



PO Box 256 Lobethal
South Australia 5241
ABN: 85 208 397 023
PH: +61 8 8389 8149
FAX: +61 8 8389 8178
M: + 61 412816107
EMAIL: info@timknappstein.com.au

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A very successful show with 41 Gold Medals awarded from 801 entries, easily breaking the existing record of 35 Gold.

WHITE WINE CLASSES:

Gold medals were awarded in all the current vintage varietal classes. The older vintage classes generally did not fare as well, with many exhibits lacking freshness.

The exception was Chardonnay where the 2016 class produced some the stars of the show.

It is gratifying to see the constant improvement and refining of the modern Chardonnay style. These wines are lower in alcohol, with bright fruit characters and lively acidity. Classy oak and other barrel derived characters provide further complexity and interest.

Consumers who have been put off drinking Chardonnay by bad memories of the fat, heavy and over oaked wines of the past should do themselves a favour and try these newer style wines.

Weaker white classes included the white blends and apart from one excellent Gewurztraminer and a stunning sweet white Riesling the white varietal and sweet white classes also struggled.

This outstanding sweet white went on to win Best Central Ranges wine - a rare win for a sweetie!

ROSÉ CLASS

Entry numbers continue to sky rocket as the popularity of Rosé booms.

Three Gold's were awarded to wines that were light coloured, dry and elegant, a style that clearly hits the right note with consumers

RED WINE CLASSES.

The judges commented on the surprising weakness of the Pinot Noir classes, which have often been the high point of this show.

Only three Golds were awarded to 99 exhibits and the judges commented on the lack of freshness and complexity in the various vintage classes.



The Shiraz classes were strong as usual and it is pleasing to see the continual style development of these cool climate wines. These stylish middle weight wines show increasing levels of complexity, with lifted aromas and rich fruit flavours largely due to the inclusion of whole bunches or berries in the fermentations.

Another factor is the increasingly sophisticated use of oak, with French oak largely replacing American. Sadly over oaked wines are still too common.

The Cabernet Sauvignon classes gave judges little joy, with many wines showing hard, green and astringent tannins while lacking richness of fruit on the palate. Definitely a grape variety for the warmer end of cool climate.

Red blends fared poorly this year but red varieties proved a shining light with two Gold medals for Tempranillo and an excellent Nebbiolo going on to win Best Red Wine of Show.

This is probably an Australian first!

WHITE AND ROSE SPARKLING CLASS

Again very strong. The standard of these wines seems to improve every year, probably not surprising given the huge number of competitors in the marketplace.

Sparkling red, sadly, seems to be in decline.

IN SUMMARY

It has often been said that it is not easy to win a Gold medal at the National Cool Climate Wine Show.

This show has always been judged to national standards and all our judges have judged in national shows, frequently in senior positions.

No allowance has even been made for the fact that many exhibitors come from small or emerging regions.

We strive for a level playing field.

The show itself, as usual, was seamlessly run and many thanks must go to both the judging panel and the many volunteers who generously give up their time and always smile as they tackle exciting tasks like washing and drying glasses.

Next year will be the 20th running of the National Cool Climate Show and I look forward to celebrating that milestone.

Tim Knapstein
Chairman of Judges.