Eight new MWs

4 Sep 2009 by Jancis Robinson

The Institute of Masters of Wine has just announced that eight more masochists can now call themselves MWs, bringing the number of MWs worldwide to 280 (including Julia and me).

The successful candidates, with their official bios and details of their sometimes arcane dissertations that finally qualified them as MWs after they had managed to pass all the tasting and written exams, were:

Susie Barrie MW (UK) Susie, 40, is a wine writer and broadcaster. [We often see her on the circuit, and I feel impelled to tell you that her mentor was oneJulia Harding MW - JR] She regularly appears on *Saturday Kitchen* (BBC1) with other television and radio credits including *Daily Cooks* (ITV), *Great Food Live* (UKTV Food), BBC Radio Two, London's LBC Radio and BBC Radio Scotland. She is the author of Mitchell Beazley's *Wine Made Easy 'Champagne and Sparkling Wines'*, and *Discovering Wine Country - Northern Spain*. As well as writing for magazines such as *Decanter* and *The Sunday Times* Travel Magazine, Susie lectures, judges international wine competitions, and hosts tastings. She and her wine-writing husband Peter Richards [who, also tutored by Julia, has just passed the MW exams at his first attempt, as his wife did a year ago - what brilliance! what pressure!- JR] are co-founders of the newly established Winchester Wine School.

Susie's dissertation, for which she received a Distinction, was "UK market attitudes towards brut nature champagne"

Michael Collier MW (UK) After leaving the University of Reading with a degree in Food Technology, Mike, 39, originally from South Wales, lived in Portugal for four years where he discovered his passion for wine. After studying a number of wine courses in Portugal he returned to the UK to work in the wine trade and continue his studies at the WSET and subsequently the IMW. After a stint with a Portuguese importer Mike worked for PLB Group as Beers, Wines and Spirits Technologist for seven years before becoming BWS Category Buyer for House of Fraser. Mike now splits his time between consulting to the BWS trade, especially on technical issues, with his other passion, mountain biking.

Mike's dissertation topic was "Quality and product safety systems – challenges of implementation and benefits or drawbacks to the small and medium sized producer".

Roman Horvath MW (Austria) Roman Horvath, 40, is the Managing Director of Domäne Wachau, one of Austria's leading wine producers, where he was responsible for the successful quality-oriented restructuring of the winery. Roman completed his master's degree for tourism management in Vienna, and was the second Austrian graduate to complete his WSET Diploma with Distinction from the Austrian Wine Academy. His formal education has been complimented by his experience in the restaurant trade and as a purchaser of international wines for the Austrian fine-wine company Wein & Co. His wine knowledge was extended with practical training at wineries in France and Chile.

Roman's dissertation topic was "The Austrian wine co-operative sector: current status and future prospects".

Isabelle Legeron MW (French, lives in UK) Born and brought up on a vineyard in the southwest of France, Isabelle Legeron, 37, is the sixth generation of a Cognac producing family. Wine runs in her blood, and thanks to her adventurous spirit, she's always out and about: sniffing, tasting, exploring. Isabelle adores communicating her love of wine. She works regularly with Michelin-starred chefs, pairing wine to their food; runs wine tasting courses for the public; heads up Wine Lab, a boutique wine tasting company running events for clients in the City; and presents her own wine programme, *Journey into Wine*, that broadcasts to 117 countries in 15 different languages. She is also a regular judge for wine competitions such as the Decanter Awards and the IWC, and recently became Wine Woman of the Year 2009 in Paris. Isabelle said, " I am so thrilled and proud to now be an MW! The Institute of Masters of Wine is second to none in the wine world and it is a real privilege to a part of it."

Isabelle's dissertation topic was "Can Vins de Pays Charentais compete on price and quality in the UK market?" [I wonder what the answer was? - JR]

Tim Marson MW (UK) After reading Classics at Oxford, Tim Marson, 34, went straight into the wine business, initially in the retail side with Oddbins followed by Wimbledon Wine Cellars. He moved to trade sales with Richards Walford, and then to buying with Bibendum, three years ago. When not involved with wine – either working or studying – Tim is a classically trained singer (he sings bass) and trumpet player.

Tim's dissertation was "Appellation Willamette: an investigation into the subdivision of the northern Willamette Valley AVA and its effects upon the region's wine industry".

Tuomas Meriluoto MW (Finland) Tuomas Meriluoto, 33, is the Managing Director and partner in one of the leading wine importers, Winestate Oy, in Finland working in co-operation with some of the best known wine producers around the world, including to name just a few Antinori, Baron Philippe de Rothschild, Cono Sur, Miguel Torres and Symington Family Estates. He also lectures on wine, has contributed to several magazines, produced an wine tasting DVD and participated in production of a wine, food and travel TV series and book. Tuomas said about becoming an MW, "I feel flattered being able to join the Institute of Masters of Wine and being able to use the magical MW initials, carried by number of highly respected people in the wine business who have inspired me during my career. I truly wish, and will do my utmost to encourage the people already in the industry as well as young students considering their future, to take the effort to increase their knowledge in this fascinating field. Wine culture in Finland is still very young compared to many other countries. The MW title gives me an fantastic opportunity to participate in increasing the knowledge and building the culture around gastronomy and wine in our market."

Tuomas did his dissertation on "The attitudes of pregnant and breastfeeding women in Finland to non-alcoholic wines." [A pattern seems to emerging. JR]

Frank Roeder MW (Germany) Frank Roeder, 51, is a former Lufthansa airline pilot from Voelklingen in Germany, who founded VIF Wine Trade, in Voelklingen in 1990. It has gone from strength to strength, and in 2006 was named best German wine distributor, and in 2007 best regional wineshop.

Frank wrote his dissertation on "Mosel winemakers' perceptions of climate change and future adaptation strategies".

Mai Tjemsland MW (Norway) Mai Tjemsland, 45, is owner of GastroConsult, a Norwegian restaurant group with two restaurants, a catering company and a private wine club in Oslo. Mai becomes the first Norwegian female Master of Wine.

Mai wrote her dissertation on "Factors determining the commercial success of the Bag-in-Box wine category in the Norwegian retail market".

The new MWs will be formally welcomed as Masters of Wine at the Institute's Annual Reception and Awards Ceremony on Wednesday 4 Nov 2009 in Vintners' Hall, London.

See the start of Richard Hemming's proposed trek up the MW mountain here.

For information on the MW Forging Links Symposium, Bordeaux in June 2010, see www.mwsymposium.com