

Nederburg Auction 2013 proves "less is more"

The 2013 Nederburg Auction saw an unprecedented 91% increase in the price paid per litre of wine - confirming that the event's increased focus on quality is paying off. The annual event was held at Nederburg in Paarl at the weekend.



Organisers of South Africa's premier fine wine auction say the increase comes on top of a further overall income result of R4,38 million - more than double the amount expected due to reduced volumes on auction.

"We are delighted that the lowering of volumes, brought about by a tough selection panel, paid off," said auction manager Dalene Steyn. "The rand per litre is up and that's a direct result of our tighter auction offering. This is not isolated, as the increase is consistent from lot to lot, with a 91.8% premium attained on reserve prices."

Wine categories

The average price per litre achieved this year was R354.64, compared to R184.78 in 2012.

Highlights included the highest price of R22,000, paid by Next International of Nigeria for three 750ml bottles of Zonnebloem Cabernet 1973. Other standout prices achieved included R17,000 paid for a single case of 6 x 750ml bottles of the Monis Collectors Port (Double Stamp Collection) 1948, R8500 paid for one case (6 x 750ml) of the Kanonkop Cabernet Sauvignon 1997, and R7000 paid for one case (6 x 750ml) of the De Krans Vintage Reserve Port 1993.

Distell MD Jan Scannell said that he was very pleased to see a 4.7% increase in wine sales to Africa, accounting for 28.7% (R1,249,200) of the total auction turnover.

In terms of international sales, which contributed 8.3% (R360,600) of total sales, the biggest contribution came from the United Arab Emirates, accounting for R219,150.

A complete price per litre summary, including comparisons by category, will be published on the Nederburg Auction website shortly.

Well-read buyers

"What was clearly apparent from the Nederburg Auction this year is that the buyers were far more informed, knew exactly what they wanted to buy and were prepared to competitively bid on lots. The result was a consistently high top average selling price, with prices for individual cases in lots rarely varying by more than a few hundred rands. This was a clear affirmation of consistent quality across the board," said Steyn.

She further added that the tighter selection this year resulted in a much stronger line-up. Since this was a completely blind tasting, quality, and only quality, determined inclusion in the auction line-up. "If a wine made it to the auction, it was worthy of the auction seal of approval. However, not all of the smaller producers attained the prices they deserved, that could be attributed to a lack of self-promotion."

Francois Rautenbach, buyer for the Singita Game Reserve, commented that the solution is twofold: "Be visible, and prepare by putting aside something special that offers a genuine sense of exclusivity." Keynote speaker Joe Roberts reinforced this statement in his keynote address, where he highlighted the fact that producers need to tell and sell a story.

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