8 new Master Sommeliers

21 Nov 2009 by Jancis Robinson

No fewer than eight wine professionals from seven countries, several of them purple pagers, have recently qualified for the internationally recognised title Master Sommelier, following the Master Sommelier Diploma examination held 6 and 7 Nov at The Dorchester and The Capital hotels in London.

This year's crop of eight, just announced by the Court of Master Sommeliers World-wide, represents the highest number in the history of the UK exams. The successful candidates come from Turkey, Portugal, France, Ireland, Germany, Colombia and Canada and are, with their nationalities and places of work:

Isa Bal, Turkish (UK resident - The Fat Duck)
João Pires, Portuguese (UK resident)
Yohann Jousselin, French (UK resident - Hotel du Vin, Winchester)
Gearoid Devaney, Irish (UK resident - Sarment Wines)
Christian Bock, German (Swiss resident - Vinothek im Park AG, Weggis, Switzerland)
Benjamin Wolf, Columbian (Swiss resident, Hotel d'Angleterre, Geneva)
Bruce Walner, Canadian-American (UK resident)
Christopher Delalonde, French (UK resident - Sarment Wines)

Christopher Delalonde was additionally awarded the perpetual Champagne Laurent-Perrier *Trophée Grand Siècle* which is passed on annually to the candidate who succeeds in all three parts of the Master Sommelier Diploma with the highest aggregate marks in the shortest period of time.

'It is a privilege to welcome these eight outstanding men from different ends of the globe to the Court. They have all worked extremely hard to promote the Court and its educational charter. As Master Sommeliers, their passion and dedication will be a tremendous asset to the growth of the organisation on an international level', said Brian Julyan, Chief Executive of the Court of Master Sommeliers World-wide. 'The Master Sommelier Diploma Examination is an incredibly difficult challenge, and while we certainly congratulate those who passed. We also praise all of the sommeliers who sat for the exam this year after many years of preparation.

'Of course none of this is possible without the generous efforts of Master Sommeliers globally who assist with the choreography and judging of exams, along with the sponsors Dorchester Hotel, The Capital Hotel, The Princess Victoria, Riedel The Wine Glass Company and Champagne Laurent-Perrier.'

In all, 18 candidates participated in the 2010 exams, which were administered in three sections: Theory, Tasting, and Practical Service. Passing each of the three sections is mandatory to earn the Master Sommelier title. There are now 179 MSs worldwide with the first Master Sommelier Diploma exams having been held in London in 1969.

The Court of Master Sommeliers was established in England in 1977 to encourage improved standards of beverage knowledge and service in hotels and restaurants. Education was then, and remains today, the Court's charter. The four stages involved in attaining the top qualification Master Sommelier are: 1) Introductory Sommelier Course; 2) Certified Sommelier Exam; 3) Advanced Sommelier Course and Exam; and 4) Master Sommelier Diploma.

Just three people - **Ronn Wiegand** MS (1986) MW (1991), **Doug Frost** MS (1991) MW (1993) and **Gerard Basset** MS (1989) MW (1998) - have managed to qualify as both a Master Sommelier and a Master of Wine.

To learn more about the Court of Master Sommeliers, contact:

Court of Master Sommeliers
Brian K Julyan, Chief Executive
Court of Master Sommeliers World-wide
1 Seaway Close Torquay,
TQ2 6PY Devon, UK
Tel/Fax +44 (0)1803 605031
bjulyan@hotmail.com

There is also www.courtofmastersommeliers.org