

Seasoned Cape Winemakers Guild auctioneer gets gavel ready for 20th auction

For the 20th time, Henré Hablutzel of Hofmeyr Mills Auctioneers, will have his gavel at the ready for this year's Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Auction. Now in its 33rd year, the annual South African wine industry showcase presents a treasure trove of rare, individually crafted wines of great diversity made exclusively for the auction by members of the Cape Winemakers Guild. With innovative winemaking the hallmark of this auction, it enjoys a loyal following of wine buyers and private collectors.

Over the past 20 years, Hablutzel has seen the auction grow in stature from a niche event to the quintessential yardstick of South African wine achievement. He started his longstanding association with the Cape Winemakers Guild when he became the Guild's auctioneer in 1998. Since then, the Guild membership has grown from 21 to 49 and the auction lineup has increased from just 28 wines with a total turnover of R1.17m to last year's 52 wines and record sales exceeding R13.8 m. This year's Guild Auction boasts a lineup of 61 singular wines featuring a host of interesting varieties, exciting blends and collaborative winemaking.



Wine enthusiasts spoilt for choice at 33rd Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Auction

4 Aug 2017



Increase in larger lots, growing interest in Guild wines

Besides the auction's phenomenal growth in stature, for Hablutzel one of the major changes has been the increase in larger lots: "Today there seem to be fewer small lots compared to the early auctions. These two-case lots are sought-after by the private collector and typically fetch higher prices compared with the six and eight case lots that are usually bought by the trade."

Hablutzel has seen the number of local buyers, particularly private collectors, versus overseas buyers increase substantially in recent years. "This is a clear indication of the growing interest in the Guild wines locally," he adds.

Sound knowledge of wine

Years of experience have honed his skills and expertise at reading the auction floor and what buyers want: "You just develop a feel and rapport with them. Certain buyers sit in the same place in the auditorium year after year, others like to retain the same numbers. You get to know their choices, and can sometimes pre-empt when they are going to bid."

Hablutzel is a true master when it comes to keeping focus and the momentum going on auction day.

With an interest in wine spanning over 41 years, he has sound knowledge of the wine on auction and is well acquainted with many of the winemakers.

Sustaining the health of the industry

His association with the Cape Winemakers Guild runs far deeper than presiding over the annual auction. Since 2000, his business, Hofmeyr Mills Auctioneers, has been a regular contributor to the Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Development Trust and the Guild's ground breaking Protégé Programme.



Auctioneer Henré Hablutzel



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“From the onset, I felt it was a brilliant initiative from the Guild to sustain the health of the industry by cultivating, nurturing and empowering promising individuals to become winemakers and viticulturists of excellence, and am very happy to be able to contribute towards it,” says Hablutzel.

In addition to regular donations, Hablutzel helps the Guild raise funds in support of the Protégé Programme by auctioning off a unique charity item representing the collective efforts of members of the Guild as part of the annual auction.

The 33rd Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Auction is open to the public and will be held at the Spier Conference Centre in the Stellenbosch Winelands on Saturday, 30 September 2017.

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