

These are the best Arizona wines of 2024

By By, Richard Ruelas

Arizona winemakers, in general, have taken their rose wines seriously. And, for the first time, one of those offerings, the 2022 Sandra's from Los Milics Winery, has been awarded the Governor's Cup for being named the best wine in the state in the azcentral Arizona Wine Competition 2024. Sandra's Rose is a blend of two red grapes, Petit Verdot and Montepulciano, and two white varietals, Vermentino and Petit Manseng.

The Los Milics Winery website calls the 2022 Sandra's a "rose for the red wine drinker."

The Growers Cup for the best red wine went to the 2021 8 Years Later, a red blend produced by 1764 Vineyards. It is an unconventional mix of Petite Sirah, Sangiovese and Petit Verdot. The winemaker is Julia Dixon, co-owner of 1764 Vineyards and a graduate of the Southwest Wine Center at Yavapai College.

The best dessert wine was the 2019 Petit Verdot Dessert Wine from Rune Wines. The Petit Verdot wine was fortified with brandy and aged four years in barrel.

The best white wine was the 2022 Hannah's, a blend of Marsanne and Malvasia Bianca, from Los Milics Vineyards.

Los Milics opened its showpiece tasting room in Elgin in 2022 and a tasting room in Old Town Scottsdale in late February 2024.

The project was the culmination of a decades-long path for its co-owner Pavle Milic. He started out championing Arizona wine at the restaurant he operated. Then, he ended up growing grapes and making wine himself.

Milic opened FnB restaurant in Scottsdale with an all-Arizona wine list, figuring it was a natural extension of the food created primarily with seasonal local ingredients by the celebrated chef Charleen Badman.

It was a bold move at the time, with the quality of the state's wines being uneven. But Milic sought out quality producers and pushed their best bottles.

Milic kept bottles of California Chardonnay and French Bordeaux on hand for customers who insisted that was all they would drink. He would then circle back with a glass of white wine poured, he would say, by mistake that he didn't want to go to waste. Only after the customer quaffed and enjoyed would Milic mention that the glass was, say, an Arizona-made Malvasia Bianca.

Milic started the Los Milics label in 2014, sourcing grapes from area vineyards and using the Dos Cabezas WineWorks winery to make his first bottles.

With an investor, Morris Garfinkle, a regular at FnB, Milic bought land in Elfrida, south of Willcox, and planted a vineyard.

Milic's wines are named after family and friends, although Sandra's is an outlier. It was named after Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman on the U.S. Supreme Court. O'Connor, who was raised on a remote ranch in

southeastern Arizona and also had been an Arizona lawmaker, died in 2022.

azcentral Arizona Wine

Competition 2024 winners

Governor's Cup: Best wine in Arizona

Los Milics Vineyards Sandra's 2022.

Best Red Wine

1764 Vineyards 8 Years Later 2021.

Best White Wine

Los Milics Vineyards Hannah's 2022.

Best Rosé Wine

Los Milics Vineyards Sandra's 2022.

Best Dessert Wine

Rune Petite Verdot Port 2019.

Governor's Cup finalists 2024

1764 Vineyards 8 Years Later 2021.

Caduceus Cellars le Cortigiane Oneste 2020.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Trebbiano Flying Leap Vineyard 2022.

Deep Sky Vineyard Gravity 2019.

Garage-East Mourvedre 2019.

Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery Legacy Sparkling Rosé 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Hannah's 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Sandra's 2022.

Mogollon Vineyards Patricia Lee Riesling 2022.

Rubrix Wines Dos Padres Vineyard Malvasia Bianca 2022.

Rubrix Wines Mohave 2021.

Rune Petite Verdot Port 2019.

Best of Class Sparkling

Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery Legacy Sparkling Rosé 2022.

Best of Class Albariño

Autumn Sage Vineyards Estate Albariño 2022.

Best of Class Malvasia Bianca

Callaghan Love Muffin White 2022.

Rubrix Wines Dos Padres Vineyard Malvasia Bianca 2022.

Best of Class Riesling

Mogollon Vineyards Patricia Lee Riesling 2022.

Best of Class Viognier

Rune Viognier 2022.

Best of Class White Blend

Los Milics Vineyards Hannah's 2022.

Best Of Class Rosé Single Varietal

Cove Mesa Vineyard Tempranillo Rosé 2022.

Best of Class Rosé Blend

Los Milics Vineyards Sandra's 2022.

Best of Class Barbera

Caduceus Cellars le Cortigiane Oneste 2020.

Best of Class Bordeaux Style Blends

Deep Sky Vineyard Fusion 2020.

Best of Class Grenache

Pilsbury Wine Company Grenache Reserve 2021.

Rubrix Wines Mohave 2021.

Best of Class Montepulciano

Callaghan Cimarron Montepulciano 2021.

Best of Class Mourvedre

Garage-East Mourvedre 2019.

Best of Class Other Red Blends

1764 Vineyards 8 Years Later 2021.

Best of Class Petite Sirah

Cove Mesa Vineyard Petite Sirah Rolling View Vineyard 2021.

Best of Class Rhone Style Blend

Deep Sky Vineyard Gravity 2019.

Rubrix Wines Black Bear 2021.

Best of Class Sangiovese

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Carlson Creek Vineyard Sangiovese 2021.

Best of Class Sagrantino

Autumn Sage Vineyards Estate Sagrantino 2021.

Best of Class Syrah

Rubrix Wines Canyons 2021.

Best of Class Trebbiano

Cove Mesa Vineyard Trebbiano Flying Leap Vineyard 2022.

Gold

1764 Vineyards 8 Years Later 2021.

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Carlson Creek Vineyard Sangiovese 2021.

Autumn Sage Vineyards Estate Albarino 2022.

Autumn Sage Vineyards Estate Sagrantino 2021.

Bodega Pierce Saeculum Cellars Muscat of Alexandria 2022.

Caduceus Cellars le Cortigiane Oneste 2020.

Callaghan Love Muffin White 2022.

Callaghan Cimarron Montepulciano 2021.

Callaghan Cimarron Petite Sirah 2021.

Callaghan Love Muffin Dry Rosé 2022.

Chateau Tumbleweed Cimarron Vineyard Graciano 2021.

Chateau Tumbleweed Cimarron Vineyard Tempranillo 2021.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Petite Sirah Rolling View Vineyard 2021.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Trebbiano Flying Leap Vineyard 2022.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Tempranillo Rosé 2022.

Deep Sky Vineyard Fusion 2020.

Deep Sky Vineyard Gravity 2019.

Deep Sky Vineyard Photon 2020.

Garage-East Mourvedre 2019.

Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery Legacy Sparkling Rosé 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Sandra's 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Hannah's 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Lorenzo's 2020.

Merkin Vineyards Shinola Red 2022.

Mogollon Vineyards Patricia Lee Riesling 2022.

Pilsbury Wine Company Grenache Reserve 2021.

Rubrix Wines Mohave 2021.

Rubrix Wines Dos Padres Vineyard Malvasia Bianca 2022.

Rubrix Wines Black Bear 2021.

Rubrix Wines Canyons 2021.

Rune Petit Verdot Port 2019.

Rune Viognier 2022.

Rune Wild Syrah 2021.

Silver

1764 Vineyards Deep Thought Syrah 2021.

1764 Vineyards Excogitamus 2021.

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Deep Sky Vineyard Syrah 2022.

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Tazi 2021.

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Rosado 2022.

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Nachise 2021.

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Great Valley Red 2021.

Autumn Sage Vineyards Estate Aglianico 2021.

Bodega Pierce Bodega Pierce Pandora 2022.

Bodega Pierce Bodega Pierce Malvasia Bianca 2022.

Bodega Pierce Saeculum Cellars Sangiovese 2021.

Bodega Pierce Bodega Pierce Emotiva 2021.

Caduceus Cellars Kitsuné 2021.

Caduceus Cellars Primer Paso 2021.

Callaghan Caitlin's 2019.

Callaghan Rhumb Line Aglianico 2021.

Callaghan Cabernet Sauvignon 2019.

Callaghan Cimmaron Sangiovese 2021.

Callaghan Greg's Petit Manseng 2021.

Callaghan The Settlement 2020.

Callaghan Padres 2019.

Callaghan Claire's Extended Play 2019.

Cella Winery Mountain Mama 2022.

Chateau Tumbleweed The Bigness 2022.

Chateau Tumbleweed Dr. Ron Bot 2021.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Syrah Deep Sky Vineyard 2022.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Malvasia Bianca Bonita Springs Vineyard 2022.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Silk 2022.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Vermentino Dos Amigos Vineyard 2022.

Cove Mesa Vineyard GSM Rosé 2022.

D.A. Ranch Estate Vineyards Homestead Arizona Red Blend 2022.

D.A. Ranch Estate Vineyards Generations 2021.

Da Vines Vineyard Da Duchess 2020.

Da Vines Vineyard Da Old Town Red 2021.

Deep Sky Vineyard Constellation 2019.

Deep Sky Vineyard Supernova 2020.

Deep Sky Vineyard Comet 2019.

Dos Cabezas WineWorks Águileón 2020.

Dos Cabezas WineWorks Pink 2022.

Garage-East White 2022.

Garage-East Sangiovese 2019.

Garage-East Red Blend 2021.

Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery Blanc de Blanc 2022.

Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery Barbera 2020.

Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery Rockslide 2019.

Laramita Cellars Tres Primas 2022.

Laramita Cellars Padre Kino 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Betty's 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Cay's 2021.

Los Milics Vineyards Jules' 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Ita's 2022.

Mogollon Vineyards Mourvedre 2020.

Mogollon Vineyards Barbera Reserve 2020.

Mogollon Vineyards Petite Sirah 2020.

Omphalos Winery Syrah 2021.

Omphalos Winery Mourvèdre 2019.

Omphalos Winery Petite Sirah 2021.

Pilsbury Wine Company Shiraz Guns and Kisses 2021.

Pilsbury Wine Company Inappropriate 2022.

Pilsbury Wine Company Mourvedre Reserve 2021.

Pilsbury Wine Company Symphony 2022.

Pilsbury Wine Company Roan Red 2021.

Puscifer: Queen B Sparking Orange Malvasia NV

Rubrix Wines Cardinal 2022.

Rubrix Wines Colibri Vineyard Roussanne 2022.

Rubrix Wines V.O.C. 2021.

Rune Grenache 2021.

Rune Brigand Echoes 2022.

Rune Mourvedre - Pillsbury Vineyard 2021.

Rune Malvasia Bianca - Amphora 2022.

Rune Graciano 2021.

Rune Roussanne 2022.

Sonoran Wines Reserve Petite Sirah 2018.

Sonoran Wines Real de Santa Catarina 2020.

Southwest Wine Center Sunset Gold 2022.

Southwest Wine Center Aglianico 2021.

Southwest Wine Center Sangiovese 2021.

Southwest Wine Center Big Red 2022.

Southwest Wine Center Viognier ML+ 2022.

Sunset Ride Vineyards I'm Your Huckleberry 2021.

Sunset Ride Vineyards Sangiovese 2021.

Twisted Union Wine Co. Berried Hits 2021.

Vino Stache Winery The Proper 2022.

Vino Stache Winery The Paniolo 2021.

Bronze

1764 Vineyards Cochise Sunset Rosé 2022.

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Carlson Creek Vineyard Malvasia Bianca 2022.

Arizona Stronghold Vineyards Carlson Creek Vineyard Riesling 2022.

Autumn Sage Vineyards Estate Cunoise Rosé 2022.

Bodega Pierce Saeculum Cellars Malvasia Bianca Orange 2022.

Bodega Pierce Bodega Pierce Cabernet Franc 2021.

Bodega Pierce Saeculum Cellars Gallia 2021.

Bodega Pierce Bodega Pierce Chardonnay 2022.

Bodega Pierce Bodega Pierce Athena 2021.

Bodega Pierce Saeculum Cellars El Coraje 2021.

Bodega Pierce Bodega Pierce Tempranillo 2021.

Callaghan La Osa 2019.

Cella Winery Zinfandel 2022.

Chateau Tumbleweed Cimarron Vineyard Mourvedre 2021.

Chateau Tumbleweed Dos Amigos Vineyard Picpoul Blanc 2022.

Chateau Tumbleweed Earth Cuckoo 2021.

Chateau Tumbleweed Rosé 2022.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Mourvèdre Golden Rule Vineyard 2021.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Sangiovese Golden Rule Vineyard 2021.

Cove Mesa Vineyard Tempranillo Dos Amigos Vineyard 2021.

D.A. Ranch Estate Vineyards Malvasia Bianca 2022.

Da Vines Vineyard Cabernet Franc 2021.

Deep Sky Vineyard Stellar 2020.

Deep Sky Vineyard Aurora 2022.

Deep Sky Vineyard Nebula 2022.

Deep Sky Vineyard Orbit 2021.

Dos Cabezas WineWorks Club Syrah 2021.

Dos Cabezas WineWorks Irwiniella 2021.

Four 8 Wineworks Four 8 Red NV

Four 8 Wineworks LEGION by Four 8 Wineworks 2020.

Garage-East Tanna 2021.

Garage-East Pronghorn 2019.

Garage-East Rosé 2022.

Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery Pinot Gris 2022.

Los Milics Vineyards Cay's 2022.

Merkin Vineyards Chupacabra Blanca 2022.

Merkin Vineyards Jane Pink 2022.

Merkin Vineyards Chupacabra Red 2022.

Mogollon Vineyards Pinot Grigio 2022.

Omphalos Winery Grenache 2021.

Omphalos Winery Malvasia Bianca 2022. 2022.

Omphalos Winery Eudamonia 2021.

Omphalos Winery Malbec 2021.

Pilsbury Wine Company Romero's Syrah 2021.

Pilsbury Wine Company WildChild White 2022.

Pilsbury Wine Company Malvasia Bonnie Lee 2022.

Pilsbury Wine Company Rosé One Night Stand 2022.

Pilsbury Wine Company Diva 2021.

Pilsbury Wine Company WildChild Red 2021.

Queen of Cups Barbera-Viognier 2022.

Queen of Cups Paziños 2022.

Rubrix Wines Carlson Creek Vineyard Chardonnay 2022.

Rune Brigand Gunsmoke 2021.

Rune Petite Sirah - Pillsbury Vineyard 2021.

Rune Rosé 2022.

Southwest Wine Center Balancing Act 2022.

Southwest Wine Center The Weaver 2021.

Sunset Ride Vineyards 2021. Cabernet Sauvignon 2021.

Twisted Union Wine Co. Arm Candy 2022.

Twisted Union Wine Co. Mother Trucker 2020.

Vino Stache Winery The Wanderer 2020.

Vino Stache Winery The Boss 2020.

azcentral Arizona Wine Competition 2024 judges

Here are the judges for the 2024 azcentral Arizona Wine Competition and their favorite wines:

Ali Amundson, Village Tavern: Cove Mesa Vineyard Tempranillo Rosé 2022.

Arthur Pottenger, Sheraton Phoenix Downtown: Autumn Sage Vineyards Estate Sagrantino 2021.

Chris Jeffers, Cuisine & Wine Bistro: Da Vines Vineyard Jolie Cerise 2021.

Christopher Gross, Christopher's at Wrigley Mansion: Rubrix Wines Dos Padres Vineyard Malvasia Bianca 2022.

Corianna Nelson, Unfiltered Wine: Rubrix Wines Mohave 2021.

Dale Sparks, 220 Imports: Cove Mesa Vineyard Petite Sirah Rolling View Vineyard 2021.; Mogollon Vineyards Patricia Lee Riesling 2022.

Drew Cameron, Café Monarch: 1764 Vineyards 8 Years Later 2021.

Dushyunt Singh, The Global Ambassador: Callaghan Claire's Extended Play 2019; 1764 Vineyards 8 Years Later 2021.

Erik Nygren, Lincoln Steakhouse: Deep Sky Vineyard Fusion 2020.

Jared Sowinski, Upward Projects: Twisted Union Wine Co. Berried Hits 2021.

The Arizona Republic (Phoenix) (United States), Section: Local

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Jim Gallen, Hearth61 at Mountain Shadows Resort: Sonoran Wines Rose of Grenache 2021.

Johnathan Osifuye-White, Steak 44: Cove Mesa Vineyard Trebbiano Flying Leap Vineyard 2022; Mogollon Vineyards Patricia Lee Riesling 2022.

Kyrri Rauber, Maple and Ash: Pillsbury Wine Company Grenache Reserve 2021.

Lori Hassler, Farrish House: Los Milics Vineyards Hannah's 2022.

Mark Guilanden, Wrigley Mansion: Garage-East Mourvedre 2019.

Michelle Jacobs, Gertrude's at Desert Botanical Garden: Merkin Vineyards Shinola Red 2022.

Richard Betts, Boyer Family Winery: 1764 Vineyards 8 Years Later 2021.

Rob Holder, JNK Concepts: Los Milics Vineyards Sandra's 2022.

Sean Tevik, Taub Family/Thomas George: Rune Viognier 2022.

Shaunna Cooper, Wine Spencer: Javelina Leap Vineyard & Winery Barbera 2020.

T. Scott Stephens, Beckett's Table: Rubrix Wines Mohave 2021.

Tracy Dempsey, Tracy Dempsey Originals/ODV Wines: Southwest Wine Center Balancing Act 2022; Sunset Ride Vineyards I'm Your Huckleberry 2021.

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