

Clayton Reabow, Rudger van Wyk take top honours at 2018 Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year Awards

The 2018 Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year Awards recipients were recently announced at the La Residence Hotel in Franschhoek. Clayton Reabow from Môreson in Franschhoek and Rudger van Wyk from Stark-Condé Wines in Jonkershoek Valley, Stellenbosch received the accolade respectively.

The Winemaker and Young Winemaker Awards focus on quality and recognition of excellence and are regarded as the country's most prestigious and well-respected wine industry competition. Celebrating the skills and talent of the vintners, these awards are open to all in the South African wine industry at no cost, thus affording all winemakers an equal opportunity. The Winemaker of the Year is in its 38th year, while the Young Winemaker has been running for 18 years.



2018 Diners Club Winners: Rudger van Wyk of Stark-Condé Wines (Young Winemaker of the Year) and Clayton Reabow of Môreson (Winemaker of the Year)

The awards are presented to the winemakers who produce a wine that the judging panel considers the best in a specified class. The categories for 2018 were Chardonnay single varietal wines for Winemaker of the Year, and red wines of any varietal or blend for Young Winemaker of the Year. The field was narrowed down to 11 finalists through rigorous judging by a panel of wine experts: with five winemakers shortlisted for the prestigious Winemaker of the Year Award, and six for the Young Winemaker of the Year title.

This year's Diners Club Winemaker of the Year (Chardonnay category), Clayton Reabow, delighted the judges with his Môreson 2017 Mercator Chardonnay. Reabow was a finalist in the 2017 Winemaker Awards (Pinotage category) and the winner of the 2009 Young Winemaker of the Year award. The 2018 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year, Rudger van Wyk, received his award (red wines category) for the Stark-Condé 2016 Stellenbosch Syrah.



The winning winemaker receives R50,000, while the young winemaker receives R25,000. Both winemakers get two return air tickets on Delta Airlines to any wine producing region in the USA.

Reabow grew up in King William's Town in the Eastern Cape. He completed a BSc agriculture: viticulture and oenology degree at the University of Stellenbosch in 2004. In between working some local vintages, he travelled to other wine-producing areas such as Bordeaux in France and the Mosel Valley in Germany to broaden his horizons. On returning to South Africa, he applied for the winemaking position at Môreson in 2007 and has never looked back. In 2011 Clayton completed a postgraduate master's degree in wine business management, cum laude at the UCT Graduate School of Business.

Van Wyk was born in George in the Southern Cape. He studied at the University of Stellenbosch where he completed a BSc agriculture: viticulture and oenology degree. As a Cape Winemakers Guild Protégé, he worked at several high-profile local wine estates, followed by a harvest in Burgundy before joining Stark-Condé Wines as assistant winemaker in 2016. Earlier this year, Stark-Condé Wines were pleased to announce Van Wyk's appointment to the position of winemaker.

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