vinetur

The standout red wines of the 2023 San Francisco International Wine Competition

The 2023 SFIWC, a showcase of diversity and value in red wine

Friday, February 2, 2024



The 2023 San Francisco International Wine Competition (SFIWC) stands as a testament to the enduring allure and quality of red wines from around the globe. This year's competition, held in the vibrant city of San Francisco from December 5-8, 2023, brought together over 50 distinguished judges to evaluate approximately 3,000 wines, showcasing the depth and breadth of winemaking talent and terroir. The competition, with its rich history and rigorous judging process, has once again highlighted the

exceptional value and complexity that red wines offer to connoisseurs and casual drinkers alike.

The standout of this year's competition, the Casto Pequeño 2022 Red Wine from Ribera de Duero, Spain, not only clinched the Best in Show Red Wine award but also emerged as the Best Spanish Red. Priced at an accessible $12, this wine exemplifies the exceptional value that can be found in well-crafted wines, challenging the notion that price is always indicative of quality. Ribera del Duero's reputation for producing red wines with depth, complexity, and aging potential is further solidified by this award, underscoring the region's adeptness at harnessing the Tempranillo grape's potential in its harsh continental climate and high-altitude vineyards.

The competition's results also underline the global nature of quality winemaking, with top honors spanning diverse wine-producing regions. From the robust and spice-laden Pinot Noir of Fathers + Daughters Cellars in Anderson Valley, California, to the dense and aromatic Tempranillo of Viña Mambrilla from Ribera de Duero, Spain, the awarded wines reflect a range of styles and terroirs. Notably, the Best Sangiovese from Wilridge Winery in Washington state and the Best Barbera from Gold Country in Amador County, United States, showcase the versatility and international appeal of Italian grape varieties when cultivated in American soil.

Moreover, the competition highlighted exceptional values beyond the top winners. Château Purcari's 2022 Rara Neagra from Moldova, priced under $5, is a testament to the competition's role in uncovering hidden gems in the wine world. Similarly, the Best in Show Desert Wine, Cat Amongst The Pigeons NV Tawny from South Australia, priced at $23.99, exemplifies the quality that can be found in dessert wines without necessitating a steep investment.

The 2023 SFIWC's diverse array of winners, from the Best Malbec of Cerebella in Oregon's Columbia Valley to the Best Petit Verdot of V. Sattui Winery in St. Helena, United States, illustrates the wide-ranging palette of red wines that continue to captivate and delight. The awarded wines, with their varied profiles from vibrant and fruity to deep and spicy, offer something for every taste and occasion.

As the SFIWC enters its 43rd year, its legacy as a pivotal platform for recognizing global winemaking excellence remains unassailable. The competition serves not only as a showcase for the world's finest wines but also as a guide for consumers seeking to explore the rich tapestry of red wine. The 2023 judging has once again affirmed that quality, complexity, and value in winemaking know no geographical boundaries, offering a compelling snapshot of the current state of global red wine production.