

Nederburg Auction results reflect conservative economic climate

Overall income at the 34th Nederburg Auction in Paarl on Saturday, 20 September, fetched R4,79-million, compared with last year's R5,13-million. Auction organisers attributed this year's lower income as well as the lower average price of R1270 per nine-litre case - down 10% on last year - to the present economic conditions and highly competitive trading environment in the South African and international wine market.



The number of participants is determined by a strict selective process which also determines the quantity of wines available.

Foreign buyers were responsible for 23% of the sales, equal to last year's figure, with Juric Imports from Zambia, Southern Rhino from Taiwan and Casa Flora from Brazil amongst the Top Ten buyers.

Encouraging international interest

Jan Scannell, MD of the Distell Group, said what most encouraged him about the auction results was the sustainability in international sales, including higher sales to Africa, which shows that South Africa's wine footprint is showing positive growth.

Retailer sales

For the second time in the history of the auction, a restaurant chain has taken the top spot, with the Cape Town Fish Market buying wine worth R924,800 (1266 cases) - representing about 20% of total sales. Checkers was the second biggest buyer with 578 cases worth R554,680 and Makro third with R474,580 (542 cases).

As in the past the supermarket and retail groups, Checkers, Makro, Spar and Ultra Liquors dominated the rest of the South African top 10 purchasers, ensuring that consumers will be able to enjoy auction wines at favourable prices.

Other top 10 buyers included Morukuru Lodge from the North-West Province and Wine of the Month Club, based in Cape

Town.

New records

The new record price for the rare Monis Collectors Port Stamp Collection 1948 was R21,000 - at R3500 per bottle, the highest price ever paid for a port at the auction. Last year's price was R20,000. The second highest price for port was R15,000 for a case of six bottles of the rare Nederburg Reserve Port. The average price of port per nine-litre case was R1414.

The highest price paid for a Noble Late Harvest wine was R5800 for 6 x 500ml of Klein Constantia Vin de Constance 1992. The second highest price was R375 per 375ml bottle for the award-winning Nederburg Edelkeur 1977. The average price for noble late harvest wine was R1861 per nine-litre case.

Overall toll for reds and whites

With the average price for red wine R1359 per nine-litre case, a single case of three bottles of Zonnebloem Cabernet Sauvignon 1964 fetched the highest price of R7000 (R3111 per bottle). Other reds that fetched top prices were rare Zonnebloem Cabernet Sauvignon 1965, 1967 and 1968, Chateau Libertas 1964 and 1968, Nederburg Vintage Cabernet 1975, De Toren Fusion V 2002 and Kanonkop Cabernet Sauvignon 1992.

The average price paid for a dry white wine was R935 per nine-litre case, an increase of 10% on last year's price, with the top price paid for Hamilton Russell Vineyards Chardonnay 2003 at R300 a bottle, while De Wetshof Bateleurs Chardonnay 2003 fetched R500 for a magnum, Vergelegen White 2005 for R183, Mulderbosch Chardonnay 2004 at R156 a bottle.

Blanc inclusions

One of the features of the auction in spring has been the inclusion of current vintages of Sauvignon Blanc. The highest price paid in this category was R83 for a bottle of Nederburg Private Bin D234 Sauvignon Blanc 2008.

The top price for Méthode Cap Classique wine was R1 200 per nine-litre case with Graham Beck Brut Blanc de Blanc 2001 going for R200 a bottle.

Words on wine technology

The average price for fortified wine was R689 per nine-litre case, with the highest price for Boland Wit Muscadet 1996 at R103 a bottle.

Professor Monica Christmann, from the Department of Oenology and Wine Technology at the Geisenheim State Research Institute in Germany, was this year's keynote speaker.

Professor Christmann, who is also president of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine's (OIV's) expert wine technology group said in her widely acclaimed address: "We as researchers and producers have a responsibility to protect wine and its heritage. That does not mean we should focus only on traditional methods. It is absolutely necessary to investigate new technologies, and when they are beneficial, also introduce them to the wine industry to ensure a positive future."

Regarding consumer demands in the future, she added that we will also notice a strong increase in the demand for consumer protection, which will become even stronger over the next few years. Questions of allergens, residues, traceability, sustainability etc. all need to be answered.

For charity

The charity sale on the day raised R227,600 for the beneficiaries, the Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa, Mothers2Mothers, and the Organ Donor Foundation of South Africa. The highest price paid on the charity auction was for a 50-litre barrel of Nederburg Flagship Red Blend, Ingenuity, donated by cellarmaster Razvan Macici, which fetched R50,000 and was bought by Ray Edwards from Spar.

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