

SA cider maker Loxtonia takes top prize in international competition

Loxtonia, a family-owned cidery in the Ceres Valley, has been named the overall champion at the 11th International Cider Challenge (ICC), the world's premier apple cider competition.



Larry and Alexandra Whitfield. Source: Supplied

Sweeping the board, Alexandra Blush Méthode Traditionelle, Loxtonia's first bottle-fermented cider, was named Supreme Champion for 2021 and won the Rosé Trophy as the best cider made in a rosé style at this prestigious London based competition. The pink-hued Méthode Traditionelle Cider is made slowly in the traditional French method of a fine Champagne and owes its complexity to bottle ageing for 15 months on the lees.

Loxtonia's Alexandra Blush was one of 150 entries from 18 different cider-producing countries across four continents and the only South African trophy winner. Run by UK *Drinks Retailing* magazine, the ICC panel of 30 judges comprised drinks retailers, cider experts, journalists and cider makers. Ciders entered into the tasting categories are blind tasted and assessed according to their taste, appearance and aroma.



Loxtonia Alexandra Blush Méthode Traditionelle. Source: Supplied

From orchard to bottle

The Whitfield family have been making a wide range of ciders from 'orchard to bottle' on their Loxtonia farm since 2013 using only home-grown, freshly pressed and naturally fermented apples.

The idea to create a Méthode Traditionelle Cider in a classic sparkling wine bottle is the brainchild of Loxtonia founder and chief cider maker, Larry Whitfield, who undertook this mission in anticipation of his daughter Alexandra's wedding earlier this year. Intended as a wedding gift to be revealed and enjoyed by guests at the reception, two Méthode Traditionelle Ciders, the award-winning rosé-style Alexandra Blush and a drier Alexandra Brut, were created from the 2018 apple harvest.

While the Covid pandemic may have delayed wedding plans in 2020, "the extra bottle maturation time enabled these wedding gifts to evolve further, developing their graceful character and finesse", the family said.



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The Whitfield's philosophy of 'orchard to bottle' captures the quality and integrity of the apple throughout the cider-making process. Relying entirely on solar power and keeping water usage to a minimum, it's a sustainable journey with zero waste that begins in the soil and ends with the cider.

The limited release Loxtonia Méthode Traditionelle Ciders will officially be available for purchase in Spring 2021.

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