

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### SA OLIVE AWARDS – BUY THESE 2017 HARVEST CHAMPIONS

Despite a difficult harvest leading to a smaller olive harvest, SA producers have still succeeded in providing the panel of five esteemed judges with outstanding contenders for the gold, silver and bronze medals up for grabs in the 2017 SA Olive Awards. Led by international olive oil expert and sensory scientist, Sue Langstaff from California, the panel awarded a total of 19 gold (22%), 37 silver and 23 bronze medals. “Out of the 87 extra virgin olive oils (EVOO) entered in categories for delicate, medium and intense, some 90% were deserving of a medal,” says Langstaff. “This compares well against similar competitions held in other countries – it means the producers have exercised a healthy measure of self-policing by entering mostly olive oils of high quality worthy of a medal.”

“The message to South African producers is that 90% of participating oils are worthy quality-wise, and local olive oil consumers can rest assured that buying medal-bearing oils from the 2017 harvest will not disappoint,” says SA Olive chairperson, Nick Wilkinson. “The competition also allows olive oil producers to ascertain what a gold medallist tastes like in terms of balance, complexity, harmony and freshness.”

#### And the winners are ...

The gold medallists in the category for **delicate** EVOO: Cederberg Olives Frantoio EVOO, Mount Ceder EVOO, Rio Largo, Gold EVOO and Tokara Mission Premium EVOO.

In the category for **medium** EVOO top honours went to Adamskloof EVOO, De Rustica Estate Medium EVOO, De Rustica Estate Collection EVOO, Green & Gold EVOO, Kleinbergskloof Olive Estate Blend EVOO, Mardouw EVOO, Olyvenbosch EVOO, Serrado EVOO and Wildekrans Keerweer EVOO.

**Intense** category winners: De Rustica Estate Collection Coratina EVOO, Kransfontein Coratina EVOO, Marbrin Olive Growers Directors Reserve EVOO, Mardouw Premium XXV Intense EVOO, Morgenster EVOO and Porterville Olives’ Andante Intenso EVOO.

Producers who scooped more than one gold medal, includes De Rustica Olive Estate (3) and Mardouw Olive Estate (2).

For a full list of the silver and bronze winners, visit [www.saolive.co.za](http://www.saolive.co.za)

#### Judging – behind the scenes

This year, for the first time, only professionals who had not entered an oil themselves, formed part of the adjudication team. The panel consisted of Reni Hildenbrand, Benedetta Lami and Linda Costa, local olive oil experts who regularly serve on international judging panels, and SA Olive tasting members, Birgitta Hofmeyr and Hazel Henman. International panel leader Sue Langstaff is also the leader of the UC Davis Olive Oil Taste Panel and co-editor of the book *Olive Oil Sensory Science* and creator of *The Defects Wheel for Olive Oil*.

Over a three-day judging process, olive oils were individually blind tasted and rated. “We do not have access to the bottles to eliminate the chance of recognising the labelling or specific shape of a bottle,” explains Reni Hildenbrand. “SA Olive has executed yet another adjudication process according to the strict regulations of the International Olive Council (Madrid).”

Some of the international directives also include that the judging venue must be kept at a steady 28°C for optimum olive oil consistency, while blue-hued specially shaped tasting glasses ensure that the oil is not judged by its colour and that the maximum concentration of aromas are captured during the tasting. Entries must also be 100% South African and made by SA producers registered with SA Olive.

The 2017 **Mentorship Award** goes to **Joseline von Wielligh** of Goedgedacht Olive Estate. SA Olive initiated its mentorship programme in 2008 with the aim of nurturing talented youth for careers in the olive industry. The participants in the programme are workers employed by SA Olive's member producers. To date include over 170 mentees have passed through the system and over 30 mentors have been trained.



#### **Golden medallists**

**Back:** Jan-Hendrik Marais (Cederberg Olives), Chris van Niekerk (Mardouw Olive Estate), Briony Coetsee (Marbrin Farm), Clive Heymans (Marbrin Farm), Peter Coetsee (Marbrin Farm),  
**Middle:** Joop Steenkamp (De Rustica Estate), Danie Goosen (Wildekrans Wine Estate), Willie Duminy (Porterville Olives), Sandy Jeffery (Diepsak Farm)  
**Front:** Yvette Jordaan (Mount Ceder Olives), Nico Loubser (Morgenster Estate), Nick Wilkinson (Rio Largo Estate), Gert van Dyk (Tokara), Dial Steyn (Kransfontein Estate).

**Absa Top 10:** Consumers can look forward to the announcement of the crème de la crème when the Absa Top 10 Extra Virgin Olive Oils are announced on 27 September.

SA Olive would like to thank Mori-Tem Oliomio and Piralisi for their contribution in furthering the local olive oil industry through their sponsorship of the SA Olive Awards.

For more information visit [www.saolive.co.za](http://www.saolive.co.za) or contact Karien Bezuidenhout at 021 870 2900 or [karien@hortgro.co.za](mailto:karien@hortgro.co.za).

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