



Media release

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SHIRAZ SA ANNOUNCES 2021 SHIRAZ CHALLENGE CHAMPIONS

The champions in the 9th annual Shiraz Challenge were revealed in Paarl this week. Held under the auspices of cultivar association, Shiraz SA, the function to announce the winners had to go the online route again this year.

Vinventions SA, global supplier of complete wine closure solutions, was the principal sponsor.

The well-known television personality Marciel Hopkins, acted as hostess and led the online programme. South African rock singer, composer and talk show host, Karen Zoid, was the celebrity guest and had the honour to announce the winners.

The 12 Shiraz wines singled out for 2021 are:

- Cederberg Shiraz 2018
- Driehoek Syrah 2019
- Flagstone Dark Horse Shiraz 2017
- Glen Carlou Syrah 2019
- Kleine Zalze Family Reserve Shiraz 2017
- Kleine Zalze Vineyard Selection Shiraz 2018
- Koelfontein Shiraz 2019
- Landskroon Paul de Villiers Shiraz 2019
- Neil Ellis Groenekloof Syrah 2019
- Rooiberg Winery Shiraz Reserve 2019
- Saronsberg Shiraz 2019
- Stellenbosch Vineyards Credo Shiraz 2018

Runners-up in this category are:

Diemersdal Shiraz 2018, Fairview Beacon Shiraz 2016, Fairview Eenzaamheid Shiraz 2017, Lomond Cat's Tail Shiraz 2019, Rainbow's End Shiraz 2019, Spier Seaward Shiraz 2019, Villion Syrah 2019 and Wellington Wines La Cave Shiraz 2018.

Since 2014 Shiraz blends were included in the competition and a significant increase in entries was seen this year.

The winning Shiraz blends are:

- Anura SMG Reserve 2018
- KWV Roodeberg Dr Charles Niehaus 2018
- Stellenzicht Acheulean Red 2018

The finalists announced in the blend category were:

Alvi's Drift Albertus Viljoen Bismarck 2019, Babylonstoren Babel 2019 and Flagstone Velvet 2017.

Shiraz Rosé winner

As in 2020, the category for rosé drew only a few entries with the three finalist wines all from the 2021 vintage. Villion Family Wines Rosa Rabbedoe Rosé 2021 was crowned the winner with Lyngrove Collection Shiraz Rosé and Saronsberg Shiraz Rosé coming in as runners-up.

New sponsor

One of the leaders in the latest label printing technology, Lebone Paarl Labels, stepped in as new sponsor of the bottle stickers for winning wines. General Manager Henk Jacobs had the following to say: "Lebone Paarl Labels considers it a privilege to be part of this grand event and to be involved with Shiraz SA. Our heartiest congratulations to the winners of 2021".

Judging

The judging panel chaired for the ninth year by Cape Wine Master Dr Andy Roediger, comprised a new line-up of experienced tasters: Frans Smit (Spier Cellar Master), Elzette du Preez (Winemaker and member of the Shiraz SA management team), Richard Kershaw (British Master of Wine and winemaker/owner of Richard Kershaw Wines) and Paul Benadé (Cape Wine Master).

The judging process, developed in conjunction with the University of Stellenbosch and implemented since 2018, was followed. The format eliminates inter-session discussion of wines and requires every judge to taste wines arranged in a unique order.

Wine MS, software and support provider, on board since the inception of the Challenge in 2013, this year put their newly developed cloud-based App for judging and tasting to use for the first time in this competition. Monitoring the entire judging process and auditing the results to ensure the competition's credibility, was auditing company The Exceed Group.

Panel convenor Dr Andy Roediger commented as follows: “The quality of Shiraz wines keeps increasing and this makes it exceedingly difficult to select the winning wines as there are so many excellent wines at the top level. A tendency that has emerged during this year’s judging, is that the wines tend to be more fruit driven, making the differentiation compared to old world wines and other countries more distinctive. Often aromatics come to the forefront rather than the herbaceous character of the old world, yet maintaining a full-bodied mouthfeel. Spiciness is evident and perhaps to my mind the pepper notes were not as evident as years gone by. Lower alcohol levels are also apparent so, in summary the Shiraz wines are of earlier drinking styles than in years gone by.”

National Shiraz Day proclaimed

During the online presentation, chairman of Shiraz SA Edmund Terblanche announced that Shiraz SA has recently decided to proclaim 21 August National Shiraz Day. “International Shiraz Day is 16 February, a date picked for the Northern hemisphere winter, but not ideal for South Africa as this is the height of our summer. August is the perfect opportunity to showcase Shiraz and also to drive our Seven Days of Shiraz & Venison event.”

Asked why the choice fell on 21st August, Terblanche commented “We did a tremendous amount of research around Bernard J Podlashuk, considered the father of South African Shiraz, but with limited information available this was the closest date we could come up with.”

For more information, visit www.ShirazSA.co.za.

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