

## Western Cape restaurants are tops in Diners Club Winelist Awards

An array of Western Cape restaurants were among those recognised at the 2012 Diners Club Winelist Awards held earlier this week. Thirty restaurants were given a Diamond Award, 36 were awarded Platinum Awards, 25 were given Gold and two Silver.

Based on the simple but accurate premise that the perfect meal is greatly enhanced by a matching fine wine, the annual awards seek to encourage food and wine serving establishments to improve standards of wine selections offered to patrons. The awards demonstrate that an establishment offers a good selection of wines that are both original and in harmony with the menu.

The award categories and competition requirements are in line with global market trends. This year's judging panel comprised individuals with a keen appreciation for the integral part played by wine in any dining experience.

### The judges

MasterChef South Africa's judge and restaurant consultant Peter Goffe-Wood was joined by Marilyn Cooper, head of the Cape Wine Academy; Winestyle owner, Nikki Dumas; author of dining guide Rossouw's Restaurants, JP Rossouw; as well as leading wine critics and judges Fiona MacDonald and Christine Rudman. Also on this year's panel - chaired by veteran wine critic and author David Hughes - was Matthew van Heerden, the reigning Diners Club Young Winemaker of the Year.



Dave Hughes (Judge), Jane Ledger (Diners Club),  
Fiona MacDonald (Judge) & Peter Goffe Wood  
(Judge)



Alexa Huxter, Sarah Baker & Inge Naude

Wine lists offering numerous wines at high prices are not what the judges are looking for. Instead, creativity, and choice are credited for the enhanced experience they are more likely to provide to patrons.

Fiona McDonald commented: "For me, a good wine list doesn't need to be massively extensive. Just a few wines can be more effective if they offer choice in terms of price, producer and area." The judges also noted the importance of wine lists that offer wine by the glass - another opportunity to enable patrons to try different wines instead of limiting them to just one.

Other elements critiqued were the range of price points offered, the presence of boutique cellars, descriptions of the wines, guidance on suitable food and wine pairings, inclusion of vintages, and the overall impression, layout and legibility of the wine list.

"The number of entries has once again increased this year and, along with it, the overall standard. The best have become even better and the middle range is becoming more adventurous, which is very exciting indeed," said David Hughes.

A Silver Award represents a score of between 60 and 70 percent, a Gold Award between 71 and 80 percent, a Platinum Award 81 and 90 percent, and a Diamond Award over 91 percent.



Alexa Huxter, Jaap-Henk Koelewijn, Peter Goffe-Wood, Inge Naude & Sarah Baker



Sylvia Taylor, Gangi Negra, Fabio Lenci (Fabios Ristorante) & Shane Sauvage (La Pentola)

### **Diners Club's other category winners in the Western Cape include:**

- Best New Entry: Buffelsdrift Game Lodge (Eastern Cape)
- Best Platinum: La Motte Wine Estate
- Best Wine List: La Colombe
- Best Wine Steward: Ewan Mackenzie (La Colombe)

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