

SA olive oil elite have 10 spots to compete for in Absa Olive Oil Awards

Olive oil - with its many uses, health benefits and differences in terms of flavour and intensity - are increasingly known and enjoyed by foodies all over. Consumers in South Africa are blessed with a choice of high quality, locally produced olive oils.



SA Olive trophy

In recent years, the growing number of awards won at major international olive oil competitions – even when pitted against countries like Italy and Spain – attest to the fact that the quality of SA olive oils can hold their own with the best of the world. The sustainable health of the SA olive and olive oil industry stands at the heart of the activities of SA Olive, the association representing the common interests of growers, producers, processors, and importers.

By means of the SA Olive Awards, annually held in August, SA Olive gives recognition to the country's top extra virgin olive oils of the particular year's harvest. Entries are blind-judged by a panel of qualified tasters where after medals are awarded in the categories for Delicate, Medium and Intense olive oils.

Ten olive oils lauded this year

In a show of confidence in the olive industry, Absa, which previously sponsored the Absa Top Five Olive Oil Awards, has now indicated that it will extend this honour to 10 exceptional olive oils. The very best gold award recipients of the SA Olive Awards will be chosen as finalists in the run for the Absa Top 10 to be announced on 27 September.

"Several encouraging factors influenced our decision to double the number of winners," says Willie Zastron, provincial head business banking, Absa. "The continued growth seen in the quality of locally produced olive oils, the rise in the number of SA Olive Award entries, as well as the consumer's increased demand for quality olive oils and loyalty to local suppliers, have convinced us to expand the platform for recognition to the top 10 olive oils. In this way we are not only pledging our support to individual producers, we are simultaneously creating opportunities for increased commercialisation in a fast-growing industry, access to markets and sustained job creation in rural communities."

According to SA Olive chairperson, Nick Wilkinson, the SA Olive Awards, as well as the Absa Top 10, serve as a two-pronged approach to give recognition to the industry. "In the first instance we laud producers for their dedication and hard work in creating a superb product," he says, "and in the second place we help guide the consumer in their exploration of the proudly South African offering."

To stand a chance to be named as one of the elite Absa Top 10, olive oil producers have to enter their extra virgin olive oil of the 2017 harvest no later than 4 August 2017. For more information visit [SA Olive](#)

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