

South African rieslings tasted in London competition

Local riesling interest group, Just Riesling, recently organised a 16-wine blind-tasting competition at High Timber restaurant in London, which was judged by wine writers Fiona Beckett and Angela Lloyd and JancisRobinson.com's Julia Harding MW.

Designed as a 2010 snapshot of South African riesling, styles ranged from a dry Thelema, at just under 3g/l, to the sweet Klein Constantia at 240 grams. The 'dry' category was won by the 2009 De Wetshof Riesling, while the 'sweet' favourite, and the highest scoring wine of the tasting, was the Paul Cluver Riesling Noble Late Harvest 2009.

A menu to match the wines was created by Gary & Kathy Jordan's restaurant on the banks of the Thames by head chef Justin Saunders. Results were verified by Deloitte London.

Just Riesling was formed in 2007 by the majority of SA riesling producer to further the interest of the noble variety. Holding the inaugural competition in 2010 is noteworthy, as this is the first year producers will be legally allowed to label this noble variety as (just) riesling and not, as the law previously stated, prefixed by either Weisser or Rhine. Crouchen Blanc, sold as riesling until now, will no longer be permitted to be labelled as such.

Other aims of the association are to improve clonal material available to riesling growers, and to pay attention to matching the variety to specific vineyard sites & regions.

Julia Harding MW wrote that she was looking forward to 2011 tasting, and commented on the styles she tasted, "The wines seem to fall into a rather neat space that spans Old World classic European restraint and structure, and southern hemisphere primacy of fruit."



From left to right: Fiona Beckett, Paul Cluver, Kathy Jordan, Gary Jordan, Johan De Wet & Julia Harding outside High Timber in London.

ENDS

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