



INTERNATIONAL WINE CHALLENGE

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International Wine Challenge Announces 2025 Tranche 1 Results

IWC awards 37 Gold medals in Tranche 1, with producers from Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and England among the top performers.

The International Wine Challenge (IWC) has announced the results of Tranche 1 of the 2026 competition, marking the return of an early judging phase designed to give producers — especially in the southern hemisphere — the opportunity to enter their wines at the moment they show at their absolute best.

This year, the panels included some of the UK's most influential wine buyers and sommeliers — people who shape national ranges, restaurant lists and, ultimately, what millions of consumers drink — with major companies such as **Tesco, M&S, Waitrose, Co-op, Morrisons, Fuller's, Enotria & Coe** and leading restaurants like etch. represented across the judging room.

This renewed timing model has delivered a tranche rich in quality, innovation and stylistic range. Judges awarded:

37 Gold Medals

191 Silver Medals

276 Bronze Medals

English wines on the rise

One of the standout stories this year is the performance of English wines, with Gold medals achieved not only in traditional-method sparkling but also in still Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Winners included **Hundred Hills** (*Blanc de Blancs Library Release 2018* and *Hillside No.3 2019*), **Wyfold Vineyard** (*English Sparkling Brut 2018*) and **1276 Wines** (*Chardonnay 2024*). This marks a notable step forward for the category and supports the growing sense that England's wine industry is entering a multi-style, multi-region phase with real depth.

A remarkable set of discoveries

Alongside established global names, this tranche revealed an exceptional group of “finds” — wines and producers that showcase the breadth and excitement of contemporary winemaking.

Highlights include:

Solaris from Denmark – Dyrehøj Solaris Reserve 2024 (Gold)

A striking climate-driven success from northern Europe, underscoring the impact of innovation in cool climates.

High-altitude Torrontés from Argentina – Colomé Estate Torrontés 2025 (Gold)

A fresh, aromatic style from a grape still underrepresented internationally.

Single Harvest Malvasia from Madeira – Henriques & Henriques Malvasia 2001 (Gold)

A long-aged fortified wine offering exceptional complexity and heritage.

VORS sherries from Spain – Palo Cortado NV and Oloroso NV (both Gold)

Deep, characterful styles that remain favourites among sommeliers and fortified specialists.

South African Méthode Cap Classique – Quoin Rock Black Series MCC 2018 (Gold)

A premium sparkling wine showcasing the country's rising global recognition in traditional-method production.

Botrytis Semillon from Australia – Cookoothama Botrytis Semillon 2023 (Gold)

A reminder that dessert wines continue to offer richness, precision and ageworthiness.

Taurasi from Italy – Borgodangelo Taurasi 2019 (Gold)

A powerful, structured expression of Aglianico from southern Italy.

"These wines are exciting not just for their quality, but for the range of stories they bring," said Ashton. "They reinforce the credibility of our judging, they expand visibility for regions and styles the trade may not expect, and they create real opportunity for producers who deserve a broader spotlight."

Established names continue to shine

Tranche 1 also saw continued excellence from major global producers, including **Trapiche, Langmeil, Jean-Marc Brocard, Canard-Duchêne, Henriques & Henriques, Warwick Estate** and **Quoin Rock**. Their Gold medals provide confidence and continuity for buyers, importers and consumers.

Country performance

Australia led the medal count with nine Golds and 42 Silvers, reflecting both the breadth and consistency of its new releases. Gold medals were awarded to Langmeil Barossa Rough Diamond Grenache 2024, Cookoothama Botrytis Semillon 2023 (Nugan Estate), Sidewood Owen's Chardonnay 2022, Sidewood Cassandra Cuvée 2018, Stefano Lubiana Sasso Pinot Noir 2023, Stefano Lubiana Estate Pinot Noir 2024, Schubert Estate The Lone Goose 2022, Curtis Gladiator MV Shiraz 2021 and Beresford Classic Shiraz 2023.

New Zealand followed closely with seven Golds and 39 Silvers, showcasing notable strength across Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, including Nevis Bluff Pinot Noir 2024, Rockburn Crimson Peak Pinot Noir 2024, Mohua Sauvignon Blanc 2025, Passage Rock Reserve Syrah 2021, Rapaura Springs Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2025, Rapaura Springs Rohe Dillons Point Sauvignon Blanc 2025 and Eva Pemper Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2024.

Argentina delivered four Golds, a reminder of the country's ability to excel not only with Malbec but also with aromatic whites and high-altitude expressions. These included Trapiche Reserve Malbec 2024, Andeluna Altitud Malbec 2023, Aluvia 2023 and Colomé Estate Torrontés 2025.

South Africa's three Golds and 20 Silvers highlight their quality, from structured reds to standout traditional-method sparkling wines: Quoin Rock Black Series MCC 2018, Quoin Rock Shiraz 2022 and Warwick Trilogy 2021.

European regions also made a strong showing despite this tranche being less aligned with their typical release cycles. **France** achieved three Golds — Jean-Marc Brocard Chablis Premier Cru Vau de Vey 2023, Champagne Canard-Duchêne Blanc de Blancs Iconic NV and Côtes du Rhône Villages Signargues 2022 (Laudun Chusclan). **Spain** secured three Golds, including Son Antem Sa Tanca 2023 and two long-aged sherries: Tabajete VORS Palo Cortado NV and Tabajete VORS Oloroso NV. **Portugal's** two Golds included Henriques & Henriques Single Harvest Malvasia 2001 and Fletcher's LBV Port 2021 (Aldi UK), while Italy earned a Gold for Borgodangelo Taurasi 2019.

England's four Golds — spanning sparkling and still wines — mark one of the most compelling developments of this tranche, awarded to Hundred Hills Blanc de Blancs Library Release 2018, Hundred Hills Hillside No.3 2019, Wyfold Vineyard English Sparkling Brut 2018 and 1276 Wines Chardonnay 2024.

Taken together, the medal map highlights how producers across multiple continents are taking advantage of the new timing structure, with high-level quality emerging from both established powerhouses and smaller, fast-rising regions.

A winemaker-first judging window

Tranche 1 was reintroduced to offer a more flexible, producer-friendly route into the competition. "For many winemakers, particularly across the southern hemisphere, this timing means their wines arrive at the judging bench exactly when they're ready," said Chris Ashton, Managing Director of the International Wine Challenge. "This year's medal spread shows just how valuable that opportunity is."

The early judging schedule brought strong performances from Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and South Africa, all of whom saw multiple Gold medals across both classic styles and new releases.

For a tranche designed around timing rather than scale, that's a really healthy spread and it tells us that producers are using this window exactly as intended. The quality at the top is tight, which gives us a good message on judging consistency.

A strong start to the 2026 competition

Taken together, the Tranche 1 results reflect a compelling start to the competition year: producer-first timing, impressive English development, reassuring consistency from iconic wineries and a wave of discoveries that highlight the evolving global landscape of wine.

Full Tranche 1 results are now live at internationalwinechallenge.com.

Tranche 2 judging takes place this spring, with complete 2025 results announced later in the year.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The International Wine Challenge

In its 41st year, the International Wine Challenge is widely acknowledged as the world's most direct, impartial, influential and global wine competition. The International Wine Challenge assesses every wine 'blind' in two rounds in London over a two-week period

with every decision scrutinised by the co-chairs: Tim Atkin MW, Sam Caporn MW, Oz Clarke, Dr Jamie Goode, Peter McCombie MW and Helen McGinn.

Each wine is judged for its faithfulness to style, region and vintage. Awards include medals (Gold, Silver, Bronze) and Commended, and Trophies are awarded to the very best wines in each category. The International Wine Challenge is committed to helping consumers discover great wine, and the medals displayed on winning bottles offer a trusted guarantee of quality.

For more information on the International Wine Challenge, or to arrange an interview with a winemaker please contact the IWC team at lilla@iwcevents.com +44 (0) 777 0556570.