

Fresh format for SA's oldest wine auction

Louise Liebenberg

SOUTH Africa's rarest and most exclusive wines will be going under the hammer at next weekend's annual Nederburg Auction.

The auction, which is again being held at the historic Nederburg homestead in Paarl, attracts buyers from around the globe and from Southern Africa.

Eastern Cape buyers will also be represented among those wielding paddles in the hopes of securing exceptional wines for their clients.

The likes of Port Elizabeth's well-known Pitsiladi family from Prestons, as well as restaurateurs and tavern owners, are usually present.

Attendance is by invitation only and serious wine buyers will have had to apply for tickets.

"The selection panel, buyers and wine critics have all hailed this year's wine line-up as the best in the auc-

tion's 43-year history and I am extremely confident it's of a quality and calibre like no other," auction manager Dalene Steyn told Weekend Post this week.

"All lots have also been structured to ensure there is something for everyone.

"The auction promises to be a memorable and fantastic event where iconic wines are the focus of the day. It will be a day of indulgence from beginning to end, with world-class chefs and baristas delivering their version of perfection before, during and after the auction," Steyn said.

This year's event has been structured slightly differently in that actual bidding will now only take place from early on the Saturday, rather than over two days as was the case in the past.

Pre-auction tasting of the wines on offer – no doubt followed by intense decision-making around what to bid

"The selection panel, buyers and wine critics have all hailed this year's wine line-up"

on – will happen on Friday, to be followed by a tapas-inspired feast.

Next Saturday will kick off early with a keynote address by South African wine guru Michael Fridjhon. All auction lots will then have to go under British auctioneer David Elswood's hammer in the Johann Graue hall before the charity auction, another important element of the event, takes place.

"Once the auction and charity auction have concluded the day will focus on networking and fine cuisine," Steyn explained. "Guests will have an opportunity to meet the producers

and industry professionals.

"In short, the 2017 auction is all business focused, where serious wine buyers can network, buy iconic wines and be engaged without distraction."

This year's selection, chosen by an international panel of global wine experts and Masters of Wine, was very well received at the two preview events held in Cape Town and Johannesburg early last month.

One of the wines with a particularly interesting story and heritage is the 1978 Meerlust Bordeaux-style blend, which led to the creation of the world-renowned Meerlust Rubicon.

The wine, bottled by famed winemaker Giorgio Dalla Cia at Meerlust, was never sold commercially, but produced only for their VIP customers to taste. The wines going on auction are the only known bottles available and are likely to achieve record prices.



PROUD LEGACY: The Nederburg Auction, SA's longest-running fine wine auction, is next weekend