

The Sommeliers Selection, BLACC reaching out to emerging wine enthusiasts

The Sommeliers Selection, an organisation which targets the everyday wine drinker through new and innovative ways - including a social and traditional media campaign, and neck tags and bold stickers on every winning bottle - has joined forces with the Black Cellar Club (BLACC), powered by Vula Afrika - an organisation that reaches out to emerging African wine enthusiasts.



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Having listened to and participated in many passionate discussions about wine and the wine industry with their colleagues in the South African hospitality sector, directors at Vula Afrika, Ian Manley and Aubrey Ngcungama, identified the need for an organisation that could reach out to Africans who were interested in furthering their wine knowledge. And so BLACC came into being.

Gregory Mutambe, chairman of BLACC, explains that the club is a very personal initiative. "Like my fellow board members, wine was not something I grew up with. My parents never drank wine at the dinner table. Yes, there was alcohol but certainly not wine. This is the case for most black Africans. With BLACC our aim is to change this scenario, to change perceptions around wine and to facilitate making wine and the knowledge thereof accessible to all South Africans by raising awareness about it."

Guiding the everyday consumer

Incidentally, The Sommeliers Selection is also the first South African wine competition judged solely by a panel of South Africa's top sommeliers, in categories moulded around those of a "wine list".

Winning wines referred to as “Listed Wines”, are listed on the sought-after Sommeliers Selection wine list. This wine list is distributed countrywide to trade and restaurants. All listed wines carry The Sommeliers Selection seal of approval, which is identified with a gold sticker and neck tag. These eye-catching stickers and neck tags will stand out on retail shelves, thereby guiding the everyday consumer with their wine purchases.

Entries are judged for their food appropriateness and their gastronomical relevance. The judging panel, look at the stylistic approach to wines, regionality and price points. All wines are tasted “blind” by the sommeliers.

Associate wine judges

The South African Sommeliers on the judging panel, who are also members of BLACC, all have extensive local and international judging and work experience. Their in-depth knowledge of international and local markets and what the public is looking for in their drinking wines, or pairing with food wines is unparalleled. In addition, each judge will be joined on the panel by an associate judge to gain valuable experience in judging wines.

Combining their expertise and passion this collaboration of ‘great wine minds’ will without a doubt take wine appreciation to the next level.

[Entries](#) open on Monday, 3 April 2017 and the judging will take place in early June. The awards ceremony is scheduled for 26 July whereafter the public will get an opportunity to taste the winning wines in Johannesburg (21 September) and Cape Town (5 October).

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