A new beer tasting language

27 Oct 2008 by Jancis Robinson

As a result of my article on tasting and anosmia Take one nose at the weekend I have had quite a bit of correspondence.

Several tasters and wine lovers, some quite well known, confess to having suffered similarly, and I also received the following interesting email from Jens Eiken of Denmark:

On my way back from Slow Food in Turin, I read your article in the FT about how to taste wines as well as your column about sake. Great!

I also hope it is time to discuss the flavour of beer? In Denmark we have launched a new 'beer language'. Please see here.

At the same time we have launched an exhibition about the five senses in beer. I hope this is of interest to you and your readers. In Denmark we have now the world record in number of microbrewers per capita and needed a better beer-language; a positive one...

I am the head brewer of the Jacobsen Brewhouse (www.jacobsenbeer.com) - the smallest brewery in the Carlsberg group. I am myself on my way to work for Coors Brewers Ltd in Burton-on-Trent, UK.

But perhaps even more interesting for wine lovers and those interested in the mechanics of tasting is this super-polite and important correction from the drinks editor of Gourmet magazine in New York, James Rodewald:

Your excellent (as always) piece in the Financial Times *on the 24th contained a slight mistake. You write, "Until the last few years, it was widely believed that the tongue was particularly sensitive to the four basic tastes in discrete areas." In fact, the so-called "tongue map" was discredited in 1974 and shown to be a century-old misunderstanding. (Of course, it still shows up occasionally in Riedel literature.) I've attached a PDF of the [2004, below] article we did on the science (and lack thereof) of wine glasses. The conclusion is that they do matter, just not for the reasons that glass-sellers say.*

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