RASV Royal Melbourne WINE SHOW 2008

21 October , 2008

Australian Wines to be Put Through the Swirl

With judging commencing for the 2008 Royal Melbourne Wine Show this week, the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds is packed to the rafters again with more than 18,000 bottles of wine for Australia's largest and most prestigious wine show.

Judging kicks off on 16 October, where more than 3300 wines from 518 wineries are in the running for the 21 awards up for grabs at the annual event.

The Royal Melbourne Wine Show is recognised by the wine producers as an important competition in which to benchmark their produce and celebrate excellence, by recognising high quality wines across a range of varietals and styles.

The most prestigious of the 21 awards on offer is the renowned **Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy** – the best red wine of the vintage year prior to the current vintage year, and the **Premiers Gold Trophy** – for the best Victorian wine in show.

Making up the high profile judging panel, chaired by new Chairman of Judges, Steve Webber will be international judges, Debra E Meiburg and Sam Harrop MW, both of whom form part of only 253 people in the world hat are recognised Masters of Wine.

Debra E Meiburg of Hong Kong is a Qualified Wine Judge and Wine Educator and has judged wine shows on four continents. Formerly a wine professor, Debra writes a weekly column in the major daily newspaper in China and is a contributing editor to the Asian Tatler Magazines. In 2007, Debra was voted as the Most Influential Wine Journalist in Hong Kong by 500 members of the wine trade.

Sam Harrop MW is a leading consultant winemaker from London. He has worked as a wine buyer for influential retailers and runs his own boutique wine making operation in France. Sam is one of only 22 people to recieve the Tim Derouet Award for outstanding performance since it was founded in 1976.

With a commitment to development and recognising varietal trends in the wine industry, the Royal Melbourne Wine Show has introduced two new classes of red wine and an entirely new category - Wines with Character, Charm and Interest in the $15-$25 class - to the award categories in 2008.

"In recent years both our domestic and international markets have been looking for wine with more charm and character. Their has been an emphasis in our wine show system that has removed all the faults in wine, but with this some of the character and interest has also been eliminated," said Chairman of Judges, Steven Webber.

"By introducing this new category, we hope to encourage local winemakers to produce more adventurous, light to medium bodied wines that possess a distinct point of difference."

With its popularity growing over the past few years, rose will this year be the feature wine.

"Rose is a growing sector and we hope to identify some highly drinkable premium examples in both the still and sparking categories" said Steve Webber, Chairman of Judges.

The judging for these prestigious awards is renowned in the industry for its innovative and thorough two-stage judging process, which was introduced, by the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria and its Wine Committee in 2005.

The first round of judging – the qualifying round - will commence on 16 October over two days. The second round takes place over four days from 20 October.

The winners will be announced at the Royal Melbourne Wine Show presentation dinner to be held on 13 November at the Hilton on the Park. The evening is an important industry event that provides guests with the opportunity to exclusively sample the award winning wines, while mingling with some of Australia's leading winemakers.

Limited tickets can be purchased by contacting Henry Clayton at the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV) 9281 7464 OR henry.clayton@rasv.com.au

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