WINE OF THE YEAR –
BEST IN SHOW
SIMCIC LEONARDO 2005,
GORISKA BRDA, SLOVENIA
£23.85/37.5cl. Bancroft Wines,
020 7292 5470

Every year, during the Sommelier Wine Awards tastings, our judges pick out their favourite 12 wines. They can be any price, and in any style, but the only criteria is that the selected wine must be exceptional — and viewed as such by a large number of tasters.

These dozen Critics’ Choice wines are then gathered together to form the line-up for our Best in Show candidates. And although the scores throughout this flight were (as you might expect) extremely high, the winning wine still blew away all of its opponents.

With an average score of 92/100 (with no less than five judges giving it a perfect 20/20) the Simcic Leonardo 2005 has been turning heads ever since it was first tasted — and its astonishing mix of coffee, caramel, roast almond and marmalade unsurprisingly did the trick again here.

Yes, an oxidised Slovenian dessert wine made out of dried Ribolla grapes might be a tough sell. But my god, it’s worth the effort. Simply outstanding.

PRAISE FOR THE WINNER
‘Rich notes of sultana, caramelised apple, apricot jam. Great acidity and a very long finish.’
Serdar Balikay, Hakkasan

‘Raisins, honey, apricots and good acidity. Outstanding.’ Mariyana Radulova, Royal Thames Yacht Club

‘Lovely Christmas flavours of raisins, sultanas and cinnamon. Excellent.’
Louann Carré, Nightjar

‘Complex and balanced, with great acidity. The essence of wine’
James Hocking, The Vineyard Group

CATEGORY COMMENTARY
‘When all the wines are this good, it’s hard to pick a winner, but I was blown away by the Leonardo.’
Ram Chhetri,
Galvin Bistrot de Luxe