

## 2013 Bollinger Exceptional Wine Service Award winner

Kayetan Meissner, sommelier at Bosman's Restaurant at the Grande Roche Hotel in Paarl, is the winner of the Bollinger Exceptional Wine Service Award 2013. He received the Riedel Glass Trophy and a trip to France including a visit to the Champagne House of Bollinger. The prize includes airfare and accommodation in Champagne.



Kayetan Meissner, winner of The Bollinger Exceptional Wine Service Award 2013, proudly shows off the Riedel Glass Trophy.

After a testing morning of written exams and a blind tasting at the Finals on 9 October at Ellerman House in Bantry Bay, the three finalists: Kayetan Meissner, Barry Scholfield, Assistant Sommelier at Rust en Vrede Restaurant in Stellenbosch, and Xolani Mancotywa, previously Sommelier at the Saxon Boutique Hotel in Johannesburg and now Sommelier at Capital Club Dubai, were faced with a practical assessment.

This year's task was to pour a magnum of bubbly evenly into 16 glasses and serve these to a table of diners and their guests. Whilst performing this challenging exercise, the candidate had to answer a number of questions from the judges and respond appropriately in a few tricky moments.

Kayetan Meissner was The Bollinger Exceptional Wine Service Award runner-up in 2012 when he was Sommelier at the Saxon Boutique Hotel in Sandhurst, Johannesburg. The Bollinger Exceptional Wine Service Award runner-up this year is Mancotywa.

Ginette de Fleuriot, Cape Wine Master, organiser of the award and one of the judges, is very pleased with the overall results, "As runner-up in 2012, Meissner was given a taste of what the competition is all about. He clearly took on the challenge to hone his skills so that this year he performed even better and was a clear winner."

Meissner graduated with a Hotel School Diploma from Varsity College, a course affiliated to the International Hotel School of Adelaide, Australia. Whilst working as a Sommelier on board the MS Seabourn Sun and the MV Crystal Symphony, he had the wonderful opportunity to visit vineyards across the world including Bordeaux, Tuscany, Napa Valley and the Maipo Valley in Chile.

Subsequently he has worked as a Sommelier at the Saxon Boutique Hotel in Johannesburg, Beverage Manager at the Metropolitan Grand in Bur Dubai, and Sommelier at the Sandton Sun. He is currently the Cellar Master at Bosman's Restaurant at the Grande Roche Hotel in Paarl and will be undertaking Certification with the Court of Master Sommeliers in November this year. His favourite South African wines come from the Swartland, his choice international wine style is Burgundy and he loves sparkling wine and champagne. His preferred cuisine is classical French and Italian and his interests include food and wine, travel, history and fly-fishing.

The Bollinger Exceptional Wine Service Award is co-sponsored by Riedel Glassware, which provides infrastructural support for the competition, together with Vinimark The Wine Company, importers of Bollinger Champagne.

The award was established in 2011 to bring focus and recognition of achievement to the growing group of professional wine waiters in South Africa. Judges at all rounds of the annual competition include internationally trained sommeliers, Cape Wine Masters and members of the hospitality trade.

## Judges

- Ginette de Fleuriot: organiser of The Bollinger Exceptional Wine Service Award, a Cape Wine Master and marketing manager at Vinimark The Wine Company
- Neil Grant: past chairman of the South African Sommelier Association (SASA) and sommelier and co-owner of Burrata Restaurant in the Old Biscuit Mill, Woodstock, Cape Town
- Higgo Jacobs: sommelier, consultant and a senior judge at the International Wine Challenge (IWC), he also tastes for various local competitions and publications and is general secretary and a founding member of the South African Sommelier Association (SASA)
- Kent Scheermeyer: German-trained Sommelier and founder of KSconsult, which services the hospitality industry in wine procurement, wine, list design and training

The South African Sommelier Association (SASA) is fully behind the Bollinger Exceptional Wine Service Award and some of its members are judges at the semi-finals and the finals. The Association aims to provide training and mentorship to guarantee the continuous development of professional standards of wine service at the highest level.

For more information, go to [www.wineserviceaward.co.za](http://www.wineserviceaward.co.za).

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