

20 July 2016



MACAU SOMM WINS ASIA ROUND OF WINES OF SOUTH AFRICA SOMMELIER CUP

Over 100 sommeliers from fourteen Asian countries entered the Asia round of this year's Wines of South Africa Sommelier Cup competition. We are delighted by the widespread interest and very impressed with the knowledge and ability of the participants.

The competition was open to sommeliers from across Asia and candidates had to complete an online examination during the application period 30 April – 31 May 2016 testing their South African wine knowledge. Ten leading sommeliers from eight Asian countries/regions made it into the top ten and traveled to Hong Kong to compete in the Asia round, held on Monday, 18th July, at L'Hotel Causeway Bay in Hong Kong.

The 10 semi-finalists that competed in the Asia round this year represent Hong Kong, China, Macau, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, Korea and Thailand:

- Bruce Li, China World Summit Wing, Beijing, China
- Danny Ng, American Club, Hong Kong
- Felix Zhang, Hakkasan, Shanghai, China
- Gus Han, Cellist's Kitchen, Taiwan
- Joe Yang, Studio City, Macau
- Justin Ho, Private Room TTDI, Malaysia
- Masayoshi Shiokawa, Takashimaya Nihombashi, Japan
- Nathan Kim, Conrad Seoul, Korea
- Setsuko Mukai, KAZZ, Japan
- Yuthapichai Polnakoo, U Sathorn Bangkok, Thailand

Candidates were put through their paces by judges Debra Meiburg MW, Hervé Pennequin (Head Sommelier, The Hong Kong Jockey Club) and Nelson Chow (President of the Hong Kong Sommelier Association). The competition consisted of a verbal blind tasting examination in the morning, followed by a session in front of an audience in the afternoon: an on-stage role play and service examination during which contestants had to recommend a South African wine for guests to go with their set menu, and thereafter open, decant, and serve a red wine.

The standard was high and it was a tough competition to win. Finally, it was Joe Yang, sommelier of Studio City in Macau who was deemed the overall winner; impressing the judges with his knowledge of South African wines, and especially his excellent customer service. He achieved high scores in all aspects of the competition and is a well-deserved winner. The runner-up was also Danny Ng from Hong Kong's prestigious members-only American Club.

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

May the best #CAPESomm win!

Michaela Stander

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