

What you think of the site - survey results

1 Dec 2005 by JR

Over a couple of days last week we asked for your views on what you liked most and least about this website and your suggestions as to how to improve it. Since we wanted your responses to be as unrestricted and creative as possible, we asked you to write from scratch rather than fill in an easily-analysable multiple-choice questionnaire. This of course has major implications for analysing the results (as one of you who specialises in polling pointed out) so we stopped once 50 of you had kindly spent some time giving us the benefit of your thoughts. Thank you all!

The five free DVDs of *Jancis Robinson's Wine Course* go to Pete Wrobel (not a purple pager), Ben Williams and Martin Nettleton in the UK and Ellen Hirsh and Reid Rapport in the US because their suggestions as to how to improve the site were especially useful. But all respondents had something valuable to offer (no spoiled papers) so very, very many thanks to you all.

Overall these were the chief areas we need to improve:

tasting notes search We certainly know about this one, and I have the very exciting news that it really will be working on this site within days and not weeks. Well, it should be. At the moment it works beautifully on our development site when tested either by me, my colleagues or by Rocky Burt of ServerZen in Newfoundland who created it. It just needs to be amalgamated into this live, working site. Keep your fingers very tightly crossed. Doubtless there will be some teething problems.

search, general and Oxford Companion This certainly needs tightening up in the New Year. Many of you are frustrated by how imprecise the references and the order in which they are listed are. We already have some specific plans afoot for the OCW which is indeed a monster that needs taming.

number of articles listed on each category page I have already reacted to this criticism, that in some cases too few articles are listed at a time. The system now shows the 10 most recent articles in each category. But let me know if you think that is still too few and you'd like to scroll down a much longer list.

logging in Some purple pagers are irritated that the site doesn't remember username and password automatically. We will discuss with the much-valued backroom boys who are the cookie cutters.

UK-centricity is a bugbear with some of the 70 per cent of members (it's more difficult to track where non-members come from) who do not live in Britain. I'm afraid this criticism is particularly valid at this time of year when I provide a lot of material for my fellow Brits about exactly where to get what. Primeur tasting notes (of which there will be masses on 2004 southern Rhônes and 2004 burgundies in the New Year) for example tend to be much more geographically independent. Fortunately *The Financial Times*, the paper for whom I am wine correspondent, is also usually global in outlook so at least I am used to writing for many different nationalities, but I must obviously try harder. The very significant proportion of members who are American may like to note that I am planning to visit both coasts of the US in 2006 (and a whole lot more travel besides).

print a page This is the 'printer' icon at the top right of every page but some of you have difficulty fitting the results on to a page. We will take this up with the designers.

email a friend One or two people don't seem to have found this 'envelope' icon, next to the printer one top right of every page. It does work for me, I promise.

What you seem to like most are **your turn**, **Oxford Companion to Wine**, **tasting notes** and, by those who are not purple pagers, **wine of the week**. And it seems that it's the independence, irreverence, candour and "a sense of community with a common passion" that you particularly appreciate.

Most of you seem quite happy about the **content** of the site, although there were some very interesting specific suggestions, including more on food and wine pairing, and a desire for video and audio clips which I would certainly like to move on to before too long. Some technical advances will be required before this can happen, I'm sure.

Thank you again. We will do all we can to make the site even better over the next few months, and I am confident that everything is moving in the right direction - not least some more exciting news that I have to announce in the very near future.