

## Masterclass report: Italian Showstoppers from the Decanter World Wine Awards

When Richard Baudains stands up to speak, it's hard not to be drawn in by his impeccable knowledge drawn from years of experience tasting and judging wines.



DWWA 2022 DWWA Highlights

Hosting a masterclass at Vinitaly in Verona – one of the wine world's biggest wine fairs, and Italy's most prominent – **Richard Baudains** presented 10 top-scoring Italian wines from the Decanter World Wine Awards 2022 to a captivated audience.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2023, with judging commencing this week, the DWWA is a huge operation. Richard explained that last year, 18,244 wines were entered from 54 countries, and involved 237 experts from around the world, including 54 Masters of Wine and 16 Master Sommeliers.

While wine competitions of old were based on analytical scoring – individual scores for each element, such as appearance, nose, palate were added up, and the final score was the average of every judge's totals – the DWWA has always emphasised independent judgement, using what Richard described as a 'symposium of tasters' tasting flights of wines blind and then discussing the results. Those awarded Gold medals (95–96 points) are grouped by category and re-tasted blind by a different team of experts, and all those achieving a Platinum medal (97–100 points) are retasted by the Co-Chairs, who finally pick out the Best in Show wines – just 0.2% of the total number of wines entered.

The DWWA 2022 awards were a success for Italian wines, just pipping France to first place with 3,100 medals to 3,097. Of the 50 Best in Show wines, nine were Italian; while Italy also represented 24 of 165 Platinum medal winners and 114 of 676 Gold medal winners.

Richard noted that 44% of entries achieved a Bronze medal (86–89 points), which is 'encouraging because it means the quality of the wines is going up and up.'

### The 10 masterclass wines

The 10 wines in the masterclass were personally picked out by Richard, representing a variety of styles.



First, the **Masottina RDO Levante Extra Dry Prosecco di Conegliano Valdobbiadene Superiore Rive 2021**, a mouthful to say and a delicious mouthful to drink, with pear fruit brightened by flecks of apricot, apple and a mineral steeliness. Richard noted that Masottina were the first Prosecco producer to win a Gold medal, and in 2022 they achieved a very impressive Platinum medal with 97 points awarded by the judges.

The second wine, **Mandrarossa's Fiano Terre Siciliane 2021** from Sicily represents great quality for the price, achieving a 97-point score and a Best in Show award. Aromatic, juicy, vibrant and super-fresh, it's bursting with pithy citrus peel, garrigue herbs and underlying soft creaminess. Delicious!

Yet another Best in Show and 97 points comes from Zenato in Veneto, whose **Sergio Zenato Amarone delle Valpolicella Classico Riserva 2016** is an absolute stunner. Intense, spicy and complex, it showcases dried black cherry, plum, raspberry coulis and cocoa-infused tannins, with balsamic and medicinal notes. It's of course full bodied, yet surprisingly light on its feet and incredibly fresh.