

Female MWs covered in glory

7 Nov 2004 by JR

and New MWs (L to R) Liam Steevenson, Jay Youmans and Charles Curtis behind a very delighted Julia Harding and Simon Larkin who flank Master of the Vintners' Company John Avery - every one of them a Master of Wine

11 nov update: And late last night one more female MW was announced, freelance British wine writer Sarah Marsh whose extensive dissertation on Pinot Noir clones, passed with distinction, promises to be particularly interesting. This brings the total membership of the Institute of Masters of Wine to 246.

Apologies for sounding sexist but at last week's annual Master of Wine presentation ceremony in London the top honours went to women, one of them a frequent contributor to the forum here on purple pages and the other vital to my sanity in that she is playing a major role in the preparation of the third edition of *The Oxford Companion to Wine*.

Patricia Stefanowicz, who became an MW in 2001, was awarded the first- ever new Noval Award for Communication, designed for the most effective MW communicator. She whom purple pages know as 'Patricia, UK' trained and still works as an architect but somehow manages to fit in an almost incredible workload of wine education and sharing of enthusiasm for this delicious subject. She not only mentors and generally nurses MW candidates, she is also a consultant to Plumpton College in Sussex, England's centre of viticultural academe.

Julia Harding, whom I first met when she was a freelance book editor who arrived on my doorstep saying she wanted to work with me, undertook the horrible job of scrunching the second edition of *The Oxford Companion to Wine* into a third of its length to become the *Concise Wine Companion* while rapidly working her way through the WSET wine exams. She did so well in them that the upmarket UK supermarket Waitrose offered her a job in their wine department. They have been kind enough to lend her to *The Oxford Companion* Mark III for two days a week and as a result I know that the oenological and viticultural entries in that third edition, due out in September 2006, will be superb. Having completed her dissertation on Loire wines with distinction last month, she turned up to collect her MW certificate last Thursday to find that she had also won the Tim Derouet Award for the top overall student and the Robert Mondavi Award for the best overall result in the Theory papers.

Other MWs 'crowned' in Vintners' Hall last Thursday were:

Charles Curtis who trained as a chef in Paris and is now Director of Wine Education at Clicquot Inc in New York.

Simon Larkin is currently principal consultant for UK wine merchants Lay & Wheeler, in charge of fine wine sales to private individuals. He won the Madame Bollinger Medal for tasting excellence.

Liam Steevenson works for Charles Steevenson Wines in Devon, UK. He won the Villa Maria Award for excellence in the viticulture paper.

Jay Youmans is an importer and distributor of primarily new world wines, based in Bethesda, Maryland and won the Viña Errazuriz Award for his papers on the Business of Wine.

There are now MW candidates toiling away at this unique qualification all over the globe. Those with a yen to join them should consult www.masters-of-wine.org and might also like to read [Tales from successful MW students](#)