



## SA WINE INDUSTRY PAYS HOMAGE TO FOUR TRAILBLAZERS

*Four trailblazers of the South African wine industry were honoured on Wednesday 2 February 2022 during the industry's annual Wine Harvest Commemorative event – which took place at the historic Groot Constantia Wine Estate in Cape Town. The event celebrated the birth of South Africa's wine industry, asked for the Blessing of the Harvest, and honoured role players who have shaped and influenced the wine industry.*

During the event the wine industry gave due recognition to individuals for their exceptional contribution in the following categories: **Visionary Leadership, Diversity and Transformation, Wine Appreciation and Wine Advancement**, and **Viticulture and Wine Creation**. This ceremony has been hosted since 1974 to honour individuals who have made great strides in the industry.

### **1659 Visionary Leadership Award**

Carmen Stevens, the first black South African allowed to study winemaking was honoured with the iconic 1659 Award for Visionary Leadership this year. The criteria for individuals or organisations to qualify for this prestigious award include demonstrable efforts and initiatives that have benefited the South African wine industry; a lasting impact and legacy; and to encourage and inspire others in the industry.

Carmen has 25 years of winemaking experience. After initially being barred from enrolling at Elsenburg due to the colour of her skin, Carmen went on to work as a winemaker for different premium vineyards before founding Carmen Stevens Wines (PTY) Ltd, the first 100% black woman-owned winery based in Stellenbosch. Apart from producing several highly awarded wines, Carmen serves on the Wine and Spirits Board and is a representative on the South African Transformation Unit board.

Carmen is committed to giving back and youth development in the wine industry is close to her heart. She strongly believes in the power of early empowerment programmes to enable children to rise above their circumstances. To date her NPO has provided 11 622 731 plates of food to 41 363 learners.

She is an active industry role player and a respected personality within the wine industry who continues to inspire numerous aspiring, emerging and established winemakers across the spectrum.

### **Recognition for Diversity and Transformation**

Denise Stubbs was selected to receive the accolade in the Diversity and Transformation category. The criteria for individuals to qualify in this category includes paving the way for others through the elimination of barriers; setting an example and inspiring others; contributing to the knowledge that others can use

and having an overall effect on the image of the South African wine industry.

It was always Denise's dream to give back to her community and when given the chance, she left her corporate career and established Thokozani, alongside 65 farm worker shareholders.

Denise is now the Managing Director of Thokozani (meaning 'celebrations' in Zulu) and she played a key role in the creation of the Thokozani Group of Companies, which is a Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment initiative that encompasses wine, conferencing, hospitality and property business interests. Thokozani now exports to seven different countries.

Denise sits on the board of Wines of South Africa and has won numerous awards – including the 2019 International Enterprising Women Award. Denise is a role model, industry leader and a mentor to many – with her contribution paving the way for female farmers and winemakers to make their mark.

### **Recognition for Wine Appreciation and Wine Advancements**

Christine Rudman has been honoured as the recipient in the Wine Appreciation and Wine Advancement category.

The criteria for individuals to qualify in this category includes noticeable contributions towards the image of wine, and the responsible use of it, as well as building the image of the South African wine industry.

A Cape Wine Master - who has twice been honoured by the wine industry - Christine has over four decades of experience in the industry. From 1977 until 1995, she served as Wine Brand Manager and then Marketing Manager for Stellenbosch Farmers Winery. She then became the Principal of the Cape Wine Academy and Chairperson of the Institute of Cape Wine Masters. In 2015, she was appointed Technical Director of the Michelangelo International Wine and Spirits Awards, prior to which she had been its only South African judge for nine years.

She has tasted on international panels across Europe and locally, she has judged various awards. She has also completed sommelier training and presented South African wine internationally.

Christine's writing contributions include the internationally acclaimed annual Platters Wine Guide, Wineland, Classic Wine, the Best Value Guide and Wine Tourism Handbook.

### **Recognition for Viticulture and Wine Creation**

This year's Viticulture and Wine Creation recipient is Francois Viljoen, a viticulturist in the South African wine industry for the past 36 years who has a BSc degree in Viticulture and Oenology from Stellenbosch University, as well as an Honours degree in Agri Extension Services.

The criteria for individuals to qualify includes the development of new ideas, technologies and methods within the wine-making industry, implementing and transferring these, changing mindsets, and benefitting the South African wine

industry overall.

Prior to taking up his position at the helm of the Gen-Z Vineyard Project in July 2019, Francois, who started his career in 1986 as a junior Viticulturist Advisor in the Robertson and Klein Karoo Regions, was the manager of Vinpro's consultation services for 20 years, during which time he led a team of regional expert viticulturists and soil scientists.

Francois was awarded the prestigious Pon van Zyl trophy by the Robertson Wine Valley in 2014 for his outstanding contributions to the region and the broader industry. Francois provides crucial viticultural advice and insight to wine estates and producers across the industry and represents wine producers on various industry committees, boards and working groups.

"It was an honour and a privilege to give due recognition to these industry role players who have delivered exceptional influence to the South African wine sector over the years," said Dr Ernest Messina, Chairperson of Groot Constantia. "The annual Wine Harvest Commemorative event is a much-anticipated date on the wine industry's calendar – not only because we are able to celebrate the start of the industry in SA and bless the new harvest, but also because we are able to celebrate these extraordinary individuals."

### **Support the SA wine industry**

The Wine Harvest Commemorative event is made possible by the financial support and partnerships of Ninety One, Groot Constantia, Standard Bank, Vinpro and Die Burger. The virtual event is still available on the website visiting [www.sawineharvest.co.za](http://www.sawineharvest.co.za). Please continue supporting the wine industry on social media using #sawineharvest2022.

**Ends**

### **DOWNLOAD HIGH RES PHOTOS:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ff27jzmq7m4brvr/AABcgC7Xaj2xYWDsEffUEFZ4a?dl=0>

*From left to right are Rico Basson (Managing Director of Vinpro), Natalie Phillips (Deputy Managing Director of Ninety One), Denise Stubbs (Recognition for Diversity and Transformation), Francois Viljoen (Recognition for Viticulture and Wine Creation), Carmen Stevens (1659 Visionary Leadership Award), Christine Rudman (Recognition for Wine Appreciation and Wine Advancement), Dr Ernest Messina (Chairperson of Groot Constantia), Willem Jordaan (Editor of Die Burger) and Reghardt Strauss (Standard Bank Head of Agribusiness: Western Cape).*



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