



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 12 October 2009

AUSTRALIA'S BEST WINES TO GO UNDER THE NOSE

Australia's most prestigious and progressive wine awards, the Royal Melbourne Wine Show (RMWS) has implemented several changes in 2009 to ensure it remains relevant and continues to build its reputation as the benchmark of excellence in wine production in Australia.

In response to a survey of 2008 RMWS entrants, the 2009 RMWS has made a significant change to its much-coveted Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy, included two new international judges, and will offer 22 awards recognising a variety of classes and categories providing the opportunity for smaller boutique producers to compete against the big players.

Established in 1884 and conducted annually by the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV), the RMWS was developed to support and promote excellence in Australian wine making both domestically, and more recently, to international markets.

The RMWS has experienced a seven per cent increase in entries in 2009 with a remarkable 3,493 individual entries from 566 exhibitors entered. The largest increase in exhibitors has been from New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, and for the first time, there has been an entrant from the Northern Territory, demonstrating its national appeal.

Chairman of the RMWS Committee, Steven Shelmerdine said the increase was due to the progressive nature of the awards.

"The RMWS Committee in conjunction with the RASV has taken on feedback from the 2008 exhibitor survey, making several changes to the awards allowing for further participation and interest from the industry.

"The introduction of lower volume requirements and new classes combined with confidence amongst winemakers that the RMWS is evolving in line with industry trends, have contributed to the increase in entries," said Mr Shelmerdine.

A total of 22 awards will be on offer this year, including four 'hallmark' trophies: the renowned Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy presented to the Best Red Wine of the 2008 Vintage Year; The Premier's Gold Trophy for the Best Victorian Wine; The Francois De Castella Trophy for the Best Young White Wine; and new in 2009, The Douglas Seabrook Single Vineyard Trophy.

Established in 1962, the Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy is the most eagerly sought after wine award in Australia. Ensuring the award remains current, the Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy will see a rule change in 2009, decreasing the volume at the time of entry from 500 dozen to 250 dozen to allow smaller wineries to enter.

Confirming the status of the Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy, last year's winners, Daniela and Jeremy Gordon of Flametree Wines – based in Margaret River, Western Australia - are still jubilant over the win in 2008.



Daniela Gordon said the award had significantly increased the profile of the Flametree brand and placed the winery firmly on the wine making map.

“Winning the Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy transported us into a whole new league, resulting in an enormous amount of media attention and an immediate impact on sales. From direct sales at our cellar door to queries at bottle shops, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of wine enthusiasts talking about and buying our wine.

“The award has undoubtedly helped grow the value of the brand, providing the winery with marketing opportunities and a reputable benchmark against some of the best in the industry,” said Mrs Gordon.

Since winning the award, the winery’s best drops feature in boutique wine stores Australia-wide, and on some of Australia’s finest wine lists including the famous Bistro Guillame, established by award-winning chef Guillaume Brahim.

The 2009 exhibits will be judged by an expert panel including two internationally recognised wine connoisseurs, Mr Lim Hwee Peng CSW of Singapore and Mr John Belsham of New Zealand.

Searching for innovation and expertise, judging commences on 19 October at Melbourne Showgrounds and culminates in an official presentation luncheon in the Port Phillip Room followed by an exhibitor tasting in the Agricultural Hall on Friday, 30 October 2009 at Melbourne Showgrounds.

For further information please visit: www.wineshow.com.au

-ends-

INTERNATIONAL JUDGE BIOGRAPHIES

MR Lim Hwee Peng, CSW

Mr Lim Hwee Peng, CSW is the partner of WineCraft Marketing & Services, a registered wine and spirit marketing company based in Singapore. Lim conducts various commercial activities as well driving the training and educational arm of the company.

An award-winning wine journalist, Lim has a string of professional wine certifications and is the first Singaporean, and Asian, to be certified as a Burgundy Wine Educator by the BIVB, achieved in June 2008.

Also in 2008, the well-learned wine educator was awarded Approved Program Provider status for the Singaporean market by the Society of Wine Educators (USA) in its Certified Specialist in Wines (CSW) program.

MR John Belsham

Winemaker, industry consultant, judge and enthusiast. Beginning his career aged 19, with five vintages in France as an apprentice winemaker, John learned the essential principals of patience, quality, hygiene and attention to detail.

Returning to New Zealand, John began at Nobilo Vintners, progressing to sole charge winemaker at Matua Valley Wines, then Hunters Wines. In 1992 he established his own label, Foxes Island Wines, producing small releases of exquisite, complex Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir, sourced from premium fruit in Marlborough and from his estate vineyard in the Awatere Valley, Marlborough.

John is owner and winemaker at Foxes Island Wines. He is panel chair for Cuisine magazine’s wine reviews and a wine consultant to Air New Zealand for in-flight service and wine education for airline staff. A highly sought after wine judge in Australasia, John began judging wines at competition in 1988 and is chairman of the annual Air New Zealand Wine Awards, New Zealand’s most prestigious wine event.



2009 MAJOR AWARDS

The JIMMY WATSON MEMORIAL TROPHY - presented by the Watson family and friends in recognition of his services rendered to the advancement of the Australian wine industry. The award will be for “The Exhibitor of the Best Red Beverage Wine of the Vintage Year prior to the Current Vintage Year”, in classes 19 to 26.

The PREMIER’S GOLD TROPHY FOR THE BEST VICTORIAN WINE – presented by the Premier of Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Government in recognition of excellence in the Victorian Wine Industry. The award will be made to the Exhibitor of the Best Victorian Fortified Wine in Show. Exhibits eligible for this award must be made from 100% Victorian grapes and vintaged in Victoria. Classes 53 to 65.

The FRANCOIS DE CASTELLA TROPHY – awarded to the Best Young White Wine in classes 5 to 11 (2009 vintage) and classes 14 to 18 (2008 vintage).

The DOUGLAS SEABROOK SINGLE VINEYARD TROPHY – awarded to the highest scoring exhibit in classes 1 to 4. All entries must be from an individually named vineyard, the name of which appears on the commercial label of the wine. The wine must be made from at least 95% grapes grown on the named vineyard.

2009 CLASS AWARDS

BEST CHARDONNAY – Classes 1, 15 and 28

BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC or SEMILLON SAUVIGNON BLANC BLEND – Classes 7, 8 and 16

BEST SEMILLON – Classes 6, 16 and 29

BEST PINOT NOIR – Classes 2 and 33

BEST CABERNET SAUVIGNON – Classes 4 and 31

BEST SHIRAZ – Classes 3 and 32

BEST SPARKLING – Classes 49 to 52

BEST AROMATIC WHITE – Classes 5, 14, 27 and 39

BEST EARLY DRINKING RED or ROSE – Classes 12 and 13

BEST CLARET STYLE – Class 34

BEST RHONE STYLE – Class 36

BEST AUSTRALIAN STYLE – Class 35

BEST MEDITERRANEAN STYLE – Class 37

BEST SWEET STYLE – Classes 47 and 48

BEST RED OR WHITE – WINE WITH IMAGINATION – Classes 43 to 46

BEST RED OR WHITE WINE 2004 AND OLDER – Classes 39 to 42

BEST AUSTRALIAN FORTIFIED RED – Classes 54 to 56, 60 and 61

BEST MUSCAT OR SWEET WHITE – Classes 57 to 59, 62 and 65

For all media inquiries please contact Wrights for the RASV (03 9690 9911):

Gareth Beck, Wrights – 0412 913 150 / gbeck@wrights.com.au