



BUYING PROWESS: SPAR Eastern Cape's Howard Lipman wields his paddle at the Nederburg auction. To his left are St Francis Bay buyers Joha and Richard Moolman, and at right is SPAR Eastern Cape financial director Richard Morgan Picture: MATT STOW

Nederburg sales buck recession

Louise Liebenberg

liebenbergl@tisoblackstar.co.za

Some 6,700l was knocked down at the Nederburg auction of rare and iconic wines on Saturday, an Eastern Cape buyer among the top 10 big spenders.

Pick n Pay was the top bidder in the oldest and biggest wine auction in the “new world”, accounting for about 9% of overall sales with a spend of R464,200.

Total sales of R5.26m were realised under the hammer of British auctioneer David Elswood.

SPAR Eastern Cape claimed ninth place in the list of buyers, spending more than R142,000.

All these wines would be coming to the Eastern Cape, senior retail operations manager Howard Lipman said.

Port Elizabeth's Nico Pitsiladi, of Preston's, was another focused bidder, buying wines worth more than R94,000.

Other Eastern Cape buyers included Richard Moolman of TOPS at SPAR in St Francis Bay, and Jeffreys Bay attorney and businessman Ernie Blignault.

Lipman said: “[It] started with a bang in terms of price [in the opening bid, the 1996

Nederburg Edelkeur sold at R1,500 a 375ml bottle].”

The 2001 Kanonkop pinotage was among the top buys – SPAR spent R36,000 on two cases of four magnums each.

The record average price was R590 a 750ml bottle – 9% up on 2017's R542.

The most expensive wine sold was the 1948 Moni's Collectors Port at R7,000/750ml.

The most expensive red was the 1968 Chateau Libertas at R5,000 a bottle, and the priciest white the 2012 Hermanuspietersfontein No 5 at R833/bottle.

The event at Nederburg in Paarl started with a pre-auction tasting on Friday.

The 107 wines on offer from 64 producers were selected through blind tasting, with the judges, led by wine masters Cathy van Zyl and Tim Atkin, tasting more than 400 wines in just two days.

A charity auction followed Friday's tasting.

On Saturday, the serious business of buying began in earnest, followed by a gourmet feast by some of SA's top chefs.

Auction manager Dalene Steyn said successful bids were more evenly spread between large retailers and private individuals.