

Newspaper excellence awards announced

The Frewin, McCall & Joel Mervis competitions - organised by the Newspaper Association of South Africa - recognises newspaper excellence in all areas of disciplines from advertising; to print and production; to layout and typography; to the balance between the use of pictures and graphics. Media 24 was the clear winner on the night.

The criteria for the newspaper industry's most prestigious publishing awards have been set by the industry to encourage and recognise publishers who excel in producing quality products.

This year's judging panel consisted of Jon Drake - formerly from Ogilvy and Mather, Harry Ferner - ACA School of Advertising, Logan Naidu - Cross Media Training Centre and Prof Govin Reddy visiting professor at Rhodes University.

The panel perused a total of 18 dailies, 27 weeklies and 7 community newspapers who entered this year's competition.

"Overall there did seem to be an improvement in layout and typography across the board. Those that scored badly clearly don't put much store in the process. But leading contenders try really hard and are not afraid to try new and fresh ideas to create a modern looking page with some obvious design sense. They are on par with the best in UK and Europe," says the panel in their summary on the quality of entries.

The winners in their respective categories are:

Frewin Competition

This competition has been in existence for the past 55 years and recognises all urban daily newspapers irrespective of their circulation:

1st - Beeld (Publisher: Media 24, Total Score: 89 points)

2nd - Die Burger (Media 24, 83 points)

3rd - Daily Sun (Media 24, 82 points)

McCall Competition

This competition has been in existence for the past 43 years and recognises urban daily newspapers with a circulation below 50 000:

1st - The Witness (Publisher: Natal Witness Printing & Publishing, Total Score: 82 points)

2nd - ThisDay (ThisDay Media (Pty) Ltd, 79 points)

3rd - Cape Times (Independent Newspapers: Cape, 78 points)

Joel Mervis Competition

This competition has been in existence for the past 9 years and recognises urban weekly newspapers irrespective of their circulation:

1st - Naweek Beeld (Publisher: Media 24, Total Score: 90 points)

2nd - Weekend Witness (Natal Witness Printing & Publishing, 88 points)

3rd - Mail & Guardian (M & G Media, 87 points) / Rapport (RCP Media, 87 points)

"This has been a good year for newspaper publishing. The latest ABC circulation and AMPS readership figures show that the demand for newspapers is increasing. Despite increasing competition from other media, newspapers are holding their own and remain a key source of news and information. Newspapers keep readers in touch with their communities and their environment, both on a local and national level. By responding to readers needs newspapers adapt, change and endure.

"But, in an increasingly competitive environment with new media products being launched at a rapid rate, newspapers must stay abreast of the latest trends in technology, continually looking for new ideas to appeal and captivate readers and implement and maintain high quality standards. These awards acknowledge those newspapers that do this and strive for excellence. The Newspaper Association is honoured to congratulate the winners of tonight's competition," says Trevor Ncube, president of the association in his address at the Print Media SA Cocktail Party held on November 11, 2004 where the winners were announced.

The winners received a floating trophy and certificate for their achievements.

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