

Winners of Muskadel SA Awards 2017 announced

From a total of 23 entries, five more than 2016, the top Muskadel producers in SA was awarded at the 15th annual Muskadel SA Awards function, sponsored by Enartis SA, on 25 May 2017.



Platinum and Gold winners group. Front L to R: Ian Sieg (GWL Landzicht), Crystal Loggarenberg (GWL Landzicht), Mathilda Viljoen (Du Toitskloof), Marli Brink (Boplaas), Alvi van der Merwe (Alvi's Drift), Chris Venter (Orange River Cellars). Back L to R: Henri Swiegers (Muskadel SA), André Scriven (Rooiberg), Tiaan Loubser (Du Toitskloof) and Paul Burger (Nuy).

Tasted blind, the wines are judged and scored according to a tried and tested points system. The uniqueness of the packaging also contributes to the final points tally and often means the difference between a gold or platinum award. Consumers can identify winning Muscats by the Gold or Platinum Muskadel SA stickers on the bottle.

The five judges for this year were Dave Biggs (wine writer and founder member of the Wine-of-the-month Club), Hans Löscher (previously Monis, now Columbit South Africa), Cerina van Niekerk (winemaker), Raymond Noppé (Cape Wine Master) and Nina Mari Bruwer (Cape Wine Master).

Henri Swiegers, chairperson of Muskadel SA, says the quality of entries was exceptionally high this year, seeing that four platinum and four gold awards were awarded. "During my ten years as chairperson of Muskadel SA we have recently started seeing a lot more delicate and lighter styled wines opposed to the traditional raisin-heavy muscats. Packaging has evolved from the traditional sweet wine bottle to more elegant packaging. There are cellars that put a lot of effort into their labels which add to the face of muscadel wine in South Africa," says Swiegers.

Platinum awards

Orange River Cellars from the Northern Cape was triumphant for the third consecutive year winning two platinum awards. Orange River Cellars White Muskadel 2016, as well as their Red Muskadel 2016, received platinum awards - Muskadel SA Awards' highest accolade adding to ORC's already stocked Muskadel SA Awards cabinet having previously won five platinum and two gold awards since 2013.

“Our muscadel are not made in the old traditional way anymore, we make use of modern technology like red and white winemakers, to ensure that the balance and quality are perfect before we bottle,” says Chris Venter, production manager at ORC. “We take part in this competition annually because the feedback we have received from the judges helped us better our product. The sticker on the bottle draws the attention of the consumer which leads to better sales,” says Venter.

Venter also explained that the 2016 harvest was a good one for ORC because it was a hot, dry season which led to a more concentrated flavour profile – perfect conditions for muscadel wine.

The Breederivier Valley was well represented by **Du Toitskloof Cellar** with their Du Toitskloof Cellar Red Muscadel 2014 being awarded platinum a second year running. This 100% Muscat de Frontignan with a plain, yet striking label and excellent aging potential is a definite must for the cold winter nights ahead. “The secret is top quality grapes from a top region. This wine is made with passion and great aging potential, crafted to a product close to the consumer’s heart,” says Shawn Thomson, chief winemaker at Du Toitskloof Cellar.

Alvi’s Drift Wines from Worcester was the fourth wine to be awarded platinum at this year’s awards for their Alvi’s Drift Premium 2014. “This muscadel along with our Verreux Pinotage is part of the Alvi’s Drift Ultra-Premium range, this wine was carefully made with a lot of passion and we are happy to share it with the consumer,” says Alvi van der Merwe from Alvi’s Drift.

Gold awards

Two cellars situated on the R60 between Worcester and Robertson was awarded gold: **Nuy Winery** for their Nuy Rooi Muskadel 2012 and **Rooiberg Cellar** for their Rooiberg Red Muscadel 2014.

Another winner from the Northern Cape is **Landzicht GWK Wines** who took home gold for their Landzicht Rooi Muskadel 2016.

Boplaas from Calitzdorp in the Klein Karoo rounds up the top performers with gold for the third consecutive year, this time for their Boplaas Heritage Collection 2014.

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