

The *Classic Wine* Champions ... all the Top Sixes

The aim of this special edition is to provide a 'highlights overview' of each category tasted by *Classic Wine's* tasting panels.

As a result of *Classic Wine's* tastings, here we present 96 top wines... our Classic Champions! In this annual bumper special edition, the wines and their stories are highlighted as a culmination of tastes, experiences and perspectives. Within each category there are catch-alls, but this supplement is the overall catch-all of our second year.

Each issue you have read arrives courtesy of a creative cycle. Beautiful wines have been carefully crafted by the winemakers of this industry, tasting categories are organised by Celia Gilloway, tasted by a huge circle of separate panels with expert tasters, and included are a number of opinions and entertaining articles for all edification purposes. Compiled, designed and aimed to highlight some of the finest wines we've come across, straight into your hands for your reading and drinking pleasure.

Readers are also consumers and a vital part of this chain. There is, in fact, a kind of push-pull mechanism, or chicken-and-egg dynamic that exists as winemakers produce wines that consumers like to drink and that they enjoy producing. But equally importantly, consumers buy more of what they like, which feeds back into this fascinating cycle and synergy of industry and consumer. *Classic Wine* is part of, and witness to this.

The *Champions* special edition comprises 16 wine categories and gives readers a summary of the year. So it can be viewed as a buyer's guide, a supplement, an annual summation, but to us, it has become something of a collector's item. If you keep nothing else on your shelf, this is the year's perspective of what happened with certain SA wines during 2013, along with some colourful insights to help you buy great wine, and enjoy them for the present and in the future.

How to use this guide

There is an introductory feature about where we have come from and the status of the SA wine industry. Statistics always help to illustrate and capture an overview of vital characteristics.

Following are the 16 *Classic Wine* tasting categories from the year 2013. Each category is explored and the Top Six wines are collated and detailed in the order of MCC, White Wines, Red Wines and Dessert Wines. Colour-coded to help you identify each one, they comprise six pages each, describing the wine variety, the top wine that emerged and the Top Six wines of that category, along with additional insights or lesser-known facts for each particular line-up.

The categories have been compiled from lighter to more full-bodied styles within the respective white and red wine categories, but this is, of course, merely a guideline!

There is a feature to end that highlights the concept of 'worth' and extrapolates a few other trends from the year 2013.

Should you wish to read further detail about some of these wines, don't forget to dive into the December/January 2014 issue that contains in-depth reviews, interviews and articles. If you have missed any issues, would like to receive back copies, or want to subscribe, please email subscriptions@classicfm.co.za

In compiling such a publication, several factors stood out:

Emerging wineries

Over the year, a number of wines gained attention – there were quite a few wineries that produced several wines showing in more than one Top Six.

Rijk's set the bar last year with its Pinotage and is keeping up this standard with another two Pinotages in this Top Six category, and yet another appearance in the Top Six White Blends.

With a presence in more than one Top Six category, or with more than one wine in a category were Creation with two Pinot Noirs in the Top Six Niche Red Wines and a further Top Six presence for its Syrah Grenache, Jordan (two) with its Rosé, Merlot and Cabernet, Oldenburg (three) for Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, Boplaas Family Vineyards continues to wave its Port flag (two), also Allée Bleue, this year for its Shiraz and Cabernet, and Mulderbosch, Kanu, Kleine Zalze, Fleur du Cap, Simonsig, De Trafford, De Grendel and Morgenster appeared in two categories. It was great to see Romond with the REBUS 2007, Thelema with a 5-Star Riesling and Môreson scooping the top White Blend with quirky Knoputibak and its Pinotage in the Top Six.

Pedigree and provenance

It is sometimes hard to define exactly what this means but consistency, heritage and continuity spring to mind. So while newly emerging and exciting wineries abound, there are also those who have been around for some time, and are immersed in a sense of history. They show something of a discernible 'presence'. Those like Anthonij Rupert with the Cabernet Sauvignon 2008 or Paul Cluver that made its mark with a 5-Star Chardonnay 2011 and 4½-Star Sauvignon Blanc 2010. And KWV found its way into no less than three Top Six categories, with two wines featuring in two of these, and 5 Stars for the KWV Classic Collection Cape Tawny NV.

What next

Some of these wines may now be in rare supply but are then a good example of what to keep an eye out for, present and future; a one-stop place for what wines to explore and purchase when the plethora of options becomes overwhelming.

Above all, this is *Classic Wine's* ode to the tastings of fine wines, creativity and is something of a reference. We suggest sourcing as many of these top wines as you can muster, for there will undoubtedly be a mood, a food, or an occasion to pair with, during the year ahead! Happy reading and drinking!