2015 Wine Label Awards bring out the good, the bad and the gold

The inaugural Wine Label Design Awards 2015, sponsored by self-adhesive label supplier Rotolabel and hosted by Winemag.co.za, have been awarded.

Labels are a vital component of product branding serving to identify ownership, show origins, describe contents and ultimately to persuade buyers. The motivation for the competition was therefore to reward outstanding design as an influence on wine purchases. There were three categories of judging the wines

1. Under R60 a bottle
2. Over R60 a bottle
3. Labels forming a series

There was a panel of five judges - Christian Eedes, editor of Winemag.co.za; Sean Harrison, executive creative director of Whitespace Creative; George Jardine, executive chef of Jordan Restaurant in Stellenbosch, Ivan Oertle, wine buyer for retailer Woolworths and Joanne Thomas, creative director: design at Jupiter Drawing Room. Judging criteria include originality of concept, execution, shelf appeal and effectiveness as a piece of communication.

Winners

Of the 92 entries were received, 31 were finalists.

Winner of a gold award for wines in a series, the People's Choice Award and the Grand Prix - BLANKbottle range: DOK 2013, Professor Kukurowitz 2013, Hinterhofkabuff 2013, The Original Spaniard 2013, Confessions of a White Glove Chaser 2013, Col. Mulscal Roos 2013. Design firm: Self designed. Winemaker Pieter Walser sources grapes from across the Winelands, designs his own labels and then uses QR codes and the Internet to tell his story.

"Any thoroughbred designer is going to scream when they see how uncrafted the BLANKbottle stuff is but it is one person's idea followed through without compromise. Wine, art and technology come together with these labels. Walser is single-handedly taking the wine industry to another level," said Harrison.

Winner of a gold award, single wine selling for over R60 a bottle was Infiniti Noble Late Harvest 2012 (Stellenbosch Vineyards) Design firm: Vanessa Fogel Design.

Here the design was in stark contrast to the BLANKbottle range, showing immaculate artisanship. The wine comes in a

long-necked 375ml bottle, a little neck tag fulfilling the function of a back label.

"There's no great concept involved but I'm charmed by its beauty," said Jardine. "Simplicity is the ultimate elegance," agreed Oertle. "The designer didn't get in the way here. She's retained only the necessary and it comes across as very considered," said Thomas.

Winners of silver awards, single wine selling for over R60 a bottle

- One Man Band by Iona 2009 Design firm: Code
- Mr P Pinot Noir 2013 (Iona) Design firm: Code
- Mulderbosch Barrel Fermented Chardonnay 2010 Design firm: Anthony Lane Design Consultancy
- Sophie Te'blanche 2014 (Iona) Design firm: Code

Winners of silver awards for wines in a series

- Marvellous range: Yellow 2012, Red 2012, Blue 2012 Design firm: Fresh Identity
- Paserene range: Chardonnay 2013, Marathon 2013 Design firm: Self designed (in collaboration with Lorraine Loots, Lauren Ann McCarthy and Carmen Ziervogel)
- Villiera range: Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, Merlot 2013, Pinotage 2013, Jasmine Fragrant White 2014, Sauvignon Blanc 2014, Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc 2014, Bush vine Sauvignon Blanc 2014, Chenin Blanc 2014 Design firm: Anthony Lane Design Consultancy

Winners of bronze awards, wines selling for over R60 a bottle

- Ashbourne Sauvignon Blanc Chardonnay 2014 Design firm: Pearly Yon
- De Morgenzon Maestro White 2014 Design firm: Fanakalo
- Elgin Ridge 282 Sauvignon Blanc 2013 Design firm: Whitespace Creative
- Quinta do Sul 2008 Design firm: Self designed (in collaboration with Warren Wilsnach of Coastal Labels)

Winner of a bronze award for wines in a series

- La Bri range: Viognier 2013, Chardonnay 2013, Merlot 2012, Cabernet Sauvignon Limited Release 2012, Affinity 2012, Syrah 2012 Design firm: Anthony Lane Design Consultancy

Finalists

Single wine selling for R60 or under

- Bellingham Pinopasso 2013
- Design firm: Just Design
- Rare Earth Shiraz 2011
- Design firm: The Butcher's Shop

Single wine selling for over R60 a bottle

- Alphabetical 2012 Design firm: Owl & Vine Brands
- Ataraxia Sauvignon Blanc 2014 Design firm: At Pace Design & Advertising
- Beau Constantia Pas de Nom Red 2013 Design firm: Fanakalo

- Cape Heritage Inception 2011 Design firm: Just Design
- Carol Boyes MCC 2011 Design firm: Carol Boyes Functional Art
- Diemersdal Heritage Range: Private Collection 2013, Pinotage Reserve 2013, Grenache 2013, Sauvignon Blanc Reserve 2014, Chardonnay Reserve 2014 Design firm: Anthony Lane Design Consultancy
- Fable Jackal Bird 2012 Design firm: Alice Edy in collaboration with Fanakalo and Anthony Lane Design Consultancy
- Glen Carlou the Curator's Collection: Pinot Noir 2011, Chenin Blanc 2013 Design firm: The Hardy Boys
- Glen Carlou the Haven Range: Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, Syrah Mourvèdre 2013 Design firm: The Hardy Boys
- Klein Constantia Meits Sauvignon Blanc 2013 Design firm: At Pace Design & Advertising
- Mount Abora Saffraan Cinsaut 2012 Design firm: Adams Rib Creative Solutions
- Runnder Duck Range (Vergenoegd): Red 2012, White 2014, Rosé 2012 Design firm: Bittersuite
- Uva Mira the Mira Sauvignon Blanc 2014 Self-designed in collaboration with Donna Christie & Soil Design
- Wildekrans Cabernet Franc Merlot 2009 Design firm: Garage EastWines in a series
- Yardstick Range: Pinot Noir 2013, Chardonnay 2013 Design firm: Fresh Identity