



UK WINNER OF THE WINES OF SOUTH AFRICA SOMMELIER CUP ANNOUNCED

Erik Simonics, sommelier at The Savoy, has won the UK round of Wines of South Africa's triennial Sommelier Cup competition. The UK competition was held yesterday at 67 Pall Mall, London; 29 sommeliers entered the UK leg. The two runners up were Yoel Abarbanel, sommelier at The Ledbury and Dorian Guillon, assistant head sommelier at Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester. The competition consisted of a written exam, blind tasting of three wines and an interview with the judges, Ronan Sayburn MS and Greg Sherwood MW.

Erik will travel to South Africa later this year to represent the UK in the global final, held on Friday 23rd September. He will join the winners from eight other key growth markets for South Africa: Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands, USA, Canada, Asia, Kenya and Ghana, to compete to be the overall winner. The winners will enjoy a week of winery visits, tastings and dinners in the run up to the final.

Commenting on the activity, Jo Wehring, UK market manager for Wines of South Africa, said: "This was a tough competition to win, the standard was extremely high and we were very impressed with the knowledge and ability of the participants. Erik achieved high scores in all aspects of the competition and is a well-deserved winner. We wish him all the best for the next stage.

"The on-trade is a focus area for Wines of South Africa in the UK, we are seeing strong growth in this sector, up 9 percent (CGA Strategy MAT to 19/03/16) by value and with a good average price. The sommelier community is vital to developing the reputation of our wines and their direct influence with consumers is helping to cement South Africa's image as one of the most exciting and innovative wine producing nations."

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Date: 14th June 2016

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