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The Finest Wines of 2023 as selected by the International Wine and Spirits Competition

The Culmination of a Year's Worth of Rigorous Tastings

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For anyone intimately involved in the world of wine, the announcement of trophy winners by the International Wine and Spirits Competition (IWSC) is a much-anticipated moment, akin to the Oscars for filmmakers. The IWSC, now in its 54th year, has distinguished itself as one of the most venerable institutions in the beverage sector, with an unyielding commitment to identifying and celebrating the most exquisite wines

globally. This year's competition, featuring over 7,000 entries from various countries, was particularly noteworthy for several reasons, not least of which was the diversification in the types of wines that ascended to the top.

A Two-Pronged Judging Approach

The IWSC adopts a unique dual-format judging approach that sets it apart from other wine competitions. Initially, winemakers from across the globe send their offerings to a panel of international judges who sample and rate the wines in a traditional setting. Simultaneously, the IWSC deploys teams of specialized judges to various wine-producing regions for its exclusive "in situ" judging sessions. This latter process allows judges to sample wines directly at their place of origin, an unconventional methodology that often results in unearthing hidden gems.

For the year 2023, the competition chose a geographically diverse set of regions for the "in situ" judging, including Turkey, Argentina, South Africa, Georgia, and Australia. A particular focus was directed towards Australia's Margaret River appellation—a region gaining rapid prominence for its distinctive wines.

The Creme De La Creme: 2023 Trophy Winners

While the gold, silver, and bronze medals serve as significant milestones for many winemakers, the highest accolade remains the IWSC's Wine Trophy. This year, the competition was fierce. Twenty-four wines emerged victorious, falling into various categories: five in the sweet/fortified wines category, fourteen still wines (sub-categorized into five white, eight red, and one orange), and five sparkling wines.

The diversity of the winning wines is a testament to the dynamic nature of the global wine industry. Australia and South Africa took the lead in terms of the number of trophies, with four and three respectively. Turkey made history by winning its first-ever IWSC trophy, solidifying its standing in the international wine arena.

Sparkling Wines

- De Saint-Gall Orpale Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Brut 2008

- Rare Champagne Rosé Brut 2012
- Piper-Heidsieck Brut 2014 (Magnum)
- Carpenè Malvolti 1868 Rive Di San Pietro Di Barbozza Brut 2021
- RAIMES English Sparkling Classic Brut 2018

Sweet/Fortified Wines

- D'Oliveiras Tinta Negra 1995
- D'Oliveiras Malvazia 2009
- Bodegas Fundador Palo Cortado Medium Blend VORS NV
- González Byass Noé VORS Pedro Ximénez NV
- Inniskillin Icewine Riesling 2021

Red Wines

- Clairault Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2020
- Passel Estate Lot 71 Reserve Syrah 2018
- Evans & Tate Redbrook Estate Cabernet Merlot 2020
- A.G. Oatley Wines Robert Oatley The Pennant Cabernet Sauvignon 2018
- Bodegas Bianchi Gran Famiglia Corte 2020
- Antigal Winery & Estates Aduentus Cabernet Franc 2019
- Corporation Georgian Wine Akido Mukuzani 2021
- Akberg Wines Akberg Lethe Ercis Karasi 2021

White Wines

- Leo Buring Leonay Mature Release Riesling 2017
- Mont Rochelle Miko Chardonnay 2018
- Capensis Wines Capensis Silene 2021
- Distell Limited Durbanville Hills The Tangram White Blend 2020
- Weingut Johann Schneeberger Kittenberg Sauvignon Blanc 2021

Orange Wine

- Chelti Winery Qvevri Kisi 2020

The 2023 IWSC stands as an epitome of how the world of wine is ever-evolving, embracing diversity and excellence in equal measure. Whether you are a sommelier, a collector, or simply an enthusiast, these award-winning wines present an unparalleled experience, representing the zenith of winemaking skill and dedication.