Concours Mondial
BRUXELLES
The United Nations of Fine Wines

PRESS PACK

Switzerland - Aigle
From 2 to 5 May 2019

25 YEARS’ EXPERIENCE

OVER 9,000 ENTRIES FROM 50 COUNTRIES

A TOURING COMPETITION

330 INTERNATIONAL JUDGES REPRESENTING 50 NATIONALITIES

PRE- AND POST-EVENT CHECKS TO GUARANTEE THE RELIABILITY OF THE RESULTS
INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE CONCOURS MONDIAL DE BRUXELLES

The Concours Mondial de Bruxelles is an international competition where over 9,000 wines are entered by producers to be tasted and evaluated by a panel of experts. Our seasoned judges from across the globe assess the wines entered. Their sole ambition is to select wines of irreproachable quality, irrespective of their labels or an appellation’s prestige. The competition is one of the foremost international events in its category.

SOME BACKGROUND HISTORY...

Established by Louis Havaux, the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles was held for the first time in April 1994 in Bruges! Although there were ‘only’ 861 entries (a feat in itself considering they were assembled in just two months), the international scope of the event – with 29 participating countries – was already acknowledged. In 2006, the Concours Mondial decided to flex its international muscle by travelling outside Belgium. The success of this initiative was such that it continued to do so for future events. For over ten years, the competition has travelled the length and breadth of Europe: Lisbon, Maastricht, Bordeaux, Valencia, Palermo, Luxembourg, Guimarães, Bratislava, Jesolo, Plovdiv and Valladolid. Last year, a new milestone was achieved when the competition travelled outside Europe to be hosted by Beijing in China.

SERVING CONSUMER INTERESTS...

Finding the ‘right’ wine amongst the thousands of commercially available products is no easy task. Even though taste and personal experience are still the best guides, the consumer in search of reliable quality cues can also have complete confidence in medals from the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles. The competition has garnered its reputation by rigorously selecting renowned judges of proven expertise. The organisers provide tasting conditions of the highest standard and have invested unsparingly in post-event checks of award-winning wines. Additional analyses are thus carried out regularly on wines that display the precious Concours Mondial de Bruxelles bottle sticker. These checks are conducted so that consumers can rest assured that the ‘Concours Mondial’ seal is a reliable measure of quality.
2019 COMPETITION HOST

AIGLE, THE CAPITAL OF CHASSELAS

The vineyards of Aigle cover 135 hectares. Most of them are planted to Chasselas, the grape variety on which the reputation of Aigle wines was founded in the Middle Ages. The traditional red varietals are Gamay and Pinot Noir. The glacial moraine soils, coupled with the microclimate created by the foehn wind, imbue Chasselas with the quintessential distinguished touch which has made the appellation famous. Another of Aigle’s defining features is its magnificent terraced vineyards whose impressive walls create unique ecosystems for various protected species. Heat stored during the day in the walls provides a unique microclimate for the vines which promotes ripening.

2019 promises to be a landmark year for the Swiss wine industry, as the country will also host the General Assembly of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) and the Fête des Vignerons, which has been held just five times a century since 1797 in Vevey.

ON TRACK

The tasting sessions will take place in the World Cycling Centre. The training centre welcomes over 150 athletes from around the world every year and houses the head office of the International Cycling Union. The 26th Concours Mondial de Bruxelles promises to be invigorating!
THE TASTINGS

THE FLIGHTS

Samples to be tasted are grouped in consistent flights based on the characteristics stated by the producer and analysis certificates, after checks ensuring they have been entered in the right category. Flights encompass:

- either varietals and product typicity: for example, ‘red varietal still wines: Merlot’; ‘white sparkling wines from aromatic varietals’; ‘dry rosé wines containing under 4g/l of residual sugar’ etc.
- or geographical origin: ‘red wines from Bordeaux’, ‘sparkling appellation wines: Asti Spumante’ etc.

Each panel is given a list of 4 to 6 flights which will be tasted in the order set out by the organisers, with a maximum of 50 samples per morning.

THE TASTING SESSIONS

The tasting sessions are held over three mornings. Every care is taken to ensure the best possible conditions: light, strictly controlled humidity levels and air temperature (between 18 and 22°C), observance of a monastic silence in the tasting rooms, impeccable glasses and service, constant monitoring of the refrigerators so that the wines are served at the right temperature etc.

Before each tasting session, a palate preparation exercise is conducted to harmonise and calibrate marks given by judges.

BLIND TASTINGS

All flights of wine tasted by the international panel of judges are obviously served blind. The competition’s organisers ensure that the samples remain entirely anonymous both as regards the label and the shape of the bottle. The only statement revealed to the judges is the vintage.
THE CRITERIA

Competing products are tasted and marked using the tasting sheet developed by CMB’s technical management based on the model designed by OIV and the International Oenologists’s Union. In 2018, for the first time in its history, the tasting sheets were digitized on tablets. Selected criteria involve:

- **sight:** clarity, appearance and, where appropriate, effervescence
- **smell:** intensity, honesty and quality
- **taste:** intensity, honesty, quality and persistency

Marks for each criterion determine the overall weighted score for each sample. A wine defined as ‘excellent’ for all of the criteria will be awarded a maximum score of 100 points.

THE PANEL CHAIR

After each sample is judged, the tasting sheets are validated by the panel chair who is tasked with checking them and ensuring consistent assessments by the panel. On a more general level, the panel chair is expected to be attentive and ensure the tastings run smoothly. The chair sets the tempo for the tastings and is responsible for a certain consistency in the way marks are awarded within the panel. Under no circumstances will the chair influence the tasters’ judgment but will be sure to guide panel members in an unbiased, objective manner. The chair also protects the secrecy of a wine’s identity and will use his/her discretion to order a second tasting of the sample should it be deemed useful. At the end of a flight, all the information is collected directly by members of staff for a final check before the results are processed and statistically analysed in conjunction with the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

JUDGES

Judges that are hand-picked have a responsibility to award medals to the best competing products. The judges are bone fide members of the trade who earn their living through wine and live for wine 365 days a year. They include international buyers and shippers, engineers and winemakers, journalists, specialist wine writers and critics, researchers and representatives from industry organisations. The 48 nationalities represented guarantee a level of diversity that is rarely seen in the world of wine competitions. The wines are judged by over 60 panels comprising between five and six judges. Three of these panels are set aside for dessert wines (Port, Sherry and Madeira for example) with a further five panels dedicated to rosé wines.
**BEFORE:** approving competition rules, checking entry forms and labelling. For each wine entered (originating from a large number of countries), FPS Economy passes its comments on to the organisers who in turn inform producers in the event of their wine winning a medal.

**DURING:** officials from the FPS Economy are on hand during the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles to check compliance with all European Community rules regarding the organisation of competitions.

**AFTER:** the FPS Economy checks that the total number of medals awarded does not exceed 30% of entries thereby ensuring that the event is a true competition. It also checks that the tasting sheets have been properly filled in by the judges and that the points have been correctly added up. After checking that the competition has been run smoothly, the FPS Economy takes responsibility for passing on the results of the competition to the relevant authorities in the other member states of the European Union so that they can conduct their own checks within their country.

**EXCELLENCE AND RIGOUR**

Compliance with current regulations is guaranteed on two counts – the competition’s official recognition by the European Union (cf. Official Journal C96/1 dated 23.4.2003) and inspection by specialist departments within the Belgian Federal Public Service Economy (FPS Economy).

In practical terms, this involves checking a wine competition like the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles before, during and after the event.
At the end of the tastings, each entry is awarded a score out of one hundred by applying the computation formula. Only wines that have achieved the highest scores are eligible for the precious medals:

- Grand Gold Medal
- Gold Medal
- Silver Medal

The 'Revelation' trophies are awarded to products scoring highest in a specific category, such as Organic Wine, Rosé Wine and Sparkling Wine.

This procedure has allowed for checks to evolve concurrently with the constant increase in entries and broader range of provenance since the first competition in 1994, whilst at the same time ensuring they remain in-depth, rigorous and efficient.

Similarly, the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles is the first international competition to introduce a post-event check on award-winning wines to ensure the legitimacy of its results. After the competition, a broad selection of award-winning samples is analysed by an authorised laboratory and tasted by a team of oenologists to compare them with the wines available commercially.

Since 2004, result calculation has been supervised by the Statistics Institute at the Catholic University in Louvain. The authenticity of the ratings obtained using the standardisation method devised by the Concours Mondial was certified in an initial appraisal in October 2004. Several methods of analysing the performance of the judges have been developed since then and will continue to be developed in the future.
“Obviously the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles is about the judges, the logistics and international aura, but in my opinion we should not lose sight of this unique competition’s primary objective: the consumer. The only purpose of such a huge structure is to provide maximum guarantees in awarding medals”.

Baudouin Havaux, Chairman

“The Concours Mondial de Bruxelles’ key features are its independence, its rigour and its quality control. With a team of professionals and international judges selected for their tasting abilities we can guarantee reliable results that are recognised by the industry and popular with consumers. Our quest for reliability and promotion of the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles endorsement are the primary missions of our organisation”.

Thomas Costenoble, Director

“For wine buyers like myself, a medal is of paramount importance as it facilitates marketing. Entering wines in the Bruxelles competition is an astute strategic decision for a producer as an award-winning product grows retail sales 10 or even 20-fold. Bruxelles is a quality event and a name to trust”.

Xavier Leclerc, Wine Merchant for Auchan, France

“The change of location every year makes the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles one of the finest competitions internationally because it gives wine writers and judges an opportunity to encounter and discover new sources for wines and different wineries.”

Marco Oreggia, Journalist, Italy

“The process is really professional. A medal on a bottle unquestionably proves that it is a good quality wine”.

Jeffrey Jenssen, Journalist, United States

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ORIGIN OF THE WINES

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SOME TESTIMONIALS

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FOR MORE DETAILS AND ACCREDITATIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US

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