



Dear fine wine colleague,

Introduction

The Top 100 SA team is terrifically pleased to launch the new 2012 Wine Challenge. 2011 was a fast paced and successful inaugural year for the Top 100 SA Wines brand. We concentrated on building the business foundations based on credibility, image and the active positioning of Top 100 winning wines both in SA and abroad. We staked our objectives clearly and openly at outset. Our resource was focused and dedicated exclusively on non-stop PR, promotion and market facing activity. The Top 100 book is sold worldwide and it enjoyed some stellar reviews. The 2011 Wine List Challenge was a sound example of enhancing and growing the fine-wine brand. The 3 Wine Men Lords event in London amplified our international capability well ahead of schedule. Stakeholder feedback together with our own performance scorecards reflect that progress has been satisfactorily. Your fine wines underpin our brand and your support has been greatly appreciated.

Positive changes for 2012

The team has concentrated their efforts to ensure that Top 100 remains highly visible to consumers, is market focused and adds demonstrable value, maintains respect for all of our stakeholders and their market needs, and provides accessible and usable high-integrity information to wine consumers and professionals alike.

A summary of select key innovations for the year ahead:

1. Loyalty programme for vineyards. Any wine entered last year will attract a special rate when the new vintage is entered in this year's Challenge
2. Top 100 invested in a sophisticated, easy to navigate electronic wine entry system, a first for SA
3. Value awards will be granted to all vineyards whose Top 100 winning wines retail for under R100
4. Vineyards will also be ranked on total accumulated yr. by yr. awards, over all their winning wines
5. QR (Quick Response) codes will be used in the 2012/13 edition giving consumers your web link
6. We are researching Kindle and associated cutting edge e book solutions
7. Book allocations will be marginally changed. However as a result of dialogue and listening to feedback from vineyards with multiple winning wines, allocations for multiple winners will now also be capped at a maximum number at fifty books for 3 or more winning wines. (This is a lot less than in 2011 where a maximum of 100 books were allocated to vineyards with 5 winning wines.)
8. Three x three-person highest quality judging panels will assess entered wines
9. A 'museum class' of prior winning wines is cellared for use in events over forthcoming years
10. Challenge results will be independently audited



Judges and Judging

Our judging protocol and methodology is the cornerstone of Top 100 SA Wines reputation. A highly credible international panel has again been assembled under Tim Atkin MW. Tim will again assume the role of overall Top 100 SA Wine Challenge chair. The same effective processes as before, such as serving wine both decanted and out-the-bottle, will be applied. This unique demonstration of respect applied to fine wine assessment remains a key, unique, differentiator. It was viewed as having considerable positive impact on how entered wines showed during the 2011 Challenge.

2012 planned market activity and promotions

While 2011 was a fast learning curve, we enter the New Year with much cause for optimism and we can apply and implement our enhanced knowledge to maximum effect. Top 100 SA Wines is dedicated to relentlessly and vigorously promoting your fine wines. Our radio and You Tube strategy and activity have, in 6 months, taken us to the foremost 'active brand player' position in SA. Our database has multiplied and our e team message daily into SA and international markets. The Top 100 SA Wines website is extremely busy with inbound traffic. 17 000 unique visitors, 75 000 page views and 1.6 million hits helps to explain why Top 100 SA Wines is already on 110 000 web pages. Already 900 web pages link to our website. Top 100 is already in 6th position on Google for 'south african wines' and in 7th position for 'buy sa wines'...exactly 365 days since launch! Translation: Your wines are being sought.

New ventures that directly link to the key tourism sector include highly regarded Portfolio of Places and Greenwood Guides. These arrangements will be publicised shortly and as an early indication, will extend our footprint to another 100 000+ contacts in SA and abroad. These in turn tie into the Top 100 Wine Tourism strategy, a high growth sector, where tours will only include Top 100 winning vineyards and restaurants. Auslese is the start of our restaurant brand promotion strategy for winning vineyards. More establishments will follow. We are in dialogue with mall operators for specific consumer wine events in high traffic, upmarket destinations. This mirrors discussions with national key book retailers.

Top 100 started its international promotions one year ahead of stated plans. To increase market penetration our intentions are very serious in this regard. Weekly we receive wine and related enquiries from abroad and SA. With smart technology and Apps we plan to both multiply and better harness these. Our planned UK office, closer to key markets, is on schedule to open later this year. Our international marketing and promotions activity will be directed and implemented from there.

In summary, we continue to back fully and invest further in Top 100 SA Wines.



Timetable 2012 (please diarise now!)

Tuesday 24th January - entries open, and close on Friday 16th March

Monday 26th March - wine assessment and judging takes place during this week

Thursday 19th April - awards event and book launch celebration at Rodwell House

Thursday 10th May - Cape Town public tasting festival with wine makers

Thursday 17th May - Johannesburg public tasting festival with wine makers

15 key reasons to enter your wines into the 2012/13 Challenge and to support Top 100 SA Wines:

1. Vineyard profile enhanced – impresses consumers
2. Aids selling wines – helps focus & motivate consumer purchases
3. Only 100 winning wines - visible high ground
4. First calendar event – first mover advantage
5. Powerful brand - newsworthy & plausible
6. International & SA judges – credible
7. MW qualifications – objective & professional
8. Consumer events – accessible to the public
9. Quality branded book – believable & trustworthy reference
10. Global positioning – inroads into Europe, Americas, East
11. Promotions – SA & in major international centres
12. Website & vineyard links – e highway for trade & consumers
13. Own website – reinforces brand & winners; high Google ranking
14. Multiple leverage points – smart joint ventures & brand partnerships are in force & growing
15. Value for money – year-long activity, events, Social Media, radio, data mailings, PR & more

I personally hope, as does the Top 100 team, that you share in our enthusiasm and commitment to a mutually successful future working together. We would love to see you enter your vineyard wines into this premier SA Challenge. The benefits for winners are unmatched in terms of impact, reach and value.

We also wish your fine wine entries a strong showing during this year's judging and selection process. Thank you personally and sincerely for your interest and your support during our inaugural year. We intend to keep justifying your confidence in our ability to be a strong marketing partner for your fine wines and your vineyard brands.

All the very best,

Robin von Holdt and the Top 100 SA Wines team.