



France retains status as global leader in International Wine Challenge

Burgundy crowned international trailblazer and smaller regions flourish

France maintained its position as the leading producer of fine wines at this year's International Wine Challenge, the world's most rigorously judged wine competition.

French winemakers were awarded 102 Gold, 480 Silver and 637 Bronze medals, reinforcing its formidable reputation on the global wine stage.

France finished well ahead of nearest rivals Australia (67 Gold, 319 Silver, and 359 Bronze medals), Spain (53, 209, 347), Portugal (46, 160, 280), and Italy (28, 235, 375). In total, 49 countries entered wines in this year's competition, judged by 400 experts from 38 countries.

Burgundy

Burgundy cemented its status as an internationally recognised gold standard for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir by bringing home both International Trophies for the two grape varieties. The Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru from Chateau de Santenay was awarded the International Pinot Noir Trophy, while Christian Moreau's Chablis Grand Cru les Clos brought home the International Chardonnay Trophy.

On a regional level, Burgundy came out top, with 37 Gold, 121 Silver and 112 Bronze medals. The celebrated region picked up 22 Gold medals for white wines and 15 for red. Chablis producer William Fèvre was once more the star performer – with reigning IWC White Winemaker of the Year 2018 Didier Séguier scoring eight Gold, 13 Silver and four Bronze medals.

Newly revived estate Edouard Delaunay's Charmes-Chambertin Grand Cru 2017 was awarded 97 points, and was one of the highest scoring wines from Burgundy. The other high scorers with 97/100 points were:

- Domaine Christian Moreau Chablis Grand Cru les Clos 2017
- Château de Santenay Clos de Vougeot Grand Cru 2017
- Jean Claude Boisset Clos de la Roche 2017
- William Fèvre Chablis Grand Cru Vaudésir 2016

Champagne

Champagne came a close second with 36 Golds, 96 Silvers and 80 Bronzes.

Charles Heidsieck, Piper-Heidsieck and Rare Champagne, belonging to parent company EPI, secured eight Gold medals between them:

- **Charles Heidsieck:**
 - Brut Millésimé 2006
 - Brut Réserve NV
 - Rosé Réserve NV
 - Blanc de Blancs NV
- **Piper-Heidsieck**
 - Essentiel-Cuvée Réserve NV

- Essentiel Blanc de Blancs NV
- **Rare Champagne**
 - Rare Millésime 2006
 - Rare Rosé Millésime 2008

The highest scoring Champagnes with 97/100 points were: Moët & Chandon MCIII NV and Champagne Rare Millésime 2006.

Rhone

The Rhône region also shone, securing 6 Gold, 40 Silver and 62 Bronze medals, with two Golds going to Château Fortia and one each to Les Terriens, Jean-Luc Colombo, Clos de l'Oratoire des Papes and Jean-Michel Cazes.

Although red wines dominated, with Châteauneuf-du-Pape as the top sub-region, the highest scoring wine – with 96/100 – was a Viognier: Les Terriens Condrieu 2017.

Alsace

Alsace took home 6 Gold medals, alongside 36 Silvers and 49 Bronzes, with Riesling as the region's top grape.

The other top regions, in descending order:

- Languedoc Roussillon
- Bordeaux
- Beaujolais
- South West
- Loire
- Provence
- Corsica

Languedoc Roussillon had one of the highest scoring wines in the competition; SPH Gerard Bertrand's red blend Château L'Hospitalet Grand Vin La Clape 2017 scored 97/100 points.

Oz Clarke, IWC co-chair, commented: "I was absolutely thrilled by the way that the lesser-known regions of France made such a contribution this year. And I was equally delighted to see great but underrated regions like Beaujolais enthusiastically on the comeback trail. France is determinedly setting out to reclaim its crown as the world's most exciting wine producer."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

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The International Wine Challenge

In its 37th year, the International Wine Challenge IWC 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.

For more information on the IWC and full results, please contact the IWC team at Phipps

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