

Try out for the South African Blind Tasting team!



By [Anna-Bet Stemmet](#)

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We may have enjoyed a nice extended long weekend over here in South Africa, but the wine world was abuzz, as always. Here's a look at the most recent happenings in the world of the vine, which includes the winners of the National Wine Challenge, a great archaeological find in Italy, and the opportunity to become part of the South African Blind Tasting team.

Spier and Creation Wines take top honours at the NWC/Top 100 SA Wine Challenge 2016

The gist of it: The National Wine Challenge (NWC), incorporating the Top 100 SA Wines, is a major fine-wine-only event in South Africa, which aims to identify winning wines by cultivar and blend, with medals awarded for top score and highest scoring wines. The categories of the awards include: Grand Cru 1st place, Double Platinum, Double Gold and Double Silver.

The 2016 winners were announced on 28 April - see the full list of winners [here](#).

Both [Spier](#) and [Creation Wines](#) were major winners, with Spier taking six accolades and Creation Wines taking five. Carolyn Martin said: "We are privileged that we are able to cultivate a number of different cultivars on our estate. We are discovering and experimenting in viticulture and winemaking innovation daily and are, therefore, excited about the opportunities that our terroir allows us in producing quality wines that interest wine appreciators and connoisseurs. Incremental improvements in quality and consistency are what we are working on constantly."



Archaeologists find proof that Roman imperial leaders ran wine empire away from the battlefield

The gist of it: Until recently, precious little was known about Rome's imperial leaders, aside from their battlefield triumphs and territorial conquests. Researchers from the University of Sheffield's Department of Archaeology who are investigating the vast imperial estate of Vagnari in Italy have now unearthed evidence of wine production on an industrial scale, shedding light on their home life away from the battlefield.

The excavation team discovered the corner of a cella vinaria (a wine fermentation and storage room) in which wine vessels, known as dolia defossa, were fixed into the ground. The heavy and cumbersome wine vessels have the capacity of more than 1000 litres and were buried up to their necks in the ground to keep the temperature of the wine constant and cool, a necessary measure in hot climates. Read the full story [here](#).

Bonus factoid: The world's oldest bottle of wine was discovered during an excavation within a 4th-century AD Roman nobleman's tomb. Called the Speyer Bottle after the region where it was found, the bottle has been dated between 325 and 350 AD.

You can try out for the South African team that will attend the World Blind Tasting Championships in France

The gist of it: The Juliet Cullinan Standard Bank Wine Festival is Joburg's oldest and most respected wine event of the year. It's the second year that the South African Wine Tasting Championships (SAWTC) will use this exclusive wine platform to allow wine lovers to test their tasting ability, and compete to become the best wine taster of Gauteng. Visitors to the festival are invited to taste and identify wines in unlabelled decanters at the SAWTC stand. The wines will be selected from the exhibitors at the exclusive show.

The SAWTC is not only a great occasion to test your palate with your friends, but it also gives you an opportunity to be selected for the South African team that will be flying to Provence in France for the World Blind Tasting Championships in October 2016. Read more [here](#).



Bonus factoid: A supertaster is a person who experiences the sense of taste with far greater intensity than that of the average person. Women are more likely to be supertasters, as are those from Asia, South America and Africa. Keen so find out whether you qualify as a supertaster? You can have yourself [tested](#)!

This week's Weekly Wine Wrap-up was brought to you by [Juliet Cullinan Wines](#). The 26th annual Juliet Cullinan Standard Bank Wine Festival will be hosted on 12 and 13 July, 2016, at Summer Place, Hyde Park. Tickets are available at [Webtickets](#).

ABOUT ANNA-BET STEMMET

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