

International Wine Competition - Sydney

The Sydney International Wine Competition for 1999 has once again produced a list of exceptional wines in the "Top 100". In fact, the wines were so good for this year's competition, the "Top 100" actually contains 102 wines - the last three being on equal points.

The bulk of this years winners came from Australia, but there were also a number of International winners. It was pleasing to see wines coming from not just the expected European competitors but also from as far afield as Mexico and China.

The 1999 competition drew 1144 entries from 289 wine makers in 16 countries. This compares with 961 entries from 261 wine makers in 13 countries for the 1998 competition, representing a 19% increase. Australian entries represented 64% of the total. Seventy eight of this years "Top 100" are Australian wines. Even New Zealand, which had 27 wines in the 1998 "TOP 100", only placed 16 this year. Germany and Chile placed one wine each. France was the exception. There are six french wines from only 12 entries. Three of them are champagne, underscoring the region's fine reputation for sparkling wines.

McLaren Valeplaced 16 (two Dry White and 14 Dry Red) Barossa with 14 (three Dry Whites, 11 Dry Reds and a Tawny) and Marlborough with nine (seven Dry Whites one Dry Red and one Dessert).

Australia placed 31 of the 50 dry white table wines, but completely dominated the reds placing 40 of the 44 "TOP 100" dry red table wines and seven of the eight sweet wines. Less than 9% of the total entry gained an award from this years Sydney International. That compares with up to 40% or more gaining awards from most Australian wine

shows. In view of this tough competition, it seems very possible that many Australian entries only enter their best wines, which does not appear to be the case with some overseas entrants.

This also partly explains the ever rising average retail price per bottle of the "TOP 100" wines, up 10% to \$28.20 this year as compared with \$25.40 in 1998. This is not far short of \$AU3,000.00 worth of wine on the table for tasting at the 1999 Exhibitions all of it Blue-Gold Medal quality.

However, the competition would like to encourage less expensive, more readily available wines into the competition. No price information is given to judges, all wines are presented blind.

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