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The Sydney International Wine Competition looks back on 30 years of successes ... and to a new beginning

The Sydney International Wine Competition will mark its 30th anniversary with an Awards Presentation Banquet on Saturday 26 February at Sydney's Shangri La Hotel, where James Halliday AM will deliver the keynote speech — *The End of an Era; and a New Beginning*.

“As we look back on the outstanding achievements of our wine industry over the past three decades and consider the significant challenges confronting us in the years to come, I think it's a highly appropriate topic, appropriately addressed by one of the world's most perceptive commentators,” said Competition Director Warren Mason.

For the 2011 Sydney International Wine Competition, South Australian Kym Milne MW chaired a 14-strong judging panel that assessed 2060 wines, breaching by 60 the competition's stated cap before the flow of entries could be stemmed.

Wines were entered by 478 producers from every Australian state, the ACT, and from New Zealand, Italy, France, South Africa, Argentina, Greece, India, Spain and England. The international flavour was reflected in the line-up of judges: Kym Milne MW (South Australia), Adrian Atkinson (UK), Ken Dobler (New South Wales), Steve Flamsteed (Victoria), Rob Geddes MW (New South Wales), Warren Gibson (New Zealand), Neil Hadley MW (New South Wales), Xenia Irwin MW (United Kingdom), Brent Marris (New Zealand), Oliver Masters (New Zealand), Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW (Singapore), Mark Robertson (South Australia), Simon Tam (Hong Kong) and Martin Williams MW (Victoria).

As previously, the unique aspect of the 2011 Sydney International Wine Competition was its hallmark assessment of the wines from the second phase of judging onwards alongside appropriately weighted and flavoured food.

This year about 10 per cent of the entries won the competition's coveted Blue-Gold Award, with about 5 per cent making the cut into the TOP 100™ wines.

“Our aim has always been to stress the role of wine as an accompaniment to food, and to elevate its appreciation as a civilised beverage,” said Warren Mason.

“An important benefit of the competition for consumers is that most of the top wines will still be currently available and that the list provides them with an instant, reliable reference to use when matching wine with food.

“Our website lists the recipes used in the judging and the wines that went well with them. This is a great resource for both committed foodies and for those just embarking on an exploration of wine and food.”

The banquet will feature the presentation of trophies and delivery of the keynote address by James Halliday AM. An optional starting time of 10am offers the opportunity to taste all the TOP 100™ and Blue-Gold Award winning wines whilst the banquet itself will start at 12 Noon, offering seven outstanding examples of wine–food synergies. Dishes have been created for the following categories: Dry White Sparkling Wines; Lighter-Bodied Dry White Table Wines; Fuller-Bodied Dry White Table Wines; Pinot Noir Still Red Table Wines; Lighter-Bodied Dry Red Table Wines; Medium-Bodied Dry Red Table Wines; and Fortified Wines.

For further information, please call Warren Mason on 02 4757 4400. The Competition’s website’s “About Us” section offers additional information. (<http://www.top100wines.com>)

High resolution images can be downloaded from WineMedia’s website (<http://www.winemedia.com.au/>).

ADDENDA

1. Report from Kym Milne MW, Chairman of Judges.
2. Reflections from two first-time judges at the Sydney International Wine Competition — and from one Judge returning after an eight-year break.