

Media Release

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VETERANS AND NEWCOMERS EXCEL IN SHIRAZ SA CHALLENGE

Shiraz SA revealed the winners of the 11th annual Shiraz SA Challenge on Thursday 17 August 2023 in Paarl, with veteran winners as well as newcomers that excelled.

The glamorous awards event brought together finalists and wine industry celebrities at Simonsvlei Wine Cellar, the wine icon that recently re-emerged as a brand and lifestyle destination. Tracey Lange, popular radio and television personality, was the master of ceremonies, and musician Schalk Joubert entertained the guests. The main sponsor was Vinventions, the international supplier of closures for wine bottles, which has been involved with Shiraz SA for many years.

SHIRAZ TROPHY HONOURS "AFRICA'S TOP WINE ESTATE"

Shiraz SA awarded the second annual Bernard Podlashuk Shiraz Trophy to **Creation Wines**, along with a cash prize of R30 000, sponsored by Bellingham. This magnificent trophy is named after the "Father of South African Shiraz", Bernard Podlashuk. Together with his wife Fredagh, Podlashuk bought the farm Bellingham in Franschoek in 1943, and they became the pioneers who bottled South Africa's first single-varietal Shiraz in 1956.

In 2022, Saronsberg became the first recipient, in recognition of their performance over the first decade of the Shiraz SA Challenge. This year, all producers were invited to enter with "excellence, innovation, creativity, sustainability, and social responsibility" as criteria. A panel, consisting of Andrew Harris of Bellingham Wines, Francois Haasbroek of Shiraz SA's Management Committee, Dr. Etienne Terblanche of Vinpro, and Prof. Jako Volschenk of Stellenbosch University Business School, assessed the entries. Three finalists were named, with Creation Wines beating two other worthy contenders, Ken Forrester Wines and De Grendel.

THIS YEAR'S WINNERS: FROM SHIRAZ TO BLENDS TO ROSÉ

Sixteen winners were named in the Shiraz SA Challenge's three categories.

The **top 12 Shiraz of 2023** are (in alphabetical order):

- * Anthonij Rupert Cape of Good Hope Riebeeksrivier Syrah 2018
- * Darling Cellars Gustus Shiraz 2021
- * De Grendel Op die Berg Syrah 2021
- * Dewaldt Heyns Weathered Hands Shiraz 2020
- * Diemersdal Syrah 2022
- * Fairview The Beacon Shiraz 2020
- * Flagstone Dark Horse Shiraz 2019
- * Groenland Syrah Premium 2018
- * Kleine Zalze Family Reserve Shiraz 2019
- * Stellenzicht Arenite Syrah 2019
- * Uva Mira The Mira Shiraz 2020
- * Wildeberg Red 2022

The 2023 Shiraz blend winners are:

- * Babylonstoren Babel 2021
- * Flagstone Velvet 2017
- * Quoin Rock Simonsberg Blend 2020

The 2023 Shiraz Rosé winner is:

- * Villion Rosa Rabbedoe Rosé 2023

QUALITY AND VARIATION IMPRESS JUDGES

The well-known cellar master of De Grendel, Charles Hopkins, chaired the judging panel. The team of seasoned tasters joining Hopkins on the panel was Cape Wine Master Dr. Andy Roediger from Stellenbosch University, Cape Wine Master Bennie Howard, vice chairman of the SA National Wine Show Association, Heidi Kritzinger from Kanonkop Wine Estate, Nongcebo Langa, winemaker from Delheim Wines, and Shanice du Preez from De Grendel, as protégée.

According to Hopkins, the quality and variation of this year's entries stood out: "We experienced clever use of oak and more fruit-driven flavours. The uniqueness of single-vineyard Shiraz and the variety of terroir were noteworthy."

The tasting system, developed in collaboration with Stellenbosch University, stipulates that each judge tastes the wines in a unique order and does not enter into any discussions. The software and support provider Wine MS assisted the judges, and the auditing firm Exceed Group checked the process and verified the results. Crystal Direct sponsored glasses ideal for tasting Shiraz and Lebone Paarl Labels provided the bottle seals for the winning wines. As usual, some of the wines that were not used were donated to the Pebbles Project.

ON 21 AUGUST, CELEBRATE NATIONAL SHIRAZ DAY

Shiraz SA invites all fans of the cultivar to celebrate national Shiraz Day nationwide on Monday 21 August. "August is the perfect time of year for our annual Seven Days of Shiraz and Venison in collaboration with participating members," says Edmund Terblanche, Chairman of Shiraz SA. "Reserve your place to make sure you don't miss out on this experience."

Visit www.ShirazSA.co.za for all the results and more information. Join the conversation on social media with #ShirazSAwards and follow Shiraz SA on Twitter @Shiraz_SA, Facebook @ShirazSouthAfrica, and Instagram @shirazsouthafrica.