

## France toasts to another award-winning year at the Decanter World Wine Awards 2020

*After a challenging year for the global wine industry, there's finally reason to raise a glass!*

**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020:** There's perhaps never been a time the global wine industry has been so hard hit, but the world's largest and most influential wine competition is giving reason to celebrate with the release of its 2020 results. After completing judging under strict Covid safety guidelines that included innovations such as proximity lanyards and bespoke disposable spittoons, the Decanter World Wine Awards has today announced its 2020 winners.

Now in its 17th year, the 2020 competition has seen a rise in successes from lesser-known wine producing regions such as the South & Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, which showcased their impressive quality and value for money. Classic regions in France, Italy, Spain, the USA, and Australia once again performed well.

During the judging month, 116 expert wine judges, including 37 Masters of Wine and nine Master Sommeliers, tasted and debated the merits of 16,518 wines from 56 countries. France achieved 3,137 medals in total, 11% more than last year, and received the most Best in Show medals of the competition – only a mere 0.3% of all wines tasted were awarded this top accolade. Exceptional quality wines hailed from Champagne, Alsace, Provence, Loire, Bordeaux and Burgundy, picking up 12 Best in Show between them. Wines from the increasingly popular Languedoc-Roussillon were also noteworthy, with five Platinum and 21 Gold medals awarded.

The Champagne region continued to impress, receiving three Best in Show medals for the second year running. **Champagne Rare** received two for its **Brut 2006** and **Rosé Brut 2008**, with the third awarded to **Taillets Sur le Grand Marais Brut Nature NV**. The region was also awarded with six Platinum and 20 Gold medals, an increase on last year, with *Grandes Marques* including **Moët & Chandon**, **Piper Heidsieck** and **Tattinger** claiming success alongside smaller producers such as **Mandois** and **Collet**.

Bordeaux had a fantastic year with three Best in Show medals for its world-renowned reds – two of which were Value Best in Show awards. These went to Pauillac's **Château Bellevue-Cardon 2015**, **L'Orme de Rauzan-Gassies 2016** from **Château Rauzan-Gassies** (Value Best in Show) in the Haut-Médoc and **Château Lacombe Cadiot 2019** (Value Best in Show).

Acting Regional Chair for Bordeaux Andrew Jefford comments, "Unfortunately Jane Anson couldn't be here this year, so I've been able to step in. We've found lots of exciting wines and have been lucky enough to inherit some of the first 2019s come through into retail. At the same

time, we have had good vintages like 2018 in a bigger, more opulent style, as well as very well balanced 2016s. We saw plenty of wines from those three vintages. Overall, it's a very exciting year for Bordeaux".

Burgundy and the Loire each won a Best in Show medal, alongside eight Platinum medals for Burgundy and two for the Loire.

Elsewhere, Provence picked up two Best in Show medals, one for **Château Sainte Marguerite Symphonie 2019**, a rosé from Côtes de Provence La Londe Cru Classé and the other for **Villa Baulieu 2016**, a white blend from Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence.

Alsace also picked up two Best in Show medals for the **Domaine Aimé Stentz Gewurztraminer Sélection de Grains Nobles 2017** and **Gustave Lorentz Vieilles Vignes Riesling 2016** – a Grand Cru from Altenberg-de-Bergheim.

Across the channel, the UK wine industry enjoyed another successful year. Two wineries scooped the ultimate award of Best in Show, both whites, one a sparkling and the other still. In West Sussex, **Roebuck Estate** won for its **Classic Cuvée Brut 2014**, and **Simpsons' The Roman Road Chardonnay 2018** picked up its first Best in Show after receiving a Silver last year for its 2017 vintage. In addition, three Platinum, five Gold, 94 Silver and 46 Bronze medals were awarded.

Andrew Jefford, Co-Chair says, "The Decanter World Wine Awards really helps producers to raise their profile internationally. It can do the same for wine-producing regions and nations, too. Our judging system - including re-tasting of all Golds, with possible promotion to Platinum - is something we are very proud of. We explain it as often as we can. So, when consumers see a DWWA sticker on a bottle, be it Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze, they can be reassured that the wine in question has been judged by regional experts and specialists before receiving its medal. We discuss, we argue, we fight it out...that's all part of the judging fun. Even with social distancing! But that's also how you get the results which have made the DWWA an international wine benchmark."

After much uncertainty on whether the awards could take place this year, Decanter was meticulous in its approach and innovation to ensure the judging went ahead, introducing strict safety measures that were put in place, including temperature checks on the door, PPE for all judges and staff, disposable spittoons with antibacterial powder that solidifies with liquid and is later incinerated with other hazardous waste, proximity tags worn on lanyards that vibrate when you are less than two metres from another person, and isolated tasting areas with designated facilities.

Co-Chair Sarah Jane Evans MW comments, "The competition has been terrific, it has been a perfect atmosphere to taste and judge this year. After months of lockdown and uncertainty everyone has been delighted to be back again, working together, sharing ideas and thoughts, and above all, focused on picking out the great wines from this year. There have been some wonderful discoveries. As ever the Best in Show day was tough, narrowing down to 50 top wines".

A full list of winners can be viewed online at <http://awards.decanter.com/DWWA>

## ENDS

The Decanter World Wine Awards Co-Chairs and key spokespeople are available for interviews, please use the contact details below to arrange.

### **Notes to Editors**

France won a total of 3,137 medals this year, with 12 Best in Show, including 3 Value Best in Show, 34 Platinum, 107 Gold, 1,180 Silver and 1,803 Bronze medals. Champagne and Bordeaux topped the tables, producing three Best in Show each, with wines from Alsace, Burgundy, Provence and the Loire also collecting the competition's top accolade. The Languedoc-Roussillon was France's most awarded region for the third year in a row.

Launched in 2004, the Decanter World Wine Awards is the world's largest and most influential wine competition.

The 2020 awards introduced new innovations, including bespoke disposable spittoons and proximity lanyards, to ensure Covid safety guidelines were adhered to in Decanter's first socially distanced judging month, held at the Future Plc offices in Canary Wharf. A panel of 116 expert wine judges blind-tasted 16,518 wines from 56 countries over four consecutive weeks in August.

Only a total of 50 wines were awarded the highly sought-after accolade of "Best in Show", and the four-week tasting culminated in 178 Platinum, 537 Gold, 5,234 Silver and 7,508 Bronze medals being given out.

Full details on the judging process can be found on [www.decanter.com/decanter-awards/](http://www.decanter.com/decanter-awards/).

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