



ASVO WINE SHOW PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION V

USE OF MEDALS

INTRODUCTION

Exhibitors enter wine shows to have their wines judged by independent and experienced peers. They do this for two main reasons:

1. To see how they compare with their competitors, glean what direction the competition is taking and to set a benchmark to improve the quality of their wines.
2. To gain marketing benefits from wine show successes.

Australian wine shows award medals to successful exhibitors - gold, silver and bronze. Wine Show medals are awarded by judges following standard criteria set by the wine show's committee and the chairman of judges. These medal awards, along with trophies, are commonly used by companies for promotional purposes. Placing an award on wine bottles is extremely beneficial from a marketing and sales point of view, as it is an indication that the wine has reached a certain level of quality.

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA) and the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation (AWBC) have recently considered issues related to the use of medals and have developed a Code of Practice, which the ASVO Wine Show Committee is pleased to endorse. The Objectives and Recommendations below have been made in accordance with this Code of Practice.

CURRENT PRACTICE / PROBLEMS

- Some wine shows permit unfinished wines (tank/barrel samples, show blends etc.) to be entered into shows and in some cases these wines may be eligible for medals. The process of exhibiting unfinished wines is uncommon outside Australia.
- Most wine shows do not monitor how exhibitors use medals.
- In some wine shows, exhibitors are permitted to enter wine under any company-registered brand name, even though the packaged wine may be labeled under a different brand. Medals are therefore portable between company products.
- Exploitation of the award system occurs when a producer places a medal-like device on the bottle, passing it off as a wine show medal, when in fact it may show a map of

Australia, a suggested serving temperature or an award unrelated to that wine. This practice is misleading to the consumer.

- Exhibitors exploit the use of medals on non-vintage wines by continuing to claim a medal after the blend or vintage composition has changed.
- Medals awarded for one blend of a staggered-bottling wine may be used for subsequent blends of the same vintage.

OBJECTIVES

- To improve the integrity of wine show awards and how the exhibitor uses them.
- To protect the value of genuine wine show awards by ensuring that they are legitimately awarded and displayed.
- To ensure that medals and trophies are awarded to finished wines only.
- To discourage the use of misleading medal-like devices and passing off by exhibitors.
- To discourage the portability of wine show awards.
- To remind producers of their legal obligation to comply with the label integrity provisions (LIP) of the AWBC Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Exhibitors are expected to comply with the Winemakers Federation of Australia (WFA) Code of Practice for the display of awards. A wine show may refuse to accept exhibits from those exhibitors who have been shown not to comply with this code.
2. Producers will not use medals, stickers, symbols or other devices in order to misleadingly convey the impression that the wine has received an award at an open, objective and independent competition or wine show.

In particular, exhibitors will not use gold, silver or bronze medals to display any award received from a wine show that does not comply with the ASVO Wine Show Standard Recommendations.

3. Compliance by a producer (including its subsidiaries or associated companies) with this Code of Practice will be a prerequisite for entry to any wine show whose awards are authorised by the AWBC for display on products to be exported to Europe.
4. All wine shows and exhibitors should be encouraged to adhere to the ASVO Wine Show Standards and Audit Protocols, with particular reference to the responsibility of an exhibitor to use wine show awards in the spirit in which they were intended.

WINEMAKERS' FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE DISPLAY OF AWARDS

Background

The issue of the widespread use of gold, silver and bronze discs attached to labels with writing saying such things as 'gold medal standard wine' 'big wine of the year' is of concern to the wine industry.

It was felt that some producers were using such labelling to mislead the consumer into believing that that wine had won a medal at a wine show, which was disadvantaging producers who only labelled legitimate show medals.

At the Winemakers' Federation of Australia (WFA) Executive Council meeting held in March 2004, Executive Council supported the development of a voluntary code of practice relating to the use of wine show medals and similar symbols (attached)

The code of practice will be taken to major wine shows with the request that they place adherence to the code of practice as a pre-requisite for entry to their wine shows. That means that any company caught breaching the code for any of the wines in its portfolio would be ineligible to compete in the show.

This does not guarantee that the indiscriminate use of gold and silver discs will not continue, but does provide some mechanism of control.

WFA recognises that there is a legitimate need to display non-show awards and awards received by an exhibitor or class of wines and is seeking to develop further labelling guidelines for the display of such awards.

Attachment:

1. Code of Practice for the Display of Awards

Annex 1: Code of Practice for the Display of Awards

1. Producers will only display awards gained from competitions authorised by the AWBC.
2. Producers will not use medals, stickers, symbols or other devices in order to misleadingly convey the impression that the wine has received an award at an open, objective and independent competition.
3. Awards received by an individual wine will bear the year of award and the class description and as a general rule shall only be applied to wines bearing the name under which the exhibit was entered.
 - However, in recognition that a wine could be entered in a show before a wine has been finally allocated to a Brand, portability of an award so that it can stay with the wine which won it shall be permitted providing it is allowed by that show.
4. Awards received by a class of wines (eg “Winemaker of the Year”, “Most Successful Exhibitor”) shall not be used to suggest the individual wine has received any particular distinction. These awards will not be presented on the bottle in the form of a medal.
5. Compliance by a producer (including by subsidiaries or by associated companies) with this Code of Practice be a prerequisite for entry to any show of which the display of awards or medals are authorised by the AWBC for export to Europe.