

Absa Perold Cape Blend Awards honours Pinotage masterpieces

The Absa Perold Cape Blend Awards, now in its seventh year, culminated in the honouring of five South African masterpieces, each comprising a minimum of 30% and no more than 70% Pinotage. “It’s encouraging to see how winemakers have embraced this challenge by creating unique wines that involve a vast array of styles and techniques,” said Pinotage Association chair Beyers Truter at the awards function held at the Overture Restaurant of Hidden Valley Wines in the Helderberg, Stellenbosch.



From Left to Right: Johan Weideman (Namaqua Wines), Danie van Tonder (Lyngrove Wines), Beyers Truter (Pinotage Association), Debbie Thompson (Simonsig), Johan van der Watt (Absa), Reino Thiar (Idiom), Abraham van Heerden (Windmeul)

De Wet Viljoen, vice-chair of the association, remarked that the leading examples are testimony to the quality of top South African combos that can represent the country among the best wines anywhere in the world. And Jacques Roux, convener of the judging panel, concurred, reflecting on the diversity of styles and praising the astonishing quality of the 53 entries this year. Cape Blends, he said, is a reflection of the winemaker’s vision, adding that it is delightful to see how they combine different variables to make for world-class combinations.

The judges were Jacques Roux (experienced judge and marketing director of DGB), Fred Viljoen and Johan Malan (proprietors and cellar masters at Viljoensdrift and Simonsig respectively), Susan Erasmus (previously winemaker at Vrede en Lust and now at Laffort SA), Brad Gold (Cape Wine Master and head of marketing at Oak Valley) and Marené de Beer (winemaker at Altydgedacht).

The winners of the Absa Perold Cape Blend competition are:

Cape West Shiraz Pinotage Limited Release 2015 - Namaqua Wines, WO Olifants River

Idiom Cape Blend 2015 - WO Stellenbosch: Pinotage, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz

Lyngrove Platinum Latitude 2015 - WO Stellenbosch: Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinotage, Shiraz

Simonsig Frans Malan Cape Blend 2015 - WO Stellenbosch: Pinotage, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot

Windmeul Cape Blend Reserve 2015 - WO Coastal: Pinotage, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot



Cape Blend winners (Image Supplied)

Top blends

Cabernet Sauvignon is one of the most popular blending partners for Pinotage and four of the top five blends this year include Cabernet Sauvignon in the mix. It also came as no surprise that some of the winners are from cellars renowned for highly rated single-varietal wines made from Pinotage. Simonsig's Redhill is among the Pinotage front-runners and the estate's Frans Malan combo has also come to the fore on a regular basis. Whereas Windmeul is the only cellar represented among the winning Cape Blends in 2017 to have also won a trophy at the Absa Top 10 Pinotage Awards in the same year.

The 2015 vintage stood out as a particularly good year for red wine and, while Stellenbosch boasts many of South Africa's champion red wine producers, wonderful expressions of the variety and Cape Blends built around the cultivar 'indigenous' to this country are completed in cellars throughout the Winelands.

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