

South Africa's Top 12 Shirazes

The Shiraz SA Challenge Top 12 competition has chosen South Africa's top 12 Shirazes—a great representation of SAs current taste profile of the wine

Is Shiraz South Africa's most popular red? An indication of the wine's increasing popularity can be gained from its growth in local production—from 50 labels in 1992 to more than 700 today.

Shiraz is also growing internationally: the biggest single category of medal winners at both the recent Decanter Wine Awards and Concours Mondial was Shiraz. People enjoy the wine for its freshness, good fruit and easy accessibility. And South Africa seems ideally suited to the variety. So it is fitting that something be done about bringing South African versions of the wine to the attention of an even wider audience. Enter the SA Shiraz Challenge.

About the Shiraz SA Challenge:

Earlier this year entries were called for and 148 wines came from all over the winelands, a large proportion from Stellenbosch, Paarl and Robertson—not surprising, when you consider the general distribution of wine producers—and the vintages ranged from 2004 to 2012. The wines were tasted blind, with no regional or vintage information supplied.

After three days of tasting and mulling, 20 of the best were chosen. The consensus of the panel was that

the wines, generally, showed attractive elegance and freshness, good fruit expression and balanced oaking. There were relatively few faults, not many over-ripe clumsy styles, or wines with high alcohol or over-oaking or wines with brett. The winners, particularly, had moved away from the tarry, smoky, very ripe styles that represented the local product in the past. There was also a nice divergence of styles. Where Viognier was blended in, it was done with restraint, adding character to the wine.

Out of the 20, only 12 were selected as winners. Why 12 and not one overall winner? “Our rationale was that there is such a wide spectrum of styles being produced locally that one single wine cannot possibly be representative of South African Shiraz,” says Edmund Terblanche, chairman of Shiraz SA. “Besides, a 12 bottle case just makes so much more sense when it comes to packaging and marketing,” he adds.

The high quality of wines and the participation from such a wide spectrum of Shiraz producers bodes well for the future of the competition: it is clearly an event that is going to grow in the future. **GT**

The 12 Winning Wines:

Boschkloof Syrah 2011

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Cloof The Very Sexy Shiraz 2011

Robertson Winery's Constitution

Road Shiraz 2010

D'Aria SV Shiraz 2010

Driehoek Shiraz 2010

La Bri Syrah 2010

Laborie Jean Taillefert Shiraz 2011

Landskroon Paul de Villiers Shiraz 2011

Rainbow's End Shiraz 2011

Rooiberg Shiraz Reserve 2011

Stark-Condé Three Pines Syrah 2010



How to Get the Wines

Availability of the pack of winning wines is necessarily limited by the restricted production of the smaller producers. But you can assure yourself of a case of all 12 wines by ordering it now from the Wine-of-the-Month Club, the competition's exclusive distributors.

R1 649 for a 12-bottle case. To order your case, call 086-111-9463 or email orders@wineofthemonth.co.za.