



**2016 OLD MUTUAL TROPHY WINE SHOW MEDIA RELEASE: FINAL  
EMBARGOED: 31 May @15h30**

## **PROOF OF VINTAGE QUALITY CATAPULTS WINE INDUSTRY PROSPECTS**

### **OMTWS 2016 RESULTS - 1**

There were celebrations and good cheer aplenty with the release of the 2016 Old Mutual Trophy Wine Show results. Gold medal counts were significantly higher than in 2015, with a better spread across a number of classes. Museum Class trophy numbers also increased as producers recognise the value of the award for suitably aged quality wines and submitted more entries than ever before. While the medal balance again swung strongly in favour of white wines with many examples from the sumptuous 2015 vintage on the tasting benches, the return of pinotage and merlot to the select club of trophy winners was welcomed by the industry.

This year's winner of the Old Mutual trophy for the Show's most successful producer was Delaire Graff Estate - a frequent presence on the medal and trophy winner's podium but a first time recipient of the coveted award. With the American Express trophy for the highest scoring cabernet sauvignon, gold medals for the Chenin Blanc Swartland Reserve 2014 and Coastal Cuvée Sauvignon Blanc 2015 and a clutch of silver and bronze medals, winemaker Morné Vrey's stellar achievement was evident for all to see. Close on his heels were Tokara with the Grande Roche trophy for Best White Blend and the Old Mutual trophy for best White Wine overall for the Director's Reserve 2014, and Nederburg with trophies for The Young Airhawk Wooded Sauvignon Blanc 2015 and the Private Bin Eminence Noble Late Harvest Muscadell 2012, respectively.

The most decorated wine at the 2016 show came from a mystery producer: the Secret Cellars Chenin Blanc No. 235 2015 not only won the Harold Eedes trophy for the Cape's best chenin blanc, it added the International Judges' trophy (highest scoring trophy winner on the international judges' ballots) and the Old Mutual Discovery of the Show trophy (for the best value gold medal winner) to its accolades. Ultra Liquors has been sourcing wines from some of the country's best known producers and offering them for sale under the "Secret Cellars" label for several years. A number of Secret Cellars' bottlings have been gold medal winners at past shows, including one which garnered the Discovery of Show trophy in 2015 as well.

Show convenor Michael Fridjhon was enthusiastic about the overall results. "The splendid 2015 vintage tipped the results strongly in favour of white wines, which show best when young. An extraordinary line-up of cheniens led the charge, though the sauvignons are equally impressive. However, more mature white wines, especially those which have been aged in oak, also did well, as did a range of red wines. It was particularly gratifying to have a trophy award for merlot - a category that has been battling for some time - as well as an inexpensive but brilliant pinotage which stole the hearts of the overseas judges."

Old Mutual, headline sponsor of the competition since its inception, sees great value in a process which identifies the country's top wines and makes this information available to the South African wine drinking public. "Old Mutual is proud of its 15 year affiliation with the country's top wine competition", says Karen Thomas, Old Mutual's Head of Brand. "The sponsorship is a natural fit for us. Like creating a great wine, building sound investments takes expertise, care and patience."

Overall the results brought good news to a wide range of producers - from boutique cellars to major wholesalers, long established estates and former co-operatives. Another feature was the generally affordable prices of the show's top wines. Michael Fridjhon believes that this is the result of a number of factors. "Firstly the blind tasting system which ensures that no one - not even me as show chairman - has access to the identity of what is being judged. Without brand reputation - which often elevates price - the wines are judged purely on their merits. However," he said, "another factor is the excessive use of oak in the more expensive so-called reserve selections. There's no doubt that the judges who are briefed to seek out elegance, nuance and finesse did not score these wooded examples with the same enthusiasm."

The judges awarded a total of 35 gold medals, from which the final 21 trophy winning wines were selected. These included 7 dry red wines, 7 dry white wines, 3 dessert wines, 2 Cape ports, and included 6 Museum Class entries.

Total wines judged were 1067 (2015: 1082) and medal counts were up on 2015. This year saw 35 golds (2015: 27), 113 silver medals (2015: 88) and 509 bronze medals (2015: 430). The strongest classes were chenin blanc, sauvignon-semillon blends, sauvignon blanc, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and pinotage. Pinot noir and méthode cap classique delivered solid results but no trophy.

Of the trophy and gold medal winners Brampton, De Krans, Delaire Graff Estate, Diemersfontein, Groote Post, Landzicht, KWV, Nederburg, Neethlingshof, Neil Ellis, Rijk's, Rustenberg, Stellenrust, Tokara, Vergelegen and Zonnebloem are all past winners. However, there were also new faces notably Koelenhof Winery, Lanzerac, Perdeberg and Vondeling (among the golds) and Bosman Family Vineyards, Franschoek Cellar; Gabriëlskloof, Stellar Winery and Vrede en Lust amongst the trophies. It is the first time in the 15-year history of the competition that a trophy was awarded for Cabernet Franc.

By curious co-incidence, all three international judges had judged previously at the competition. They expressed their delight at what was on offer in some of the strongest classes, and the regular South African panellists commented on the markedly better quality of the top wines in most of the classes.

Michel Bettane, France's leading wine authority, writer and critic, judged for the first time in 2004. At the time he lectured the local judges on embracing the virtues of pinotage. Twelve years later, he hasn't changed his mind: "I am very pleased there are still some very good pinotages. They deserve to be bought at the same price as some very good cabernets. I think they are even better."

Eric Goettelmann, sommelier for the multi-Michelin-starred restaurant group Bernard-Loiseau, based in Burgundy, judged more recently in 2013. Included in his line-up were the pinot noir and chardonnay classes, and while he was disappointed with the pinot noir, he believes South Africa currently has 'rough diamonds' that will in time produce world-class sparklers.

The effusive Hong Kong-based Simon Tam first judged in 2010. Head of Wine for Christie's, China, he had three bold and passionate messages for the South African wine industry: "Believe in yourselves; get your pricing right; and travel in Asia to learn about your potential customers' habits." One of the classes he judged was chenin blanc: "Through the judging it was absolutely phenomenal to see that of all the cultivars, the single category with the most amount of gold medals was chenin blanc. No-one else has got cheniens like these - with grape purity and pristineness with a minerally backbone."

The Museum Class entries continued the trend of accounting for at least 5% of the submissions - and revealed what is clearly a change in emphasis amongst the country's super-premium cellars. "Increasingly we see the country's top wineries choosing to send a message about the age-ability of their best vintages," observes Fridjhon. "Since this coincides with a wider industry commitment to emphasise the age-worthiness of our top wines, we see in the growth of the Museum Class numbers an important message for South Africa's wine aficionados." This year's Museum Class entries yielded 6 trophies, 3 gold, 12 silver and 27 bronze medals.

Discernment of future value is a key component of the investment side of Old Mutual's business, locally and internationally, so the process by which the show's judges approach the task of sifting through the more than 1000 wines entered annually resonates with the country's financial services group. "Investing for the long-term, like making world-class wine, requires specialist care and expertise," observes Old Mutual's Karen Thomas. "We are excited to play an important role in discovering talent and highlighting it both locally and on the international stage and we enjoy building relationships with wine lovers all over South Africa. Skills development is an important element of all our sponsorships and we are pleased to also support the development of world-class wine judges through the Wine Judging Academy, run with the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business."

Recognising the importance of the rigour which goes into the Show's judging methodology, Old Mutual takes the top wines on a national roadshow to present them to some 2000 wine enthusiasts in eight cities in Southern Africa. Within the next two weeks, a series of tastings will be taken to seven major centres countrywide including Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, East London, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria, followed by a Masterclass® in Windhoek in July. Wine lovers in Cape Town and Johannesburg will be able to taste more than 140 trophy, gold, silver and some of the Museum Class medal-winning wines at public tastings in Cape Town and Sandton on 3 and 10 June respectively, and will have an opportunity to judge these top achievers for themselves.

They can also take advantage of the opportunity to buy superlative wines (while stocks are available) at special show prices via show fulfilment partner Makro.

Last year Old Mutual replaced the printed Icons guide with a downloadable app to go live immediately after the final results have been announced at the function. This will enable all smartphone-users to access the key information they will need to optimise their wine-purchasing decisions - at restaurants and wine merchants - for the year ahead.

The app offers a search by wine name, medal, class/category or producer. New features this year include a link to the Makro online wine store and to Computicket to buy tickets to the public tastings; a photo gallery and the archived 2015 results.

Download the free Old Mutual App on your smart or feature phone and find all the results from the Trophy Wine Show.

**Option 1:** Visit your app store, search for the Old Mutual App, and download it

**Option 2:** Visit [www.oldmutualapp.com](http://www.oldmutualapp.com) on your mobile phone browser

**Option 3:** Scan the QR Code



Visit the Old Mutual Trophy Wine Show website [www.trophywineshow.co.za](http://www.trophywineshow.co.za) for all the results, the Top Tens (Top Ten whites, reds, bubbliies, fortifieds, MCCs, producers etc.), the judges' profiles and the AV from the judging.

## All the 2016 Trophy Winners

Old Mutual Trophy for Most Successful Producer Overall  
**Delaire Graff Estate**

American Express Trophy for Best Cabernet Sauvignon, Old Mutual Trophy for Best Red Wine Overall  
**Delaire Graff Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2013**

Grande Roche Trophy for Best White Blend, Old Mutual Trophy for Best White Wine Overall  
**Tokara Director's Reserve 2014**

Harold Eedes Trophy for Best Chenin Blanc, Old Mutual International Judges' Trophy, Old Mutual Trophy for Discovery of the Show / Best Value Gold Medallist  
**Secret Cellar Chenin Blanc No. 235 2015 (Ultra Liquors)**

Miele Trophy for Best Chardonnay  
**Rustenberg Five Soldiers Chardonnay 2013**

Nestlé Pure Life Trophy for Best Sauvignon Blanc  
**Nederburg The Young Airhawk Wooded Sauvignon Blanc 2015**

Riedel Trophy for Best Bordeaux-Style Red Blend  
**Gabriëlskloof The Blend 2013**

Tony Mossop Trophy for Best Cape Port  
**KWV Classic Collection Cape Tawny NV**

Trophy for Best Semillon  
**Franschhoek Vineyards Semillon 2014 (Franschhoek Cellar)**

Trophy for Best Cabernet Franc  
**Vrede en Lust Artisan Cabernet Franc 2014**

Trophy for Best Shiraz  
**Stellar Organics No Sulphur Added Shiraz 2015**

Best Shiraz Blend, winner of the Trophy for Best Non-Bordeaux Red Blend  
**Zonnebloem Shiraz Mourvèdre Viognier 2014**

Trophy for Best Pinotage  
**Brampton Pinotage 2014**

Trophy for Best Merlot  
**Groote Post Merlot 2014**

Trophy for Best Unfortified Dessert Wine  
**Nederburg Private Bin Eminence Noble Late Harvest Muscadel 2012**

Trophy for Best Fortified Dessert Wine  
**Landzicht Wit Muskadel 2015**

Trophy for Best Museum Class Unfortified Dessert Wine and Trophy for Best Museum Class Wine Overall  
**Neethlingshof Short Story Collection Maria Noble Late Harvest 2009**

**Trophy for Best Museum Class Sauvignon Blanc  
KWV Cathedral Cellar Sauvignon Blanc 2010**

**Trophy for Best Museum Class White Blend  
Vergelegen G.V.B 2012**

**Trophy for Best Museum Class Chardonnay  
KWV The Mentors Chardonnay 2011**

**Trophy for Best Museum Class Chenin Blanc  
Bosman Optenhorst Chenin Blanc 2011**

**Trophy for Best Museum Class Cape Port  
KWV Limited Release Port 1948**

**Also Gold Medal Winners**

**De Krans Cape Vintage Reserve 2013 (Port)**

**Delaire Graff Chenin Blanc Swartland Reserve 2014**

**Delaire Graff Coastal Cuvée Sauvignon Blanc 2015**

**Diemersfontein Carpe Diem Chenin Blanc Reserve 2015**

**Koelenbosch Houtverouderd Chenin Blanc 2014 (Koelenhof Winery)**

**Lanzerac Mrs. English 2011 (Museum Class Chardonnay)**

**Nederburg Private Bin Edelkeur Chenin Blanc Noble Late Harvest 2005 (MC)**

**Neil Ellis Groenekloof Shiraz 2014**

**Neil Ellis Woolworths Elgin Sauvignon Blanc Sauvignon Blanc 2015**

**Perdeberg Winery The Dry Land Collection Chenin Blanc 2014**

**Rijk's Reserve Chenin Blanc 2011**

**Stellenrust Sauvignon Blanc 2006 (Museum Class)**

**Tokara Reserve Collection Stellenbosch Syrah 2012**

**Vondeling Cabernet Sauvignon 2013**

**Ends**

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