other benefits. (Find out more in [What Do You Really Know About Antioxidants?](#))

The higher antioxidant levels also help preserve the wine naturally. This means the rooibos-and-honeybush vino is free of a preservative by-product, sulfites, which is found in most wines. And sulfites cause an allergic reaction in many people. Both plants also have low tannin levels, another compound found in some traditional wines that can irritate people.

As for the most important part—the taste—Audacia describes their vino with words we love to hear regarding any Merlot: a tobacco-like smokiness with hints of vanilla, cherry, and black pepper. And since rooibos tea is already a little fruity, this is a blend we're dreaming of tasting.

The wine is currently only available through the [winery's website](#), but our fingers are crossed it gets picked up by American distributors soon. (Until then, stick to [The Best Wines for Your Waistline.](#))

And the mastermind behind this pumped-up variety, Strydom, is looking beyond just grapes. The unique taste and natural preservation abilities of rooibos and honeybush wood make them ideal for beer and cider as well. That means that the health benefits of all alcohol—at least the non-hard liquor variety—may one day be supercharged. Cheers to that idea!