



Merlot Forum Announces South Africa's First Merlot Top 10 Competition

By Emile Joubert

Cape Town, 6 April 2022 - The first Merlot Top 10 Competition, organised by the South African Merlot Forum (also known as 'Hallo Merlot'), is to be held this year and aims to highlight the exceptional quality of Cape Merlot and the commitment of the country's top winemakers to this variety, as well as provide consumers more precise insights into the standard of wines made from the Merlot grape.

Leading up to the announcement of the Merlot Top 10 on 22 June, an esteemed panel of wine judges has been assembled to judge the competition entries on 31 May and 1 June. Producers have until 20 May (late entries) to enter with all pertinent details on www.merlotforum.co.za.

Dawie Botha, chairman of the Merlot Forum, who will also convene the judging panel, says that initiating a Merlot Top 10 Competition is a new highlight in the Forum's aim of accentuating the standard of South African Merlot, the diversity of the Cape Winelands terroir where this grape is grown, and the popularity the wine variety enjoys among the consumers.

"As South Africa's top-selling red wine varietal, Merlot enjoys a high profile among South African wine drinkers," says Botha, also cellar master at Anthonij Rupert Wines. "With the Merlot Top 10, we want to showcase the exceptional standard of Merlot wines in this category of Cape wine.

The awards will recognise the best-quality wines and provide members of the Merlot Forum the opportunity to see how their respective wines and styles perform against those entered by their peers. This kind of competition and exchange of information can only lift the bar for South African Merlot as a whole and place it in its rightful position as one of the country's leading categories in terms of quality, style typicity and terroir expression."

Besides Botha, the wine judges chosen to serve on this year's inaugural Merlot Top 10 panel are Cathy van Zyl, MW, journalist Malu Lambert, Spencer Fondaumiere, ASI qualified sommelier, and Tarryn Vincent, national sales manager for Reciprocal Wines.

Follow the Forum's developments on the Top 10 Merlot Competition on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).