

MEDIA RELEASE

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BEST OLIVE OILS IN SOUTH AFRICA NAMED AT 2014 ABSA TOP 5

The *crème de la crème* of South African extra virgin olive oils were unveiled at the Absa Top 5 Olive Oil Awards today. Grootte Vallei, Morgenster, Rio Largo and Willow Creek were recognized as the winning producers, edging out an impressive line-up of leading olive oil exponents for the coveted Top 5 positions.

The Absa Top 5 accolades were awarded to: Rio Largo Premium Blend Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Intense), Rio Largo Gold Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Medium), Grootte Vallei Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Medium), Morgenster Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Intense) and Willow Creek Estate Blend Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Medium).

The runners-up are: Eden Olives Muiskraal Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Delicate); Gabriëlskloof Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Medium); Marbrin Olive Growers Intense Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Intense); Mulderbosch Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Intense) and Willow Creek Food Lover's Signature Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Medium).

SA Olive and Absa instituted the Top 5 competition in 2013 as an extension to the annual SA Olive Awards. The Absa Top 5 olive oils were selected from the ranks of this year's SA Olive Awards top achievers by a revered panel of olive oil experts.

The competition thus provides a platform for the South African olive oil industry to showcase its very finest. South African oils are regularly recognised around the world for their quality and distinctiveness, and competitions like the Absa Top 5 play a pivotal role in educating local consumers about the industry and its diverse spectrum of products. According to Willie Zastron, Absa Provincial Head for Business Banking in the Western Cape, the Absa Top 5 aims to shine the spotlight on the superlative quality of these oils, thus increasing awareness and helping consumers to appreciate SA olive oil for the national treasure it has become.

"This is the second year in which Absa has partnered with SA Olive as we continue to promote uniquely South African olive oils made by the top South African producers. This partnership reflects Absa's commitment not only to SA Olive, but also to South African agriculture as a whole," says Zastron.

The tasting panel led by Mauro Amelio – an accredited panel leader and international olive oil expert from the National Association of Olive Oil Tasters (ONAOO) in Italy – was comprised of South African industry specialists Gerrie Duvenage, Reni Hildenbrand, Louise Rabie, Robert Claasens, Leonard Arangies and Benedetta Lami.

Following today's announcement, Absa will be inviting top clients to taste the Top 5 olive oils as well as this year's Top 10 Pinotage wines in KwaZulu Natal during October.

Visit www.saolive.co.za for more information or contact SA Olive at tel (021) 870 2900 or email info@saolive.co.za.

Follow SA Olive on Facebook and Twitter @SAOliveIndustry #ABSATop5 #SAOlive for the latest news and events.



2014 ABSA Top 5 Olive Oils



l to r Nick Wilkinson (Rio Largo), Brenda Wilkinson (Rio Largo), Chris van Niekerk (Morgenster), Willie Lategan (ABSA), Vittoria Jooste (SA Olive), Willie Zastron (ABSA), John Acland (Groote Valleij), Stephan Loubser (Willow Creek)

Photograph: Andrew Gorman

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