

# Meet the Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year 2017 finalists

Five winemakers have been shortlisted to compete for the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year award while four will battle for the Young Winemaker of the Year title.

Diners Club introduced the Winemaker of the Year award in 1981 to encourage local winemakers to raise the standard of wines produced in South Africa. 17 years later the Young Winemaker of the Year award was introduced to encourage winemakers under the age of 30 to develop their skills, express their individuality, and add to the future prestige of South African wines internationally. These awards, focusing on quality and recognition of excellence, are regarded as the country's most prestigious and well-respected wine industry competition.

## Celebrating the skills and talent of vintners

The competition is open to all in the South African wine industry at no cost and consequently, this affords all winemakers a shot at the sought-after titles. While other awards focus on just the wine, the Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year awards celebrate the skills and talent of the vintners.

The awards are presented to the winemakers who produce a wine that the judging panel considers to be the best in a specified class. The categories for 2017 are Pinotage single varietal wines for Winemaker of the Year, and White Wines for Young Winemaker of the Year. As in previous years, a few winemakers have been shortlisted for more than one submission.

## The 2017 Diners Club Winemaker and Young Winemaker of the Year finalists are:



2017 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year Finalists: Left to right: Niël Groenewald (Bellingham), Christiaan Groenewald (New Cape Wines), Clayton Reabow (Möreson), André Scriven (Rooiberg), De Wet Viljoen (Neethlingshof)

## Winemaker of the Year category: Pinotage

- André Scriven - Rooiberg Pinotage Reserve 2016

- Christiaan Groenewald - New Cape Wines - Arendskloof Pinotage 2015 and Eagles Cliff Pinotage 2017
- Clayton Reabow - Môreson Widowmaker Pinotage 2015
- De Wet Viljoen - Neethlingshof Pinotage 2016
- Niël Groenewald - Bellingham Homestead Pinotage 2016

## Young Winemaker of the Year category: White Wines



2017 Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year Finalists: Left to right: Charl Schoeman (Simonsig), Philip Viljoen (Bon Courage), Murray Barlow (Rustenberg), Wade Roger-Lund (Jordan)

- Charl Schoeman - Simonsig Roussanne 2016 and Roussanne Marsanne 2016
- Murray Barlow - Rustenberg Stellenbosch Chardonnay 2016
- Philip Viljoen - Bon Courage Chardonnay Unwooded 2017 and Noble Late Harvest 2016 (Weisser Riesling/Gewürztraminer)
- Wade Roger-Lund - Jordan Blanc de Blancs Méthode Cap Classique 2015

## Rigorous judging by a team of wine gurus

The field was narrowed down to the nine finalists through rigorous judging over two days by a team of wine gurus, including the renowned international judge, William Predhomme. All the judges agree that it will be a close race for the top prize, a clear indication that the finalist wines are outstanding. Judges examined each wine evaluating appearance, aroma, taste, aftertaste and overall impression.

The 2017 Diners Club Winemaker of the Year judges

- William Predhomme
- Carrie Adams
- Debi Van Flymen
- James Pietersen
- Michael Crossley
- Nomonde Kubheka
- Ntsiki Biyela

*The winners of both the Winemaker and the Young Winemaker of the Year awards will be announced at a black-tie gala dinner at La Residence Hotel in Franschhoek on 25 November 2017. The winning Winemaker receives R50,000 and the Young Winemaker R25,000. Both winemakers also receive two return air tickets on Delta Airlines to any wine producing region in the USA.*

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