

Sommelier News



INTERNATIONAL
Sommelier
GUILD

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Volume 6, Issue 3

Newfoundland Dreaming

ISG classes begin in St. John's April 1

By G. Wyatt Snoe

St. John's Newfoundland will become the 15th Canadian city to host International Sommelier Guild classes when Wine Fundamentals Certificate Level 1 begins there on the first of April.

The partnership between the ISG and the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation is the first of its kind for both organizations. "We're excited about this relationship," says ISG President Joseph Miller. "Not only will we be providing sommelier education for hospitality workers, but we'll also be contributing to staff development at the NLC."

As so often happens, this in-

stance of ISG growth was facilitated by a former student: Sommelier and Wine Importer Mark Cuff. "I'm a native Newfoundlander and I've been thinking for some time that the ISG and the NLC could work well together." With Mr. Cuff's assistance, ISG Vice President Wayne Gotts met with NLC Vice Presidents Blair Boland and Rob Simm and an agreement to deliver classes with the NLC acting as host was reached.

"I would be willing to wager that

(Continued on page 2)

First Press

By David Wilkening

Wine can collector may be one-of-a-kind

Allan Green not only has the largest wine can collection in the world but also, as far as he knows, he is the only collector of that type of commodity anywhere. "There are a lot of can collectors around - collectors who collect soda cans, beer cans, coffee cans, oil cans, whatever cans," he says. "While some collect eclectically and include a few wine cans, mine appears to be the only one that is wine-specific." Green, owner and

winemaker of Greenwood Ridge Vineyards in Anderson Valley (Mendocino County), has the largest wine can collection in the world with 400 cans of it.

Young wine consumers equate drinking with adulthood

Consumers aged 20 to 25 have a perception of wine as a healthy, high quality alcohol product that is becoming a popular trend among their age group, yet the perceived expen-

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some of the world's finest sommeliers will come out of Newfoundland in the next few years," says Gotts. "Newfoundlanders are legendary for the quality and generosity of their hospitality, so in attitude, at least, they have everything working in their favor."

The courses will be overseen by another ISG sommelier gradu-

ate: the NLC's first ever Senior Product Consultant, Andrew Facey. "I'm certainly looking forward to what these classes can do for consumers and NLC staff," says Facey. "There's an enormous interest here in wines and spirits, but not a lot of structured learning to help people make sense of all the floating information. The Fundamentals classes will remedy that situation and hopefully help to expand the palates of Newfoundlanders."



G. Wyatt Snoe is a sommelier who specializes in writing about interesting figures in the wine industry.

First Press

(Continued from page 1)

sive cost of wine and confusion about different wine styles can be barriers to consumption, according to a study conducted by Vinexpo. One of the key findings of the study was that young people in all countries considered wine to be the healthiest alcohol beverage, yet many perceived wine as the drink of choice among older adults, aged 30 or 35 to 40. Yet, according to the study, this image makes wine more attractive as the study participants

defined a wine drinker as "refined, educated and cultivated," according to the study. "Drinking wine is a part of the new identity that young people create for themselves. Drinking wine is a 'marker' of adulthood," said Robert Beynat, general manager of Vinexpo.

New Zealand heat helping to set records

Central Otago's long and dry summer has caused havoc for farmers but wine growers are

(Continued on page 15)

Rising from the Graves

Pessac-Léognan's reds are now among the best in Bordeaux

By Roger Morris

[E]very time I alighted on

the wines of Pessac-

Léognan, I came away

delighted. And not just

with the celebrated whites.

It was the reds which

intrigued me most.

The revelation came during a morning press tasting of 2004 barrel samples held by the *Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux* at VinExpo in the summer of 2005. I have the bad habit of arriving early at these events, and many winemakers have the equally annoying practice of being habitually late – especially if the affair starts before 10 am, as this one did. Predictably, when the doors opened, some had still not arrived, while others were just setting up their bottles and exchanging pleasantries and unpleasantries with colleagues at adjacent tables.

Rather than proceed with my glass from one commune's stations to the next in any logical order, I instead looked for the few bright, smiling faces ready to get pouring – especially those of the number of comely female Bordelaise vintners. And so I went randomly like a butterfly in a field of flowers, back and forth between Pauillac, St.-Julien, St.-Estephe, and Margaux, writing notes and ticking off wineries tasted. And every time I alighted on the wines of Pessac-Léognan, I came away delighted. And not just with the celebrated whites. It was the reds which intrigued me most.

I was somewhat surprised that I was finding the reds of Pessac-Léognan to be, on average, as good as or better than those of their more highly-rated brethren from the Médoc. And nothing in the intervening three years has changed my opinion,

including a similar large sampling from throughout Bordeaux in the 2006 *primeurs* or barrel tastings of the stellar 2005 vintage.

The name Pessac-Léognan might not pop memory corks with some Bordeaux drinkers because it is an offshoot of the larger Graves region, declaring its independence only 21 years ago. It – or rather “they,” as there are two communes involved – lies on the south side of the city of Bordeaux, some of it even within the *rocade* motorway that circles the city. It is a mixed region of suburbs and verdant countryside. Most of it is underlaid by a river of gravel that undulates, here just beneath the surface, and there several feet under. This *terroir* often gives its wines a stoniness and minerality that blends of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc from the Médoc seldom possess,

Of course, the region is anchored by one of the five first-growth châteaux of the Left Bank – Haut-Brion, the region's showpiece which functions somewhat as a Macy's or Nordstrom's would to give gravity to a shopping center. But it is important these days to look beyond the singularity of Haut-Brion and its almost-as-famous sister winery across Avenue Jean Jaurés, La Mission Haut-Brion. Robert Parker, in his thoughtful 2003 re-design of the Bordeaux genesis classification of 1855, lists

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those two châteaux as first growths, then adds Pape-Clément and Smith-Haut-Lafitte as second growths and Les Carmes-Haut-Brion, Domaine de Chevalier, Haut-Bailly, and Larrivet-Haut-Brion as thirds. I would argue for kicking Haut-Bailly up a notch. In most vintages, I would stack up Haut-Brion, La Mission, Haut-Bailly, Pape-Clément, Smith-Haut-Lafitte, and Chevalier against a similar half dozen from any commune of Médoc.

There is a new/old feeling about Pessac-Léognan that is hard to explain. So, one image: "We still use horses at Pape-Clément," says Bernard Magrez over dinner in New York City. "Tractors compact the soil there too much." Located just a few blocks from the Haut-Brions but with a little more open space than its neighbors, Pape-Clément is a beautiful property with a gleaming showpiece château. In these days when true work horses are a rarity anywhere in western Europe, it would be lovely to see a YouTube video of the urbane Magrez rushing to fly off in his private jet, then glancing out the side window of his limousine to see a solitary gray horse making its way down a vine row followed by a solitary plowman, perhaps with a Gaulois dangling from his mouth, turning over his highly prized soil.

It is the last day of *primeurs* 2006, and a Korean wine importer and I are waiting in the old water tower just outside the winery to meet with the director, Jean-Phillipe Delmas, and taste barrel samples from the fabulous 2005 vintage. While we are waiting, I amuse myself by getting a good overview of the estate, which is bordered by walls with two avenues funneling traffic on either side of the almost rectangular property. On the west side, there are relatively low buildings only a few stories tall – most likely apartment houses – that are nevertheless tall enough to afford glimpses inside of the vineyards and the comings and goings, reminding me of the buildings outside Chicago's Wrigley Field where Cub fans could see games inside the old ballpark. One can imagine friends visiting the tenants, and the proud hosts observing to their guests as drinks are being poured, "Look, Francois, they are doing a green harvest today – too much vigor, *n'est ce pas?*" or "Catherine, isn't that Murphy the château dog digging in the rose beds?"

Delmas arrives punctually and assures me that both his father, Jean-Bernard, who has recently retired from the director's post, and Murphy are fine. He explains that 2005 was a great vintage, but a very different one. Green harvest was stopped two weeks sooner than usual. Picking was earlier than normal, beginning the last day of August, but the maceration was a long one at the main châ-

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"We still use horses at

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teau, and the first fermentation lasted 17 days.

Then we begin to taste, surprisingly starting with the reds before the Haut-Brion *blanc* – first La Chappelle, next Bahans, La Tour, La Mission, and finally Haut-Brion. Despite being 56% Merlot, it is massive and dense. The nose is reluctant, and it is difficult to tease out the tightly wrapped flavors. The Korean and I exchange glances. Then, about 20 minutes later, baker's chocolate and dark fudge brownie aromas open up to violets, plums, vanilla, and purple fruits. Later, I read a review of the wine by the English merchants Berry Brothers & Rudd, who call it "a brooding, sleeping giant of a wine with monumental levels of fruit but an exquisitely fine demeanour." Parker gives it a perfect 100 points in his barrel tasting notes.

"Graves is the oldest part of Bordeaux in terms of winemaking, dating back to the Middle Ages," says Véronique Sanders, winemaker and manager at Château Haut-Bailly. "This region is the original Bordeaux since – since ever!" Few people have worked as hard at upgrading the region's reputation or at upgrading her own property's wine as Sanders, who has served as head of the Graves *Grands Crus*

Classés organization. We are talking on a rare sunny morning in an otherwise dismal summer of 2007 at Haut-Bailly, a lovely property located atop a swale of clay and gravel just outside the village of Léognan.

Francois Thienpont, the wine-grower and *négociant* whose family members make wine at the legendary La Pin and Vieux Château Certan in addition to Pavie-Maquin and Puygueraud, thinks that Sanders' wines are among the finest in Bordeaux. "Haut-Bailly," he says, "is the Vieux Château Certain of the Left Bank!" "We're family-owned," Sanders says, "so we can make the types of wines we want to. We keep our soul."

Sanders believes Pessac-Léognan and Graves have to do more to promote their relevance, and that is happening as well. "If we do great wines, we have to do great food," she says, explaining why the Graves *grands crus châteaux* – all located within Pessac-Léognan – have been bringing top-rated restaurateurs from across Europe to their properties to be wined and dined and why the group hosted the opening party for VinExpo 2007 in June. "We are also going to get more involved at Haut-Bailly in wine tourism," says Sanders, echoing a movement being felt throughout Bordeaux. "We are not doing it to gain money," she says, "but it will help our image."

In addition to writing for The Sommelier News, Roger Morris regularly contributes articles to Saveur, The Robb Report, The Wine Enthusiast, Drinks, and Beverage Media, among others.

"Graves is the oldest part of Bordeaux in terms of winemaking, dating back to the Middle Ages," says Véronique Sanders, winemaker and manager at Château Haut-Bailly. "This region is the original Bordeaux since – since ever!"

Great Cause, Great Fun

Sommeliers needed to assist with this year's Niagara Wine Weekend and Auction

By G. Wyatt Snoe

On Saturday, June 14th sommeliers will have the opportunity to contribute to the health and well-being of children by donating their time to the Niagara Wine Weekend and Auction.

Hillebrand Estates sommelier Dieter Unruh is hoping to attract some 40 sommeliers to mingle with the crowds and talk about the wines being served. The time commitment for the

event is roughly 8 hours (2 pm to 10 pm).

Those interested in helping to make this important charitable event a success are asked to contact Dieter at dieter.unruh@hillebrand.com.

Below is an appeal from John Peller, which provides more details of the event.

Dear Friend and Colleague;

"So successful was the premier cru of this Niagara wine extravaganza that it's sure to become an annual summer must-do among society's movers and shakers." - (National Post – Dec 29, 2007)

This June, over 1,000 guests, celebrities, wine and food writers, chefs, sommeliers and entertainers will gather in the picturesque town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario for an unparalleled weekend of world-class wine and cuisine. Join us on **June 13, 14 and 15** as we raise a glass in support of SickKids Foundation and the St. Catharines General Hospital Foundation.

The weekend includes a picturesque Garden Party featuring Oscar Lopez and James Keelaghan; a Gala Dinner and Dance featuring the Pointer Sisters and The Temptations; and a Wineries Showcase Sunday. Guests will have the opportunity to mingle with winemakers and sommeliers, taste a variety of spectacular Niagara Wines, savour foods from Ontario's celebrity chefs and bid on priceless wines, exclusive wine packages, merchandise and getaways.

We are anticipating 700 guests at the Garden Party and 1,000 at the Gala Dinner & Dance. Proceeds from the event will benefit the health and well being of children by supporting SickKids Foundation and St. Catharines General Hospital Foundation Pediatric division. During the garden party our goal is to have a number of Canada's most knowledgeable sommeliers mingle with the crowd to provide them with a greater sense of the characters of the wines being served. The gala dinner will be more substantial in sommelier presence, with a goal of having one sommelier for every four or five tables, each to be paired with a wine server in order to maximize the opportunity for the sommeliers to speak to the wines. We look to your expertise to enhance the wine tasting experience for our guests and keep the focus on wine as the foremost theme of the weekend.

The NWA is dedicated to supporting SickKids Foundation and the St. Catharines Hospital Foundation and we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tireless effort, loving care and exemplary professional services offered by these organizations. We look to you as an ideal contributor at this spectacular festival of food and wine. We encourage you to explore www.niagarawineweekend.com and thank you for your consideration and support of the 2008 Niagara Wine Auction.

Sincerely,

John Peller

June 13–15, 2008

★
NIAGARA WINE
WEEKEND & AUCTION

In support of SickKids Foundation &
St. Catharines General Hospital

St. Patrick's Day Products

A profile of Irish libations in honor of the green day

By J. Herbert Silverman

[A]ccording to Irish whiskey lore, monks learned the art of distillation from missionaries who had served in the Middle East where they had been busily engaged in spreading Christianity to the infidel. Along with those pioneers it was said that St. Patrick deserves some of the credit for spreading the distilling technique.

The Irish have a unique way of recalling past glories. They create whiskey, proceed to brew beer, and then name the results after glorious battles, famous men and enduring castles.

Following tradition, one should raise a glass of Irish whiskey (*uisce beatha* or *water of life*) or down a pint of stout during upcoming celebrations of St. Patrick's Day. But after the fog clears, it wouldn't hurt to learn something more about Ireland's mostly unsung heroes by investigating the lives of the colorful personalities behind the founders' names.

An example: according to Irish whiskey lore, monks learned the art of distillation from missionaries who had served in the Middle East where they had been busily engaged in spreading Christianity to the infidel. Along with those pioneers it was said that St. Patrick deserves some of the credit for spreading the distilling technique.

Never a saint but a mere bishop, Patrick was antedated by one of Ireland's greatest heroes, Brian Boru, the High King of Eire, whose memory is preserved today by newcomer Boru Vodka, a five-times distilled premium spirit from Dublin.

That legendary hero led the Irish to defeat Viking invaders in 1014 at the Battle of Clontarf, a monumental victory which unified Ireland 1000 years ago and also became another proud piece of Irish history. This unforgettable battle was honored centuries later in the form of a spirit named called Clontarf Irish Whiskey.

The Battle of Clontarf (Cath Chluana Tarbh) took place on Good Friday, 1014 (April 23rd) between the forces of Brian Boru and those led by the King of Leinster, Máel Mórda mac Murchada. The Leinster forces consisted of various Scandinavian groups, Viking mercenaries from Dublin, and forces from the Orkney Islands led by Máel Mórda mac Murchada's cousin Sigtrygg. It ended in a rout of the Máel Mórda's forces, along with the death of the elderly Brian, who was killed by a few Danes who were fleeing the battle and stumbled upon his tent, where they found him praying.

"We named our super premium vodkas as a tribute to Brian Boru," says distillery spokesperson Roseann Sessa. She adds patriotically, "His bold attitude and uncompromising spirit are attributes that underscore our own brand profiles."

After their failure, the Vikings would turn to England and Scotland, eventually taking power when Canute the Great was installed as King in 1015.

Over the centuries, myth has been replaced by real people. Ireland's contribution to man's well being got off to a flying start in 1608 when Sir Thomas Phillips, the king's deputy at the plantation of Ulster, was granted the world's first license to distill whiskey by James 1.

He chose a site in the tiny village of Bushmills along the waters of St. Columb's Rill between Tara, the ancient royal capital of Ireland, and Dunseverick, a great

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James Power, an innkeeper from Dublin, established his John's Lane Distillery in 1791. At the turn of the 19th century James' son John joined the business, and the company ultimately became known as John Power & Son.

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pre-Christian fortress on the River Bush. By coincidence, Sir Thomas happened to be the local licensing authority in County Antrim.

In 1780, John Jameson arrived in Ireland to start up a distillery on Bow Street, Dublin, thus creating an infusion of Highland expertise. His career was aided by his marriage to Margaret Haig, a member of the illustrious Scots whisky family.

"Old John," as he was known, created not only a majestic brand but also generations of Jamesons to come with his progeny of 16 children. Proof positive of the family's social position is the extensive listing today in the annals of Burke's Irish Family Record, the closest thing there is to a blue book of Irish high society.

James Power, an innkeeper from Dublin, established his John's Lane Distillery in 1791. At the turn of the 19th century James' son John joined the business, and the company ultimately became known as John Power & Son.

By 1823, with the help of a 500 gallon still, the annual output had grown to 33 000 gallons. A decade later, this had increased tenfold to approximately 330 000 gallons per annum. As the distillery grew so, too, did the stature of the family. John Power was knighted and later made High Sheriff of Dublin.

Power is known for two innovations. In 1866, the distiller began bottling his own whiskey. Until then, distilleries usually sold whiskey by the cask. A gold label adorned each bottle and it was from these that the whiskey got the name *Powers Gold Label*.

James Power's son achieved a kind of immortality in the world of drinking by inventing the "miniature" whiskey bottle, calling it the "Baby Power." The concept of the miniature was simplicity itself. John Power reasoned that Irish women would form a new market for his distillate. But custom dictated that women could enter a pub only via a "snug" an enclosed area separated from the bar and that had obvious limitations. He also believed that since Irishmen rarely, if ever, stocked whiskey at home, preferring to drink with their cronies in pubs, women were being dealt "a bad hand."

By creating the "miniatures," he enabled the countryman to provide for his wife without being spied upon by the neighbors who could clearly identify a large, obviously visible bottle.

Tullamore Dew was first distilled in 1829 and was created in Tullamore, County Offaly, by one Michael Malloy. Today, it is the only Irish whiskey packaged in a handsome "jar" or ceramic crock (as well as glass) and reminds us of the days when it was a "standard" fireplace ornament.

Eventually the distillery passed to a grandnephew, Captain Bernard Daly. Since the officer had most of his time taken up by such interests as horseracing, he passed the mantle to an employee, D.E. Williams, who used the acronym of his initials for an early and memorable advertising slogan "Give Every Man His Dew."

In the waning years of the last century, the late American spirits importer, Sidney Frank

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Michael Collins Irish Whiskey has sold more than 50 000 cases since its launch last year. Made at the independent Cooley Distillery in the outskirts of Dublin, the bottle features a copy of Collins' signature from the 1921 Treaty on the bottle neck

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became fascinated with a movie about the Irish patriot Michael Collins, the iconic leader of the forces in the 1921 Civil War. With the permission of the patriot's descendants, Frank launched his Michael Collins Irish Whiskey with a picture of the War of Independence veteran on the label.

Introduced last year in the U.S., more than 50 000 cases of the whiskey have been sold since the launch. Made at the independent Cooley Distillery in the outskirts of Dublin, the bottle features a copy of Collins' signature from the 1921 Treaty on the bottle neck

Collins was one of the most prominent IRA leaders during the War of Independence. He signed the treaty with the British government which led to the creation of the Irish Free State but split the republican movement. In agreeing to the treaty, Collins famously said he was "signing [his] own death warrant." His eventual assassination, during the subsequent civil war, saw him become one of Irish nationalism's most famous figures.

Tyrconnell is named after the horse that won the 1876 Queen Victoria Plate at 100 to 1 odds. New to the American market, it is one of two Irish malts produced by the Cooley Distillery.

Actually, Tyrconnell was an ancient kingdom of Ireland. Conall Gulban, a son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, King of Ireland, acquired the wild territory in the northwest of Ulster (the modern County Donegal), and founded the kingdom about the middle of the 5th century. Of the several branches of his family, the O'Con-

nells, O'Cannanans and O'Dohertys may be mentioned. The kings of Tyrconnell maintained their position until 1071.

A potable is also memorialized as a swan by the poet William Butler Yeats who wrote *The Wilde Swans at Coole*:

The trees are in their autumn beauty,

The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight
the water

Mirrors a still sky;

Upon the brimming water
among the stones

Are nine-and-fifty swans.

Now the 60th swan exists in the *persona* of Coole Swan, an expensive and handsomely bottled cream liqueur just introduced to America.

Ireland is noted for the beautiful castles that reside in the countryside, among them, the magnificent Knappogue Castle, in County Clare which also lends its name to a vintage single malt.

Built in 1497 by Sean MacNamara, Knappogue Castle has a long and varied history, serving from battlefield to dwelling place. In 1571 Knappogue became the Seat of the MacNamara Clan which actually descended from Brian Boru. In fact, one of the castle's stained glass windows features the legendary high king. The bar pours Knappogue single malt.

Over time, the castle changed hands many times, and after falling into disrepair in the 1920s, it was later purchased and restored by Mark Edwin Andrews and his wife of Houston, TX. During this time Andrews began buying

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casks of fine pot still whiskey from the top distilleries in Ireland. He aged and bottled them under the Knappogue Castle label. His last batch of Knappogue 1951 is now the oldest and rarest Irish whiskey.

By 1966, the leading whiskey families in Ireland decided to amalgamate as Irish Distillers Ltd., in order to end financially expensive competition and to join in a mutual fight to regain what they regarded as a fair share of the American market.

Some years ago, in the worldwide takeover trend of privately-held companies, France's Pernod Ricard acquired the group, and ownership passed into foreign hands for the first time in history. The contemporary distillery is located in rural Midleton, Co. Cork and is considered the world's larg-

est.

Turning away from spirits and towards beer, the Irish might be considered far sighted. What other country in the world would welcome a man so sure of his product that in 1759 he would sign a 9,000-year lease for a brewery along the River Liffey in Dublin.

That man, of course, was Arthur Guinness who came to Ireland from England with a 100-pound legacy from the Archbishop of Cashel—scarcely a fortune even in those days—to set up his good works. Today, the once family-owned business is part of the giant Diageo spirits group still producing stout and lager. More than 10 million glasses of Guinness beer are poured every single day around the world, and 1.8 billion pints are sold every year.

Although it was sold by Diageo

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Ontario Wine Awards Sommelier Competition *Calling all ISG graduates*

Tony Aspler has announced that working sommeliers (those affiliated with a restaurant) are invited to compete in the Ontario Wine Awards Sommelier competition. In the preliminary round, each prospective candidate is asked to write the most important duties of a sommelier (maximum 200 words). Written entries should be emailed to tony.aspler@sympatico.ca with your name and your restaurant affiliation. Please notify your employer of your intention to compete. The deadline for receipt of the written work is March 15th. Please ensure that a contact phone number is added as well as the email address. Our committee will select the ten best entries.

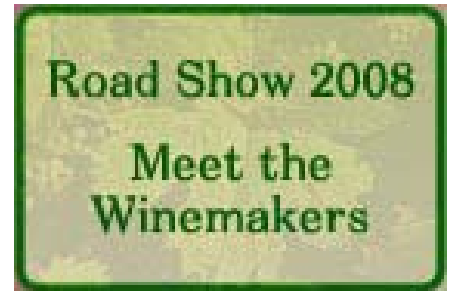
The ten top entrants from the preliminary round will be invited to compete in a Blind Tasting— to be held on Saturday, March 29th at Brassaii restaurant, King Street West, at 3pm. Participants will be asked to identify six wines - variety, region, vintage and, if possible, producer.

The winner will be presented with the trophy at the Ontario Wine Awards gala dinner (Queens Landing, Niagara-on-the-Lake) on Saturday, April 26th.

Greek Wine Competition

Meet the Greek Winemakers

Wines from Greece, together with hosts **Doug Frost MS MW**, **Steve Olson** and **Madeline Triffon MS** would like to invite you to participate in a wine competition featuring Greek wine. Competitions will be held in Chicago, San Francisco and New York. The winners in each city will accompany us on a trip to the Greek vineyards. A seminar will be given prior to each competition that will also include well-known judges from the trade. Don't worry if you are a bit rusty on our indigenous varieties. You are probably not alone! Details and registration information are below and there is no participation fee. For more information on Greek wine go to www.thewinesofgreece.com.



Following the competition, join **Greece's Top Winemakers** for a reception as they present the 2007 vintage and current release of reds in the market.

Register at rsvp@allaboutgreekwine.com Please indicate City!

Tel: 404-545-2323

CHICAGO- Thursday May 8th

Westin Michigan Ave

(990 N. Michigan Ave at E. Delaware)

Hosts: Doug Frost MS MW & Madeline Triffon MS

Judges: Alpana Singh MS & Joe Spellman MS

Seminar 10:30am-12:pm

Competition 12:00pm-1:00pm

Reception/Meet the Winemakers 1:00-4:00pm

SAN FRANCISCO Tuesday May 13th

Westin St. Francis (Union Square)

Hosts: Doug Frost MS MW & Steve Olson

Judges: Brian Cronin MS, Keith Goldston MS & Gilles de Chambure MS

Seminar 10:30am-12:pm

Competition 12:00pm-1:00pm

Reception/Meet the Winemakers 1:00-4:00pm

NEW YORK Thursday May 15th

Le Parker Meridien

(119 W 56th between 6th & 7th Ave)

Hosts: Doug Frost MS MW & Steve Olson

Judges: Tara Thomas, Roger Dagorn MS & Michael Weiss

Seminar 10:30am-12:pm

Competition 12:00pm-1:00pm

Reception/Meet the Winemakers 1:00-4:00pm

SOMMELIER OF THE MONTH: Jill Mott

On beer, Spanish lessons, and staying true

By G. Wyatt Snoe

Jill Mott stops short of calling herself rootless, but admits that she has a tendency to fly away on the weakest of breezes. "I love to travel," she says, "and even before I entered the wine business full time I always seemed to find myself in a vineyard or a restaurant surrounded by wine."

After completing her studies in Spanish Language and Literature at the University of Minnesota,

she flew off to live in Spain for a year and has since traveled to France, South Africa, Croatia, Argentina, Italy and more. She has also worked on the retail side of the industry, first in Minneapolis and later as a buyer for Sam's Wines & Spirits in her adopted home of Chicago. "I try to do a lot of different things," she says, "so that nothing gets stale or old."

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Jill Mott dreams of Oktober

"I've worked in a wine bar, taught locally and internationally, did a stint as a harvest intern in the Willamette Valley, assisting in the wine-making process. Now I work with all kinds of fascinating people building cellars, holding tastings, and delivering classes. I like the kinds of challenges that mess with my preconceived notions and prejudices."

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I've worked in a wine bar, taught locally and internationally, did a stint as a harvest intern in the Willamette Valley, assisting in the wine-making process. Now I work with all kinds of fascinating people building cellars, holding tastings, and delivering classes. I like the kinds of challenges that mess with my preconceived notions and prejudices."

What is your most memorable wine? Why?

I'd have to say either a 1978 Blandy's Bual or a 1970 Lopez de Heredia Vina Tondonia Blanco. Are you going to make me decide? Not only was I totally seduced by them, but they encapsulated and sealed the deal to the experiences I was having at the time.

How did you develop an interest in wine?

After college, I wandered off to Spain and lived in La Rioja for a year. I didn't have any responsibilities, so wine just fit and I fell in love. I was there simply tracing my roots from the ground up.

What is your current position?

Like a lot of sommeliers, I piece it together. I do some consulting (what does that mean anyway?), some writing and some work in the retail sector.

What is your personal philosophy when it comes to being a sommelier?

I'm a traveler at heart, so I try to bring that to guests. I ask them to take a journey relying on their senses.

What is your most memorable wine-related experience?

Why?

Traveling the world, visiting wine regions and meeting people responsible for providing us with an exceptional beverage. There's nothing that can substitute for those interactions.

If you were stranded on a desert island what three wines would you like to have with you?

Chablis by day, Pinot Noir or Garnacha Blanca by night and beer in between.

What is your favorite grape?

To be fair, I really cannot answer that question. The typical answer would be Pinot Noir, wouldn't it? So predictable.

What wine resources are must haves?

Atlases and history books can fill my time nicely. Of course, bottles of wine are a must.

If you could go back in time who would you most like to sit down with, have dinner and talk about wine?

I'd like to sit with a whole bunch of ancient Greeks, possibly a few Romans, too. They did amazing things and developed astonishing concepts on a much more primitive scale.

What are some of your favorite wine and food matches?

My home-made paté and Sautes is humbling yet decadent.

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Good company can also make the most basic dishes *del pueblo* and the simplest wines sing.

Plans for the future?

Plans? They best include an airplane. I love teaching as well. Possibly making wine. We shall see...

What advice would you give to

a novice wine drinker or a person interested in the sommelier profession?

Do not compromise. The world will likely find a place for what you enjoy, and you'll be able to carve out your little corner of the wine industry. Also, know thyself: learning what wines make you tick and why is a vital prerequisite for development. Above all, be original and follow your instincts. Look at Pasteur...and Parker.

G. Wyatt Snoe is a sommelier who specializes in writing about interesting figures in the wine industry.

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some years ago, the Guinness Book of Records, now called the World Record Book adds to the luster of the brewery and contains an internationally recognized collection of world records.

The genesis of the book is classically Irish. In 1951, Sir Hugh Beaver, then the managing director of the brewery, went on a shooting party in the Slob, alongside the River Slaney in Wexford. He became involved in an argument: which was the fastest game bird in Europe, the golden plover or the grouse?

That evening at Castlebridge House, he realized that it was impossible to confirm in reference books whether or not the golden plover was Europe's fastest game bird. Beaver thought that there

must be numerous other questions debated nightly in the 81,400 pubs in Britain and Ireland, but there was no book with which to settle arguments about records. He realized then that a book supplying the answers to this sort of question might prove popular. One thousand copies were printed and given away. The first 198-page edition was bound in 1955 and went to the top of the British best seller lists by Christmas. "It was a marketing give away—it wasn't supposed to be a money maker," said Beaver. The following year it was launched in the U.S., and it sold 70,000 copies. After the book became a surprise hit, many further editions were printed, eventually settling into a pattern of one revision a year.

J. Herbert Silverman is writing a book about colorful characters in the wine and spirits business and a history of Irish whiskey.

Sommelier News
Mission Statement

The International
Sommelier Newsletter
currently reaches more
than 17,000 readers

Our Aims are:

- To provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience of food and beverage industry professionals and enthusiasts world-wide.
- To spread enthusiasm for wine, beer and spirits with intelligent, educationally-oriented material.
- To encourage input and contributions from our readers in all aspects of wine, beer, and spirits.
- To encourage diverse perspectives on the beverage alcohol industry, and to study our topics from the earth to the table.

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of their submissions and their opinions may not represent those of the International Sommelier Guild

First Press

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looking at record harvests due to consistently high temperatures, followed by cooler nights in recent weeks. "What is really good is we haven't had any great extreme in temperatures. January was hot and now at night the temperature is dropping down to 5 C, which is what we need, because the fruit will be able to hold there, and get all these glorious flavors," Central Otago Winegrowers Association president Martin Anderson told the *Southland Times*.

Medical Association says alcohol tax would lower drink-related deaths

More than a quarter of all drink-related deaths could be prevented by a 10 percent rise in taxes, says the British Medical Association (BMA). It condemned the government for being too close to the drinks industry and said 24-hour drinking contributes to the public health problem, according to the *Telegraph*. It backed calls for the Government to ban cut-price alcohol, including two-for-one offers and so-called "loss leaders." It also blamed drunken celebrities, accusing artists, such as the Arctic Monkeys, of being bad role models.

Oui: France has record wine year

France's wine and spirit industry scored record exports in 2007, with triple-digit surges in China and an exuberant performance from the star of French wines, Champagne, according to the *International Herald Tribune*. France sent nearly 9.4 billion euros, or about \$13.8 billion, worth of wines and spirits abroad in 2007, an increase of nearly 7 percent year-on-year, the French Federation of Wine and Spirits Exporters announced. Growth in China more than doubled to nearly 247 million euros (\$364 million) worth of alcohol. The country of 1.3 billion people, and a growing middle class discovering a taste for wine and already fond of cognac, was the 11th-largest market by value for French wines and spirits in 2007. Barely a decade ago, wine buyers' choices outside of the poshest hotels, restaurants or stores were mostly limited to Chinese-made rot-gut, according to the newspaper.

Vineyard walking tours now offered in California

The Sonoma County Winegrape Commission and the Sonoma County Vintners teamed up with Zephyr Wine Adventures to offer walking tours. The five-day tours include meals, lodging,

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First Press

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and walks through some of Sonoma's most scenic and famous vineyards, accompanied by expert guides and representatives from local vineyards and wineries. "Our goal is not only to get visitors to Sonoma County but also to get them into the vineyards", says Larry Levine, Vice President of the Sonoma County Winegrape Commission.

First ever TTB conference to focus on wine

The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) is organizing its first ever confer-

ence and expo for the alcohol, tobacco, firearms and ammunition industries. TTB Expo 2008 is scheduled for June 17 and 18 at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center in Covington, Ky., in the greater Cincinnati area. Some of the 40 sessions are targeted at firearms and tobacco, but spirits and brewery segments dominate the program. Wine-specific topics include "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly-How to Correctly Pay Wine Excise Tax"; "Uh-Oh! Did I tell TTB About That?" and "Changes to Report to TTB Regarding Your Wine Operations."

The First Press features monthly wine related news selected by roving correspondent and long-time professional journalist, David Wilkening.

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