

## South Africa boosts medal success by 16% year-on-year 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 South & Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, which showcased their impressive quality and value for money. 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", one of which was awarded to **Rustenberg Five Soldiers Chardonnay 2018**, hailing from Simonsberg-Stellenbosch.

With overall results up 16% compared to 2019, South Africa had more medals to celebrate – in addition to the one Best in Show, it picked up four Platinum, 31 Gold, 364 Silver and 136 Bronze medals.

Notably, Stellenbosch produced around one third of the wines that won medals in 2020, but Cape Agulhas, a small wine-producing region on the southern tip of South Africa, 170km from Cape Town, also impressed the judges' palates. The greater-region won medals with all seven of its entries, including one Platinum for the **Ghost Corner Wild Ferment Sauvignon Blanc 2018** hailing from Elim, as well as one Gold, three Silver and two Bronze medals.

South Africa's other three Platinum medals came from different regions on the Western Cape. The famed **Klein Constantia Vin de Constance 2016**, a 100% Muscat de Frontignan, was one of only 22 sweet wines awarded a Platinum medal in 2020. The other wines awarded were **Cape Doctor 'The Red' 2015**, a Cabernet Sauvignon blend from Stellenbosch, and **Paul Cluver Seven Flags Chardonnay 2018** from Elgin.

Other highlights include Constantia's **Uitsig Sémillon 2018**, which was also the only Sémillon-dominated wine from South Africa to pick up a Gold medal, and **Boschendal Reserve**

**Collection Vin d'Or 2017**, which was awarded a Gold medal for a sweet white blend of Weisser Riesling and Viognier.

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 that were put in place, 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 with other hazardous waste, 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**

South Africa increased its overall results 16% compared to 2019, collecting one Best in Show, four Platinum, 31 Gold, 364 Silver and 136 Bronze medals.

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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