



TV celebrity Graham Norton 'tickled pink' with his wine success downunder – talk-show host's wines take two medals in Sydney International Wine Competition as Rosés rule



Graham Norton's first ever Australian Shiraz and New Zealand Rosé were medal winners in the 37th Sydney International Wine Competition – photos: (l) Graham Norton with Shiraz and (r) Rosé tasting

8 November 2016: Irish and global TV celebrity, Graham Norton, had every reason to be tickled pink as his collaboration with Invivo Wines has produced a Blue Gold medal for his debut Kiwi Rosé and a Gold medal for his South Australian Shiraz in the **37th Sydney International Wine Competition**.

The inaugural Graham Norton's Own 2015 Shiraz is a blend of grapes from the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale and Langhorne Creek which 'Chief Winemaker' Graham Norton blended the wine at Bantry House in County Cork, Ireland with the Invivo team. The 2016 'Pink by Design' Rosé is produced from Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris grapes grown in Marlborough and Hawkes Bay.

Both wines have been launched in Australia and New Zealand, and the Shiraz will be available in UK/Ireland from this month with the Rosé being launched in time for the Northern Summer 2017. They follow Graham Norton's first foray into wine, with his Graham Norton's Own Sauvignon Blanc in 2015 (from Marlborough) selling over 600,000 bottles and chosen for Qantas Business Class.

Graham Norton's wines will be available in Australia from this week. Full details of how Graham Norton 'produced' his wines can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCHPiM1XEwU>

The success of the Graham Norton Rosé wine is part of a major resurgence of Rosé style wines in the Sydney International Wine Competition and reflects a growing appetite for lighter bodied wines to match Australia's climate. There was a 52% increase in the number of Rosé and sparkling wines entered into this year's competition.

New Zealand's The Ned Pinot Rosé won the Trophy for Best Still Rosé Wine, while the Clover Hill Tasmanian Cuvée NV Rosé won the trophy for Best Australian Sparkling Wine.

The judging of the Competition took place in October with 1911 wines judged from eight countries. While New Zealand once again dominated the whites (and Pinot Noir), and Australia held sway in the medium and full bodied red categories, international wines featured in the medals across the competition.

A total of 290 wines were awarded TOP 100™, Blue Gold, and Gold medals, including 26 trophy winners.

The Sydney International Wine Competition is unique amongst wine shows in that wines are judged alongside food, making it the most relevant wine competition for consumers. Renowned chef, Michael Manners, once again produced dishes specifically designed to complement the various wine categories being judged.

An international panel of 14 judges, led by Chairman of Judges Kym Milne MW, initially blind-tasted all the entrants, and then tasted the 400 leading wines alongside appropriately matched food to decide the award winners.

Chairman of Judges, Kym Milne MW, praised the quality of this year's entrants, singling out the success of lighter-bodied wines – especially from cool climate regions – and the diversity of the award-winning wines.

"The Lighter Bodied Whites class proved to be one of the more interesting and varied of all the classes in terms of results," said Mr Milne. "The Top 100 & Blue Gold categories feature wines made from Pinot Gris, Viognier from New Zealand, as well as Semillon, Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc blends, Vermentino, Gruner Veltliner, Chardonnay and a very good Italian white blend all from a wide variety of Australian regions and climates. Add to this list an Albarino from the Rias Baixas region of Spain and there is a lot of fascinating quality wines available to the consumer to choose from."

Other stand-out features of the 37th International Wine Competition:

- Coolangatta Estate Wollstonecraft Semillon 2009 was awarded "Best Wine of Competition" (along with two other trophies for Best White Table Wine and Best Lighter Bodied Dry White Table Wine)
- Villa Maria won the Trophy for "Most Successful Winery of Competition"
- Marlborough was the most successful wine region, winning 59 awards and dominating the Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc categories but also doing well in the others
- In the Sparkling Wines class, France dominated this year with six of the ten wines in the Top100 & Blue Gold categories coming from Champagne
- Riesling dominated the Aromatics category, with five out of the nine wines in both the Top 100 and Blue Gold categories. Four of these Rieslings were from the Clare Valley Polish Hill sub region, three from one producer – Jaeschkes Hill River
- New Zealand dominated the semi-sweet and Sauvignon Blanc categories, with NZ Gewürztraminer wines also achieving success
- All 19 Top100 and Blue-Gold winners in the Pinot Noir class were from New Zealand with a fairly even spread of awards between Marlborough, Central Otago and the Wairarapa/ Martinborough regions
- Shiraz from cooler climate areas of Australia and New Zealand excelled in the lighter bodied reds
- Margaret River, Clare Valley, Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale produced the majority of award winners in the medium bodied category, but a Hawkes Bay Syrah was a trophy winner in this class.
- Barossa Valley Shiraz and McLaren Vale Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon were the most featured wines in the fuller bodied reds class, with two Italian reds – an Aglianico from the Campania region of Italy and a Primitivo (Zinfandel) from Puglia – along with a Chilean Carmenere providing an interesting point of difference from the Australian varietals.

Full details of winners at: www.top100wines.com

Public tastings of award winners will be held in Sydney on 11 February, 2017 at Novotel Sydney Central.

Further information

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