

Hidden Valley wins!

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In a format that sees one superlative winning wine and one best value wine recognised in Wine's BRENN-O-KEM Shiraz Challenge, Land's End Cape Agulhas Syrah 2008 has topped the 2011 BRENN-O-KEM Shiraz Challenge roll of honour.



The 4½-star winner from Hidden Valley which costs R175 per bottle was named the winner ahead of the Fairview Shiraz 2009, which was rated 4 stars, as were the rest of the top 9 wines.

In alphabetical order, they are:

- Benguela Cove Premium Selection Shiraz 2009 – R115.00
- Fairview Shiraz 2009 – R58.25
- Glenelly The Glass Collection Shiraz 2009 – R70.00
- Hidden Valley Lands End Cape Agulhas Syrah 2008 – R175.00
- Laborie Jean Taillefert 2009 – R155.00
- Lord's Shiraz 2009 – R80.00
- Raka Biography Shiraz 2008 – R90.00
- Thelema Shiraz 2007 – R110.00
- Tokara Zondernaam Shiraz 2009* - R75.00
- Uva Mira Syrah 2008 – R200.00



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The winning Land's End Cape Agulhas Syrah 2008 was the only wine to score 4½ stars in the 2011 challenge. The judges noted the Lands End Cape Agulhas Syrah's "white spice, savoury, and smoky" flavours on the nose and commended its "fresh, complex palate with a good clean balance and delicious sweet fruit flavours."

The Best Value wine to emerge was the 2½ star Obikwa Shiraz 2010 selling at R27* per bottle, also the Best Value winner of the 2010 Shiraz Challenge.

Panel chairman for the Wine magazine BRENN-O-KEM Shiraz Challenge, Carrie Adams, said she "particularly wanted to award a Shiraz that smacked of a typical South African style [and I think we did]. With Shiraz long being termed the 'crown prince' of red cultivars in South Africa, we have waited with anticipation for said label to emerge. Fraught with problems over the years, involving disease in the vineyard, brett in the cellar, bacterial infection and closure hassles, we have all drunk more dreadful Shiraz wines than we care to remember. Happily, this is changing, and we tasted some seriously smart Shiraz over the two days of the Shiraz Challenge."

"It was a privilege and a pleasure to chair this year's Shiraz Challenge – praise all around to SA Shiraz producers, to Wine magazine for putting it all together and of course to BRENN-O-KEM for sponsoring the Challenge. We will continue in our quest to find that ultimate sweet spot, but for this year, our crowned prince is a wine to be truly proud of."

Of the 165 wines tasted, only one wine received 4.5 Stars and was an outright winner. Eight wines were not scored as a result of being faulty, which then left us with 5.7% of the wines scoring 4 Stars; 8.3% scoring 3.5 Stars and 22.6% receiving 3 Stars. The wines were tasted blind and assessed using the 20-point/5-Star scoring system by a five-person panel, consisting of Carrie Adams, Miguel Chan, Karl Lambour, Angela Lloyd and James Pietersen.



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