

# Record price for port at Nederburg Auction

A new record price of R20 000 for the rare Monis Collectors Port Stamp Collection 1948 was set at the Nederburg Auction this weekend – at R3333 per bottle, it was the highest price ever paid for a port at the auction. Overall, however, sales were down.

Overall income at the 33rd Nederburg Auction in Paarl, Western Cape, on Saturday, 29 September 2007, was only R5.13 million compared with last year's R6.96 million, as there was 17% less wine on auction and 16 fewer participants.

Auction organisers attributed this year's lower average price of R1411 per nine-litre case – down 11% on last year – to the competitive trading conditions in the South African wine market. The number of participants is determined by a strict selective process which also determines the quantity of wines available.

Foreign buyers upped their purchases to 24% from last year's 16%, with Vina Vita from Russia, the top overseas buyer in fourth overall position, taking a healthy 6.5% (238 cases).

For the first time in the history of the auction, a restaurant chain took the top spot, with the Cape Town Fish Market buying wine worth R654 220 (884 cases) – representing more than 12% of total sales. It was the second biggest buyer last year.

As in the past, the four retail groups, Pick 'n Pay, Checkers, Makro and Ultra dominated the rest of the South African top 10 purchasers. Other top 10 buyers were the Sun International Hotel group and three regular buyers from Namibia – Woerman Brock Bottle Store, Hotel Pension Palmquell and Heinitzburg Hotel.

## New record price

The new record price for the rare Monis Collectors Port Stamp Collection 1948 was R20 000 – at R3333 per bottle, the highest price ever paid for a port at the auction. The average price of port per nine-litre case was R1726.

The last five cases of the 30-year-old Nederburg Edelkeur 1977 fetched R5000 for 12 x 375 ml – attaining more than R400 per half-bottle for the first time ever. The average price for noble late harvest wine was R2382 per nine-litre case.

With the average price for red wine R1559 per nine-litre case, a single case of six bottles of Zonnebloem Cabernet Sauvignon 1967 fetched the highest price of R16 000 (R2666 per bottle). Other reds that fetched top prices were Chateau Libertas 1967 and Stellenzicht Syrah 1994, both at R666 a bottle, Vergelegen Estate Wine 2001 (R633 a bottle) and Rustenberg John X Merriman 2002 (R1250 per magnum bottle).

The average price paid for a dry white wine was R853 per nine-litre case, with the top price paid for Cape Point Sauvignon

Blanc 2004 at R300 a bottle, while Hamilton Russell Vineyards Chardonnay 2003 fetched R266, Rudera Chenin Blanc 2003 R183 and Jordan Nine Yards Chardonnay 2004 R175 a bottle.

One of the features of the auction in spring has been the inclusion of current vintages of Sauvignon Blanc. The highest price paid in this category was R123 for a bottle of Graham Beck Pheasants' Run Sauvignon Blanc 2007.

The top price for Méthode Cap Classique wine was R1738 per nine-litre case with Graham Beck Brut Blanc de Blanc 2001 going for R300 and Nederburg Sparkling Noble Late Harvest 2001 (375 ml) for R100 a bottle.

The average price for fortified wine was R801 per nine-litre case, with the highest price for KWV Red Muscadel 1953 at R400 a bottle – a new record high for Muscadel.

## **Two guest speakers**

For the first time in the history of the auction two guest speakers shared the podium – Mutle Mogase, executive chairman of the South African black-owned private equity fund, Vantage Capital, and Tom Perry, MD of Rioja Wine Exporters' Association from Spain.

Mogase, co-founder of the ultra-exclusive wine label Epicurean, urged the industry to “start applying the same energy to the education of wine marketers as it has to winemakers and wine production over the past 10 years and to expand their marketing efforts into several regional capitals which are participating in the growth of the economy.

“It is imperative to increase local wine consumption and those same marketers, armed with a goodly percentage of well-priced, good quality wine, need to inculcate a wine-drinking culture in the South African public – a culture that puts a good carafe of white or red at an affordable price onto every dinner table across the country.”

Perry cited the example of its latest marketing project Rioja Passion to interest young Spaniards between 25 and 35 in wine culture, through the innovative use of the Internet. He stressed the importance of marketing wine as a lifestyle product and the use of creative PR and advertising campaigns combining wine with sport and literature.

Referring to packaging innovations, he said, “Young consumers accept new forms of packaging for wine. Perhaps our industry will have to become a little less conservative when marketing to new wine drinkers.”

## **Charity sale**

The charity sale on the day raised R386 500 for the beneficiaries, the Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa, Mothers2Mothers, and the Organ Donor Foundation of South Africa. The highest price paid on the charity auction was for a 225-litre barrel of Nederburg Cabernet Sauvignon 2007, donated by cellarmaster Razvan Macici, which fetched R80 000 and was bought by wine importer Mack & Schuhle of Germany.

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