

No recession for top class wine auction

The annual Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Auction defied the recession with record sales of R5 739 000 (excluding VAT) with a complete sell out of all the wines on offer. Brisk bidding at a rate of R1 million per hour set the tone for a record breaking 28th auction in the Stellenbosch winelands over the weekend.



Annelie van der Merwe, Andries Burger & CWG Chairman Louis Strydom

Recognised as South Africa's most prestigious wine auction that is open to the trade and general public, this year's record sales were 8.6% up on the 2011 turnover of R5 286 700, despite 431 fewer cases of wine. The auction also attracted a record number of 54 new local buyers and private collectors, four of whom were amongst the top 10 buyers this year.

"With the increased variety and superb quality of our auction selection reflecting the great diversity of the South African wine industry, there was more scope for different types of buyers this year. We got the balance right between red and white wines on offer once again, which ensured keen interest from the floor right until the end. Unusual varietals such as Nebbiolo and Cinsault as well as stylistic differences within varietal categories such as Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon created a lot of interest. We were also delighted by the increase in local buyers," said Louis Strydom, chairman of the Guild, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

The auction, conducted by Henré Hablutzel of Hofmeyr Mills Auctioneers for the 15th consecutive year, attracted 148 buyers including 14 foreign buyers and for the first time, 14 online bidders. In total 2 517 cases were sold at an average price of R2 281 per case equivalent of 6 x 750ml bottles. The lineup of 52 wines included 38 red wines, 10 white wines, 2 Méthode Cap Classiques, 1 dessert wine and a port.

Alan Pick of The Butcher Shop and Grill in Sandton triumphed for the 11th consecutive year as the biggest spender at R1 017 400 million. The bulk of the wines, 87%, was bought by local buyers. Amongst the foreign buyers, the biggest sales went to Belgium with R266 800, followed by Namibia on R131 400, Denmark on R105 600 and the United Kingdom with R101 600.

Three Kanonkop wines were amongst the eight top sellers at an average price per case of over R3 000: Kanonkop CWG Paul Sauer 2007 (R3 760), Rust en Vrede Cabernet Sauvignon 2009 (R3 548), Kanonkop CWG Paul Sauer 2009 (R3 485), Hartenberg Estate Auction Shiraz 2009 (R3 324), Kanonkop CWG Pinotage 2010 (R3 294), Beyerskloof Traildust Pinotage 2010 (R3 214), Bouchard Finlayson Pinot Noir 2009 (R3 120) and Ernie Els CWG 2010 (R3 063).

Amongst the white wines, top sellers were the Jordan Chardonnay Auction Reserve 2011 with an average

price per case of R2 353, Chamonix Chardonnay Auction Reserve 2011, Gottfried Mocke's maiden auction wine, at R2 044 and the Cape Point Vineyards Auction Reserve White 2011 at R2 014.

The best performing Méthode Cap Classique, Graham Beck Non Plus Ultra Cap Classique 2008 sold at an average price per case of R1 630. The only dessert wine on auction this year, the Teddy Hall Eva (Krotoa) Muscat de Frontignan Noble Late Harvest 2009 averaged at R1 113 per case of 6 x 375 ml, whilst the only fortified wine, the Carel Nel Cape Vintage Auction Reserve 2010, achieved an average price per case of R1 353.

Over and above the main auction, a record amount of R182 100 was raised on the day in aid of the Cape Winemaker's Guild Protégé Programme, a mentorship initiative for young, upcoming winemakers. Every year a very special charity item is auctioned off to raise funds. This year's item, a one-of-a-kind 18-litre 2010 Members' Reserve comprising a blend of top wines from all 45 members of the Guild, was purchased by Annelie van der Merwe of Restaurant Mosaic for a record price of R50 000.

A full house of 52 exceptional wines all crafted exclusively for the auction by members of the Guild to represent the pinnacle of what can be achieved in South African winemaking, went under the hammer this year.

For more information, go to www.capewinemakersguild.com.

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