

Michelangelo International Wine & Spirits Awards honours SA's top producers

The 2020 Michelangelo International Wine & Spirits Awards has honoured 24 of South Africa's top producers. During an informal presentation held at Grand Roche in Paarl - in lieu of the usual annual awards ceremony - 21 trophies were handed out, together with three special Grand Prix awards.



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Top awards

The Multi Color Corporation Grand Prix trophy for the highest scoring entry went to Franschhoek producer Chamonix for their outstanding 2018 Chardonnay.

This wine was also awarded the Bidvest Premier Lounge Chardonnay Trophy.

The second Multi Color Corporation Grand Prix trophy, which is awarded annually to the highest scoring dessert wine, went to Aan de Doorns Wine Farm for a 2017 Red Muscat. Aan de Doorns walked away with a Platinum medal for their 2015 Muscat D` Alexandrie too.

Lastly, the Grand Prix trophy, sponsored by Kuehne & Nagel for the Highest Scoring Spirits, went to Stellenbosch-based producer, Louiesenhof, for their Le Roux Smit Alambic 16-Year-Old Potstill Brandy.

This special brandy was produced and named in honour of Louiesenhof's former owner, Stefan Smit, who was murdered on the farm in 2019, and for master distiller and brandy legend, Jos le Roux. The brandy was also awarded the 2020 Brandy Trophy, sponsored by African Cellar Suppliers.

New lifestyle category winners

Awards also went to two newcomers on the spirits scene, each of whom took home a trophy and a Medal of Distinction.

Cape Town-based Doña Distillery's Ready to Drink Harry Bitter Orange Spritz won the trophy in the competition's new category for Ready to Drink products, considered to be the fastest-growing beverage segment worldwide. Doña Distillery's Mahala Non-alcoholic Botanical Spirit was also awarded a Medal of Distinction.

L-Gin Craft Gin, a relative newcomer to the Elgin Valley, scored the 2020 Gin Trophy for their classic L-Gin Plush gin, while their L-Gin Gin-on-the-Go bag-in-box stole the limelight in the Alternate Packaging category with a Medal of Distinction.

Three producers awarded trophies

De Grendel was awarded the Kuehne & Nagel Pinot Noir Trophy for their outstanding Op die Berg Pinot Noir 2017, as well as a Platinum medal for their De Grendel 2018 Shiraz, while Aan de Doorns not only scooped the Spirits Grand Prix, but a Platinum medal too for their 2015 Muscat D'Alexandrie.

Diemersdal Wine Estate's Thys Louw excelled once again by winning the Tsogo Sun Hotels Sauvignon Blanc Trophy with his ground-breaking 2020 Winter Ferment Sauvignon Blanc while also being awarded a Platinum medal for the 2019 Diemersdal Pinotage.

Overcoming challenges

Despite the trials brought about by the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, the Michelangelo Awards - which celebrate their 25th anniversary year next year – managed to attract 1565 wine and spirits entries.

This included some 100 entries from Namibia, France, the UK, Australia, Moravia and Slovakia. Level 3 lockdown regulations which were in place at the time of the judging, restricted the transport of alcohol which resulted in special arrangements having to be made to ensure the samples were delivered in time at the Michelangelo warehouse and tasting venue.

Thirteen local judges - among them nine Cape Wine Masters – managed to taste their way through the entries for six days in August, judging the entries under the watchful eye of technical director, Dr Winnie Bowman.

Ultimately, a total of 615 awards were bestowed, consisting of 21 trophies, seven Special Awards, 24 Platinum, 89 Double Gold, 363 Gold and 111 Silver medals.

For an entry to receive a Platinum medal, it has to achieve at least 96 points, while a Double Gold medal requires 93 points, a Gold medal 89 points and a Silver 86.

Lorraine Immelman, founder and organiser of the awards, says: "These are very high standards to strive for, but exactly the reason why a Michelangelo medal is considered an outstanding achievement. In addition, only approximately one third of all entries are awarded, making a Michelangelo award even more unique and sought-after."

[View the full list of winners.](#)

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