

Judges nose out the best in Hunter Valley Wine Show

The HERALD, Newcastle

By Donna Sharpe

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SOME of the Hunter's best drops will be on show at Singleton this week for the 36th annual Hunter Valley Wine Show.

The occasion is one of the premier regional wine shows in Australia, concentrating exclusively on exhibiting only those wines made from Hunter Valley grapes and attracting the best and most experienced judging panels in the country.

Chairman of judges Iain Riggs said this year would probably be one of the most interesting shows with the 2009 vintage considered 'pretty smart' after some excellent growing conditions.

'We have already seen some stylish '09 Semillons,' Mr Riggs said.

He said 2008 was a wet year producing no Hunter reds but the year's Semillons and chardonnays were excellent.

'We've also seen some very smart reds coming from the '05, '06, '07 vintages,' Mr Riggs said.

This year the show has attracted an impressive 779 exhibits from 106 Hunter Valley exhibitors over 33 classes.

Renowned South-East Asian wine journalist and publisher Ch'ng Poh Tiong is the international guest judge and Mr Riggs will lead judges who include Lester Jesberg, Nick Ryan and Travis Fuller.

Only Hunter Valley wines are judged in the show, providing the opportunity for wines that exhibit true regional style and quality to be rewarded.

Mr Riggs said show entries this year were down a little on previous years because of the drought in 2007 and 2008.

'There are really two parts to the wine show. There are the bragging rights, of course, but it also gives the winemakers themselves the chance to know how they are going and to benchmark themselves against other wineries in the Hunter.

The other side is the consumer side and the trophies etc,' Mr Riggs said.

Mr Riggs said the 2010 vintage was shaping up well with good rain throughout autumn.

The wine show, which started yesterday, is being held at Singleton Army Base throughout the week. A public tasting will be held at Lindeman's on McDonalds Road, Pokolbin, on Saturday, August 29 from 1pm - 5pm.



STYLISH: Judge Usher Tinkler makes notes
- Pictures by Kitty Hill



Wine Journalist Nick Ryan shows the downside of testing reds - Pictures by Kitty Hill