

MICHELANGELO AWARDS

By Edo Heyns

CHARDONNAY comeback AT MICHELANGELO AWARDS

The judicious use of oak on Chardonnay made this somewhat beleaguered white wine the star performer at the CCL Labels Michelangelo International Wine Awards. Out of 102 Chardonnay entries, six Grand D'Or, 12 gold and 15 silver medals were awarded.



top: Sweet wine gurus Henri Swiegers and Willie Burger with Lorraine Immelman.
left: Rafeek Evans from CCI Label Cape & Franck Malassigne from Marianne Estate.
right: Top producer Diemersdal's Thys Louw and Mari van der Merwe.



THE panel of 15 international judges commented that South African winemakers had upped the standard of this varietal, with Chardonnays from across the winelands showing well at the competition.

Under the chairmanship of South African born Aussie, Sue van Wyk CWM, the judges came from across the globe. Several winemakers commented that the competition should follow the example set by the Old Mutual Trophy Wine Show, by organising a proper judges' feedback session, whereby the industry could benefit from the comments and suggestions made by the panel. Although the list of judges is freely distributed, very little information is given about the background and credentials of its members.

The CCL Label Grand Prix Trophy – which is awarded to the best rated wine at the Show – went to Marianne Estate in Paarl for the Shiraz 2007. This variety again boasted the most entries and medals.

Diemersdal was awarded the Grotto Trophy for the top producer at the show.

A record increase in Sauvignon Blanc entries did not proportionally yield the expected accolades. Comments included that the 2010 vintage did not match the quality of 2009 and that a lack of acid balance was a common shortfall.

Renewed confidence in the potential of Pinotage was reflected by the results of this category. From a total of 87 entries, two Grand D'Or, eight gold and 23 silver medals were awarded.

Badsberg – a regular standout at the SA Young Wine Show – successfully made the step-up to a bottled wine competition, winning Grand D'Or for the 2005 and 2009 Noble Late Harvest, as well as its natural sweet, Badsberg Badlese 2009.

This year, 240 producers entered a total of 1 310 wines, of which 426 received medals. A total of 28 Grand D'Or, 116 gold medals and 282 silver medals were awarded. In line with OIV standards, no more than 30% of entries are awarded medals.

The traditional gala evening has made way for an award ceremony held over an extended luncheon, still at the Lord Charles Hotel. Organiser Lorraine Immelman boasted that three million Michelangelo stickers – a major income source for the competition – were sold last year.

Other trophies:

RX South Africa Most Innovative Wine on Show Trophy:

Blaauwklippen Zinfandel Noble Late Harvest 2009

The Grotto 2010 Top Producer Trophy: Diemersdal Wine Estate, Durbanville

The Organic Trophy: La Motte Pierneef Sauvignon Blanc 2009

Good Taste Garagiste Trophy: Mount Vernon Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

The Sue van Wyk Pinotage Trophy: Altydgedacht Pinotage 2009

Toneleria Magrenan Brandy Trophy: KVV 20 Year Old Potstill Brandy

Golden Oldie Trophy: Anura Vineyards Shiraz Mouvédre Reserve 2003

Dessert Wine Trophy: Badsberg Noble Late Harvest 2005

Grand D'Or medals:

Altydgedacht Pinotage 2009

Anura Shiraz Mourvèdre Reserve 2003

Anura Chardonnay Limited Release 2009

Badsberg Noble Late Harvest 2009

Badsberg Noble Late Harvest 2005

Badsberg Badlese 2009

Bloemendal Sauvignon Blanc 2009

Bonnievale Cellar Chardonnay 2010

Dieu Donné Merlot 2008

Dunstone Shiraz 2008

Grand Provence Chardonnay 2009

Groote Post Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2009

Hoopenburg Chardonnay 2007

Journey's End Chardonnay 2008

Journey's End Merlot 2007

Kranskop Chardonnay 2008

Leopard Frog Vineyards Spellbinding

Chenin Blanc 2006-2009 vintage blend

Marianne Shiraz 2007

Mischa Merlot 2009

Mount Vernon Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

Nederburg Private Bin Eminence 2009

Neil Joubert Shiraz 2002

Perdeberg Rex Equus Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

Saronsberg Provenance Red 2008

Saronsberg Shiraz 2007

Swartland Blanc de Noir 2010

Welgegund Pinotage 2009

Zorgvliet Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 