

## Our wines shine

GREAT Southern wines sparkled at the prestigious Mt Barker Qantas wine show last week.

Twenty-four of the region's wines won gold – second only to the Margaret River region.

This year, the show's 31st, James Halliday returned to Mt Barker as chief judge of 1200 wines.

Last year's Best Wine of Show award winner, Houghtons' Jack Mann cabernet sauvignon, won gold and will vie for the top gong again this year.

Gold medal-winners will now compete for 17 trophies, to be awarded in Perth on October 21.

Smaller and boutique wineries were rewarded for their rieslings, with Porongurup's winery Castle Rock winning two golds for its 2002 and 2005 whites.

Poacher's Ridge, Oranje Tractor Wine, Trevelen Farm, Three Drops, Harewood and Lamont's all won gold for their rieslings.

Royal Show gold medal winners Shepherd's Hut picked up a gold for their 2005 shiraz.

Castle Rock winemaker Rob Diletti said he was very excited about the results. "Any time you get a gold it's a great result. We were very happy with the 2008 riesling. Because it's a new wine

it's really good to have it out there. We knew the 2002 was ageing well, but we are still really pleased with the result."

Castle Rock also acts as a contract winemaking facility for nearby Oranje Tractor, Three Drops, Shepherd's Hut and Poacher's Ridge, all of which won gold medals.

"It's very pleasing to see wines I have made do so well," Mr Diletti said. "The grapes I have to work with are top quality, so it makes my job easy."

Established vineyards such as Howard Park, Houghtons, Goundrey, and Forest Hill won awards for a range of wines with Howard Park taking two golds for its 2008 sauvignon blanc and 2008 riesling, Goundrey winning with its 2008 riesling and 2005 cabernet sauvignon and Forest Hill taking gold for its 2006 Estate chardonnay and 2006 Estate cabernet sauvignon.

Lamont's senior winemaker Digby Leddin was a first-year senior judge at this year's show.

"Mt Barker rieslings are always strong, and I was very fortunate to have judged all classes," he said.

"Every class produced gold medals, and the pristine condition of some of the 2002 rieslings was particularly impressive."

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