

2014 Klink Awards winners revealed

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14 Nov 2014

A consumer-driven competition, the Klink Awards aims not only to recognise the profound impact of wine and its production, but the exceptional achievements of the South African wine tourism industry. Winners of this year's awards were revealed at a gathering at Silvermist Wine Estate in Constantia, Cape Town on Thursday, 13 November 2014.



Launched in 2012 by Monika Elias, publisher of *The Wine Tourism Handbook*, the awards recognises and honours industry innovation and shines the spotlight on the sector's significant contribution to the Western Cape's GDP and job creation. Unlike other wine awards, the judges are the customers themselves who were called to vote on the website or through its Facebook or Twitter feeds.

This year there was a total of 79 award nominees - pre-selected by a panel - across 16 categories.

And the winners are...

The 'Crowd Pleaser' Award for Best Wine Route Event - Franschhoek Bastille Festival

This award goes to the most popular wine route event on the annual Winelands calendar - an event that draws repeat visitors year after year, helps to build a regional wine brand and market a specific wine route destination.

The 'Happy Times' Award for Most Memorable Wine Route - Franschhoek Wine Valley

This award goes to the most popular wine route selected by wine tourists who cherish memories of their experience of a particular wine region because of its ambience, accessibility, scenic beauty, soul, sense of community, family tradition and heritage, warmth, friendliness, culinary offerings, etc. These criteria all go into the memory mix.

The 'Wild Card' Award for Most Unusual Attraction on a Wine Route - Game Drives at Groote Post

Celebrating the most unusual and memorable attraction on a wine farm, this award is for a destination that offers a unique selling point attracting wine tourists to the cellar-door - from wine and river cruises to vintage motorcar and heritage museums.

The 'Family Day Out' Award for Best Child-Friendly Venue on a Wine Farm - Blaauwklippen Family Market

This award goes to a wine farm where you can take the whole family and the kids are taken care of in a safe environment. There must be something for everyone here. The adults can relax and enjoy their wine experience - while a kids' menu, special kids' activities or a kids' playground for all ages keeps everyone happy on a day out in the Winelands.

The 'Connoisseur' Award for Best Cellar Tasting Experience - Waterford Estate

This award goes to the cellar which offers the best vintage wine tasting experience. Criteria include the welcome and wine knowledge of staff, the use of the correct glasses, the condition of wine samples, the range of vintage wine releases available, the availability of vertical flights of flagship wines and the range of unique wines available at cellar door only.

The 'Heritage' Award for Welcoming Cellar Door Experience - Weltevrede Wine Estate

This award acknowledges a family wine farm that offers the warmest country welcome. One that retains the authenticity of its Cape heritage while investing in a cellar-door experience and goes out of its way to make a visit to the cellar door a special experience - making wine tourists feel they are sharing in the special family heritage of the farm and the Winelands

The 'Tread Gently' Award for Most Green Wine Farm - Villiera

The wine farm that sets the standard for green, planet-friendly farming practices in terms of sustainable viticulture and wine production, biodiversity and conservation initiatives, as well as organic or biodynamic viticulture is celebrated with this award.

The 'Delicious Deli' Award for Best Deli on a Wine Farm - Fairview Wine Farm

These days, cellar-door delis sell all manner of goodies: estate olives and olive oils, artisanal breads, cheeses and charcuterie, boutique chocolates and nougat, organic vegetables, farm honey, jams, pickles and picnic baskets. This award recognises the top cellar-door deli, one that tempts wine tourists with an authentic range of traditional and contemporary Winelands produce grown on the farm or sourced locally from artisanal producers.

The 'Comfort Zone' Award for casual dining on a Wine Farm - Towerbosch Restaurant at Knorhoek

This award goes to the best casual dining or café style venues in the Cape Winelands. The best venue combines quality fare, setting and service without all the frills of silver service. We were looking for venues that source local, artisanal farm produce and showcase good food and wine in an informal, relaxed style as well as offer value-for-money on own wines and wines served by the glass.

The 'Beyond Expectations' Award for Great Food and Excellent Wine - Harvest at Laborie

Situated between our Klink awards for casual dining-style, country cuisine and fine dining, this award is for a Winelands restaurant in the mid-price category that serves seriously good food and excellent wine, attracting foodies by raising the bar and presenting local garden and winelands produce with passion and contemporary culinary style.

The 'Gourmand' Award for Best Gourmet Restaurant at the Cellar Door - The Restaurant at Waterkloof

This award goes to the best of the best cellar-door restaurants in the Cape Winelands - those gastronomic destinations with signature chefs who create cuisine on the cutting edge to attract domestic and foreign wine tourists. We were looking for restaurants which pay great attention to detail in terms of an overall cellar-door experience, have a great location, first class service, a focus on artisanal and local Winelands produce, seasonal menus, tasting menus which expertly pair food and wine, a sommelier service and a wine list which showcases older vintages, own wines and/or regional wines at the cellar door.

The 'Yin and Yang' Award for Best food and wine pairing at the Cellar Door - Creation

Wines

These days' cellar doors tempt wine tourists with special food and wine pairings at the cellar tasting centre - from biltong, nuts, dried fruits and wine to cheese, chocolate, and nougat and gourmet canapé tasting platters. We went looking for the best Winelands experiences in the art of food and wine pairing over the tasting counter. Note: This category excludes formal restaurant pairing menus.

The 'Spoil Me' Award for Best Accommodation on a Wine Farm - Rosendal Winery and Wellness Retreat

This award goes to the best of the best, from exclusive five star hotels, luxury guest house, boutique style accommodation or Cape Manor House on a wine farm. Criteria include the highest standards in terms of location, style, service, quality and comfort, facilities, and add on attractions such as a restaurant or spa.

The 'Country Comfort' Award for Accommodation on a Wine Farm - Dunstone Guava Cottage

The winner of this category offers self-catering accommodation on a wine farm that promises a relaxed and comfortable stay. The winning venue will capture the romance of a wine farm getaway and offer the facilities of home but the luxury of going away.

Brand New Cellar Door Attractions - Silvermist Wine Estate

The winner of this category has launched a new winery or winelands experience in the last 12 months. This award is for a new wine farm offering or experience, a new wine farm, restaurant or accommodation that adds to the full South African wine tourism offering.

The 'Tracks & Trails' Award for Best for Outdoor Vineyard Adventures - Van Loveren Fish Eagle hiking trail

This award goes to the most memorable outdoors experience that requires wine lovers to expend some energy on a spectacularly scenic vineyard hike, a challenging wine farm bike trail or a spirited wine route horse ride. Each outdoor adventure must also reward the hiker, biker or rider with a wine tasting experience or more.

For more, go to www.klinkawards.co.za

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