



A YEAR OF SURPRISES AND SUCCESS FOR EMERGING REGIONS IN EUROPE AT DECANTER WORLD WINE AWARDS 2023

Indigenous varieties and traditional winemaking techniques have helped fuel success across the Balkans, Caucasus and North-eastern Europe at Decanter World Wine Awards 2023

7 JUNE: After two weeks of rigorous judging in London, the full results from Decanter World Wine Awards 2023 are released today. It's clear from assessing the results that the world of wine does not stand still. There was a panoply of newsworthy awards from up-and-coming winemaking countries and regions across the Balkans, and emerging parts of East and Northeast Europe – including a first-ever Platinum awarded to a fortified wine from Ukraine.

This year, the Decanter World Wine Awards (DWWA) celebrates its 20th year. Since its inception two decades ago, DWWA has consolidated its reputation as the largest and most influential wine competition in the world, acclaimed for its rigorous judging process. Over the course of two weeks in April and May, 236 judges (including 16 Master Sommeliers and 53 Masters of Wine) from 30 countries tasted, debated and compared the relative merits of 18,250 wines from 57 countries, making this year's competition the largest yet.

As well as the largest, it was also one of the most interesting for wine lovers who value a sense of discovery. Andrew Jefford, Co-Chair of the DWWA commented:

"You look at other newer regions like the Balkans, from where we get terrifically good entries. Increasingly we see real literacy of winemaking coming from it and similar regions, so that is very exciting to monitor."

Co-Chair Ronan Sayburn MS pointed to both Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, highlighting a particular variety from Georgia:

"A grape variety that consumers should know about? Saperavi, a Georgian-Russian grape that makes very dark, very opaque, densely coloured wines, with lots of fruit and that lasts a long time".

With one Platinum and eight Gold medals, **Georgia's** performance was up on last year's, and showed the quality of indigenous varieties, such as Saperavi. The Platinum went to a 100% Saperavi, **Kakhuri Gvinis Marani, Kakheti, Mukuzani 2020**, described by the judges as "focused and elegant."

Of Georgia's eight Gold medals – four were fermented in traditional qvevri (earthenware vessels) which are becoming more popular among winemakers throughout (and beyond) Europe. Also this year, a first-ever Gold for a sparkling wine from Georgia – and a red Saperavi at that: **Badagoni, Maestro Saperavi, Kakheti 2021**.



With just 50 wines across the entire competition awarded Best in Show, **Serbia** made headlines with a first-ever win in this prestigious category for **Vinarija Vinčić, Grašac, Srem, Fruška Gora 2020**, in addition to five Golds. The Grašac variety is known elsewhere as Laški Riesling, Welschriesling and Riesling Italico and the judges enjoyed this carefully crafted wine, describing it as “pure, long and refined”.

Elsewhere in the Balkans, **Croatia** won 44 more medals compared to last year – nine more Golds, 18 more Silvers and 20 more Bronze compared to 2022. The majority of the wines awarded were white single-varietal wines although 10 orange wines were awarded medals, including a Gold from **Srednja i Južna Dalmacija**, reflecting the growing interest (and quality) in this category. **Slovenia** had its best-ever Gold and Silver performance with 12 Gold medals and 80 Silver, signifying an overall increase in quality.

Hungary claimed three Platinum medals, all based on Furmint from the Tokaji region; one sweet and two dry styles. Famed sweet Tokaji Aszú is not new to the competition's top medal charts, but Furmint's rendition as a dry wine has seen a steady increase in interest globally, and a look at results suggests quality is on the rise too. Both awarded 97 points, **Oremus' Mandolás Tokaji Furmint 2020** was described by the judges as “vibrant and well layered, with a very long saline finish” while **Tokaj-Hétszőlő's Selection 2011** impressed with a “developed nose showing honeyed and waxy aromas and ripe citrus.”

Ukraine is well worth mention too, winning its first-ever Platinum medal (out of just 125 globally) for **Shabo, Limited Edition Muscat Ottonel, Odessa 2016**, a fortified wine from Odessa. In winemaking terms, this country is thriving with 23 more medals compared to last year.

DWWA Co-Chair Michael Hill Smith MW commented:

“Decanter World Wine Awards has evolved through time, but it's still kept to its core principle of regions being judged by regional specialists. What I've really enjoyed is that mixture of the old and the bold. There's a nice mixture of experience and enthusiasm and youth.”

Visit awards.decanter.com for a full list of winners.

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The Decanter World Wine Awards Co-Chairs and key spokespeople are available for interviews. Please use the contact details below for more information:

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Notes to editors:

Serbia was awarded a total of one Best in Show, five Gold, 38 Silver and 59 Bronze medals. The Best in Show winner is:

- Vinarija Vinčić, Grašac, Fruška Gora, Srem 2020

Hungary was awarded a total of three Platinum, 11 Gold, 54 Silver and 78 Bronze medals. The Platinum winners are:

- Gizella Winery, Tokaj 2019
- Oremus, Mandolás Furmint, Tokaj 2020
- Tokaj-Hétszőlő, Selection, Tokaj 2011

Georgia was awarded a total of one Platinum, eight Gold, 34 Silver and 66 Bronze medals. The Platinum winner is:

- Kakhuri Gvinis Marani, Mukuzani, Kakheti 2020

Ukraine was awarded a total of one Platinum, 13 Silver and 23 Bronze medals. The Platinum winner is:

- Shabo, Limited Edition Muscat Ottonel, Odessa 2016

Elsewhere, Croatia won 25 Gold medals; Slovenia 12 Gold medals; Moldova four Gold medals; Bosnia and Herzegovina four Gold medals; Bulgaria five Gold medals; and North Macedonia won two Gold medals.

About DWWA

Launched in 2004 and now in its 20th year, the Decanter World Wine Awards (DWWA) is the world's largest and most influential wine competition.

Decanter - the world's leading wine media brand - has a trusted relationship with an international audience of both consumers and trade that sets DWWA apart from other competitions. Sustainability is a key focus for the DWWA team. All plastic and cardboard is collected and recycled, while every bottle is crushed and remelted, ready to be remade into usable glass within 30 days. All leftover wine is also collected, recycled and sold back into the national grid as gas.

About Decanter

Decanter is the world's leading wine media brand with a total monthly reach in excess of 2 million via its print, digital and social channels. It has a unique place in the world wine market, with authoritative tastings and highly knowledgeable expert contributors making it a must-read, both online and in its high-quality monthly print magazine. Decanter was launched in 1975, making it one of the publishing world's enduring success stories.