



PHIPPS

Embargoed until Thursday 29th November 11.00am GMT

**Supermarket wines come of age; English sparkling wines set to rival Champagne;
Chardonnay makes a comeback;
Canadian ice wine by The Apprentice star awarded medal**

The results are in following Tranche 1 of the International Wine Challenge (IWC), the world's most influential wine competition, and there is plenty to write home about.

With 212 wine experts from 23 countries putting the wines to the test, there was very little ambiguity about the answers that came out of the four days of judging that took place at The Oval earlier this month.

Fortifying times for supermarket wines

It's been well documented that supermarkets are working hard to improve the quality of their own label wine, bringing in expert buying teams including MWs to help select the best wine for their customers. It looks like this tactic is proving to be successful given the impressive selection of supermarket own brands that won the highly coveted IWC Gold medal.

Overall, 11 of the Gold medals in the competition went to the supermarkets, spanning all categories bar rosé.

The fortified category was the one that most impressed for the supermarket own brands. Marks & Spencer's bringing in two top gongs for its own label Sherry and Port made by Emilio Lustau and Taylor's respectively, while Waitrose brought in one Gold for its Palo Cortado, also made by Lustau.

- Sparkling wines
 - o Marks & Spencer's Delacourt Champagne 2004
- White wine
 - o Aldi Artisan Tasmanian Chardonnay 2016
- Red wine
 - o Tesco Finest Cantina Valpantena Amarone 2015
 - o Tesco Finest Fratelli Martini Secondo Luigi Barolo 2014

- Morrison's Baron de Ley The Best Marques de los Rios Rioja Gran Reserva 2012
- Fortified
 - Waitrose – Kopke Colheita Tawny Port 1999
 - Aldi – Barao de Vilar Vinhos Maynard's LBV Port 2014
 - Aldi – Barao de Vilar Vinhos Maynard's 30 Year Old Tawny
 - Marks & Spencer's Special Vintage Port 2007 by Taylor's
 - Waitrose Palo Cortado "Torre del Oro" NV by Emilio Lustau
 - Marks & Spencer's Very Rare Palo Cortado NV by Emilio Lustau

Please see attached document for the list of Gold medal winners with pricing and tasting notes.

England and France the only countries to win Gold medals for sparkling wines

While Champagne dominated the sparkling wine category, England was the only other country whose wines were deemed Gold-worthy. Both Ridgeview from Sussex and Raimes from Hampshire were awarded Gold with 95 points for their Blanc de Blancs 2014 and Classic Brut 2014 respectively.

No other sparkling wine from any other region scored Gold.

Charles Metcalfe, Co-chair of the competition, said "England and France are the only Gold medal winners among sparkling wines! That is amazing, and shows the astonishing improvements English producers have achieved over the past few years, battling head-to-head with Champagne."

Australia beats France in Chardonnay Gold medal haul

The ABC ("Anything But Chardonnay") era is now drawing to an end, as demonstrated by the landslide success of the grape with nearly 30% of all Gold medals awarded going to Chardonnay wines, including the two highest scoring wines in the competition.

One of the countries that has been working particular hard to demonstrate the elegance and precision of the grape is Australia; of all the non-sparkling Chardonnays that were awarded Gold, Australia led the way with eight, while France – typically the standard bearer for

vinous excellence, especially for its white Burgundy – brought in six. Other countries to bring home Gold were New Zealand, South Africa and Japan – the country's only Gold.

The highest scoring wines in the competition were:

- McGuigan Shortlist Chardonnay 2015 – 97 points
- William Fèvre Chablis Grand Cru Vaudésir 2016 – 97 points

The Apprentice contestant takes home a medal

BBC Apprentice star Jackie Fast's new ice wine brand gained a Silver medal with a score of 92 points.

The dessert wine, made in Canada from frozen grapes, is sold exclusively in the UK under Jackie's new REBEL Pi label. Canadian-born Jackie describes it as "something rare, something unique."

IWC judges, who tasted it blind, described it as "luscious with savoury, earthy complexity and a sweet but balanced finish".

Made for Jackie by boutique winery Pentage in British Columbia, the grapes are harvested in winter when they are frozen so the liquid that is pressed out is sweeter and more concentrated. This risky, time-consuming process makes the wine expensive - £139.00 for a 37.5cl bottle.

London-based Jackie launched the REBEL Pi brand mid-October.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The International Wine Challenge

In its 36th year, the International Wine Challenge is accepted as the world's finest and most meticulously judged competition. The IWC assesses every wine 'blind' and judges each for its faithfulness to style, region and vintage. Each medal-winning wine is tasted on at least three separate occasions by a minimum of 12 different judges including Masters of Wine. Awards include medals (Gold, Silver, Bronze) and Commended awards. The IWC is committed to helping consumers discover great wine, and the medals displayed on winning bottles offer a trusted guarantee of quality.

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