

## **Moldova, Hungary and Slovenia win Best in Show as The Balkans & Eastern Europe take record medal haul at the Decanter World Wine Awards 2020**

*After a challenging year for the global wine industry, there's finally reason to raise a glass!*

**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020:** There's perhaps never been a time the global wine industry has been so hard hit, but the world's largest and most influential wine competition is giving reason to celebrate with the release of its 2020 results. After completing judging under strict Covid safety guidelines that included innovations such as proximity lanyards and bespoke disposable spittoons, the Decanter World Wine Awards has today announced its 2020 winners.

Now in its 17th year, the 2020 competition has seen a rise in successes from lesser-known wine producing regions such as the The Balkans and Eastern Europe, which showcased their impressive quality and value for money to earn a staggering 975 medals. Classic regions in France, Italy, Spain, the USA, and Australia once again performed well.

During the judging month, 116 expert wine judges, including 37 Masters of Wine and nine Master Sommeliers, tasted and debated the merits of 16,518 wines from 56 countries. Only a total of 50, just 0.3% of all wines entered, were awarded the highly sought-after accolade of "Best in Show", of which The Balkans and Eastern Europe collected four.

In Eastern Europe, the historic wines of Moldova had a standout year, collecting one Best in Show - awarded to the wines that exhibit the utmost quality for under £14.99 retail per bottle - the **Asconi Winery Sol Begru Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 2019**. Moldova also picked up another Best in Show for **Purcari Viorica de Purcari 2019** made from 100% Viorica, a local variety considered the symbol of Moldovan white wine. In addition to this, Moldova won one Platinum, three Gold, 36 Silver and 55 Bronze.

Hungary was awarded Best in Show for **Juliet Victor Édes 2017**, a Szamorodni sweet wine from the Tokaj region, as well as a country-best five Platinum, 12 Gold, 40 Silver and 66 Bronze. Slovenia completed the quartet with **Primorska Goriška Brda 2015** collecting the final Best in Show.

Other regions that increased their medal haul include Croatia, picking up three Platinum medals for its dry white wines (**Cattunar Nono 4 Terre 2015**, **Kozlović Selekcija Malvazija 2017**, **Kutjevo Graševina de Gotho 2018**) as well as 11 Gold, 68 Silver and 88 Bronze. Czechia was awarded two Platinum medals for Rieslings from the Moravia region, in addition to four Gold, 27 Silver, 79 Bronze, with wines awarded medals up 31% from 2019. Bosnia and Herzegovina won two Gold medals after collecting only Silver and Bronze last year, and Serbia almost doubled the number of wines awarded with a medal in 2020, collecting an impressive Platinum for **Erdevik Omnibus Lector Chardonnay 2015**, as well as three Gold, 26 Silver and 59 Bronze.

Romania also collected a gold for **Cramele Recas Wildflower Pinot Grigio 2019**, as did Bulgaria for **Angel's Estate Stallion Classic 2018** from the Thracian Valley and Montenegro for **Plantaže Pro Corde Vranac 2016**.

Regional Chair for Northern & Eastern Europe, Caucasus & The Balkans Beth Willard comments, "I think that there's an overall improvement in the quality of the flights overall, mainly because the wines are really balanced and fresh, but showing incredible varietal character so that's really exciting. It's really great to see some of the reds from Eastern Europe so countries like Moldova, Romania and Hungary showing a lot more freshness and really great quality oak. The wines are a lot more balanced, so we've had some standout wines from those regions."

Andrew Jefford, Co-Chair says, "The Decanter World Wine Awards really helps producers to raise their profile internationally. It can do the same for wine-producing regions and nations, too. Our judging system - including re-tasting of all Golds, with possible promotion to Platinum - is something we are very proud of. We explain it as often as we can. So, when consumers see a DWWA sticker on a bottle, be it Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze, they can be reassured that the wine in question has been judged by regional experts and specialists before receiving its medal. We discuss, we argue, we fight it out...that's all part of the judging fun. Even with social distancing! But that's also how you get the results which have made the DWWA an international wine benchmark."

After much uncertainty on whether the awards could take place this year, Decanter was meticulous in its approach and innovation to ensure the judging went ahead, introducing strict safety measures, including temperature checks on the door, PPE for all judges and staff, disposable spittoons with antibacterial powder that solidifies with liquid and is later incinerated, proximity tags worn on lanyards that vibrate when you are less than two metres from another person, and isolated tasting areas with designated facilities.

Co-Chair Sarah Jane Evans MW comments, "The competition has been terrific, it has been a perfect atmosphere to taste and judge this year. After months of lockdown and uncertainty everyone has been delighted to be back again, working together, sharing ideas and thoughts, and above all, focused on picking out the great wines from this year. There have been some wonderful discoveries. As ever the Best in Show day was tough, narrowing down to 50 top wines".

A full list of winners can be viewed online at <http://awards.decanter.com/DWWA>

**ENDS**

The Decanter World Wine Awards Co-chairs and key spokespeople are available for interviews, please use the contact details below to arrange.

### **Notes to Editors**

In Eastern Europe, Moldova came out on top, winning two Best in Show, one Platinum, three Gold, 36 Silver and 55 Bronze. Hungary collected one Best in Show, five Platinum, 12 Gold, 40 Silver and 66 Bronze, and Czechia collecting two Platinum medals, four Gold, 27 Silver, 79 Bronze, with wines awarded up 31% from 2019. Romania also performed well, with 75% of wine submitted awarded with a medal, one Gold, 21 Silver and 57 Bronze in total.

The Balkans was awarded 562 medals in total, including one Best in Show, eight Platinum, 25 Gold, 198 Silver and 330 Bronze. 33% of these medals were won by Slovenia, including the Best in Show, with Croatia collecting three Platinum as well as 11 Gold, 68 Silver and 88 Bronze. Serbia took home one Platinum, three Gold, 26 Silver and 59 Bronze, and Montenegro had a notable performance with one Gold, eight Silver and three Bronze.

Launched in 2004, the Decanter World Wine Awards is the world's largest and most influential wine competition.

The 2020 awards introduced new innovations, including bespoke disposable spittoons and proximity lanyards, to ensure Covid safety guidelines were adhered to in Decanter's first socially distanced judging month, held at the Future Plc offices in Canary Wharf. A panel of 116 expert wine judges blind-tasted 16,518 wines from 56 countries over four consecutive weeks in August.

Only a total of 50 wines were awarded the highly sought-after accolade of "Best in Show", and the four-week tasting culminated in 178 Platinum, 537 Gold, 5,234 Silver and 7,508 Bronze medals being given out.

Full details on the judging process can be found on [www.decanter.com/decanter-awards/](http://www.decanter.com/decanter-awards/).

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