

Raats Cabernet Franc goes head to head with Cheval Blanc

Bruwer Raats of Raats Family Wines was one of twenty-five producers invited to participate in a commemorative tasting at London's Tate Modern, hosted by Britain's Alliance Wines in celebration of their 25th anniversary. Winemakers featured in the October 21, 2009 gala event were asked to show one of their own wines alongside a wine that had inspired them.

Though no newcomer to international acclaim, Raats knocked the socks off participating wine critics and connoisseurs in showing his 2001 Raats Cabernet Franc against the iconic 2001 Château Cheval Blanc.

According to one of the UK's leading journalists Anthony Rose of *The Independent*, the Raats Cabernet Franc was fantastic. "The lovely Cabernet Franc fragrance, flavor and texture made this one of the few wines of the evening, which was not blown away when put up against an acknowledged superior partner, in this case the deceptively concentrated, seamless and subtle 2001 Château Cheval Blanc."

Wine master Tim Atkin and Jancis Robinson echoed Rose's findings and were excited by Raats' strong showing. In her event write-up, renowned critic Robinson remained enthusiastic about Raats. "A wine I was most impressed by about five years ago. Now in its prime - with 2007 being the current vintage. Lovely and still fresh with no jagged oak. Very skillful winemaking for eight years ago. Really refreshing."

Aptly named 25 Inspired Wines, the gala dinner and tasting at the Tate Modern created a platform where Alliance's top wine producers could demonstrate both the quality and context of their wines. Raats was one of only two featured South African wineries.

Giles Cook of Alliance Wines paid tribute to the participating producers and lauded their effort to offer something hand crafted, unique and high quality in tough times when these types of wines are often undervalued and overlooked in the chase for cheap, yet quality wines. "It is absolutely vital that we reflect on what makes wine unique, why have a duty to all those daring, inspirational winemakers and producers all around the world to educate the consumer that a little complexity can be exciting, can be great value and can ultimately provide great drinking," stated Cook.

Raats was delighted with the praise. "Obviously it was a great honor for me to be invited to this fabulous event and to receive such encouragement from some of the top wine critics and retailers in the world is definitely hugely gratifying. It is fantastic that quality wines are still recognized and appreciated for their unique characters," mentions Raats.

