

WWW.INTERNATIONALWINECHALLENGE.COM



# International Wine Challenge 2026

Everything you need to know

**Entries now open**

[internationalwinechallenge.com](https://internationalwinechallenge.com)

Credibility, Visibility, Opportunity



# International Wine Challenge 2026



## Welcome

Since 1984, the International Wine Challenge has set the global benchmark for wine competitions. Every wine is blind tasted, every medal is debated, every entrant receives feedback.



*“Winning at the IWC isn’t just a medal – it’s an opportunity. We’re here to give producers recognition that truly makes a difference in the market.”*

Chris Ashton, Director, International Wine Challenge



## About the IWC

### The most respected wine competition in the world.

- Established in 1984, trusted for over 40 years.
- Wines judged by 400+ top wine experts from 50+ countries.
- Meticulous blind tasting and debate at every stage.

IWC is about more than medals – it connects producers with trade, press and consumers worldwide.

#### CASE STUDY

### Lyme Bay Winery (UK)

In 2025, Lyme Bay became the first English winery to win both Best English White and Best English Red.

*“This accolade is a testament to our team’s dedication and to the rise of English still wine. We’re proud to craft exceptional wines from the best grapes and vineyards, thanks to our talented team and growers across the South.”*

#### CASE STUDY

### Le Grand Domaine (South Africa)

Winning with Cabernet Sauvignon ignited new trade opportunities:

*“Our IWC medal didn’t just validate our winemaking – it opened doors to sommeliers, merchants, and distributors who had never discovered us before*



## Why enter?

### Visibility, Opportunity, Growth

#### Global recognition

Worldwide PR reach, **connecting with billions of consumers and trade professionals** (*Cision, Jan–Sep 2023*).

#### Credibility

Every wine is blind tasted by the global industry's leading and independent judges ensuring fair, expert results.

#### Powerful Marketing

Access everything you need to promote your success: medals, certificates, digital badges, press templates and social media assets.

#### Medals that move bottles

IWC stickers boost sales:

- Co-op Great Value Winner: **+476%**
- M&S Gold Medal wines: **+117%**
- One Silver Medal winner: **+700%**
- Across the board, wines with stickers outsold non-stickered by up to **seven times**.

Independent research confirms that medal-winning wines achieve **~13% higher wholesale prices** (*Paroissien & Visser, 2018*).





## Why enter? (continued)

### Lowest-Cost Shipping

Save time and money with **consolidated shipping** through **Hellmann Beverage Logistics**, offering the **most efficient and cost-effective entry route** of any UK wine competition.

### Influence Across the Trade

IWC medals are recognised and trusted by supermarkets, restaurants, importers, and independent merchants across the UK and beyond.

The International Wine Challenge also runs the **IWC UK Industry Awards** – the UK's most prestigious celebration of excellence in the wine trade. These awards honour the retailers, buyers, and distributors who shape the market. Also Industry Award schemes are run in Spain and Argentina.

### Expert Feedback for Every Entry

Receive **detailed judges' notes** on every wine you enter: invaluable feedback for producers and winemakers about your wines reviewed independently.

### Exclusive Trade Opportunities

Looking for a route to market? The **IWC Discovery Tasting** connects medal-winning wines directly with **UK importers, distributors, retailers and sommeliers**.

Your wine is **rebottled into 50 ml bottles** and shipped to verified trade buyers via IWC's **secure online portal**, staying in perfect condition for up to 3 months. Buyers can view your **medal status, tasting notes, and contact details**, making follow-up simple and effective – giving your wines **hands-on exposure in the UK market** without travel or events.

[FIND OUT MORE >](#)

### Stay Connected

Reach industry leaders worldwide through **IWC Insight**, our fortnightly trade newsletter read by buyers, sommeliers, and influencers.

### Enter Today

Join the world's most influential wine competition and put your wines in front of the people who matter most.

[ENTER TODAY >](#)



## What's New in 2026

- **No & Low Alcohol Wines** – now judged in a dedicated category, responding to growing consumer demand.
- **ICON Wines** – tasted by expert sommeliers from world-class venues including **67 Pall Mall**, giving your wines exposure to the industry's most influential palates.



## INSIGHT

*“Bringing you the trends, stories, and analysis the global wine trade is reading today.”*

IWC Insight is more than a newsletter — it’s our core content hub tailored for wine professionals.

- Features medal-winning producers alongside global market analysis.
- Covers the topics buyers, sommeliers, and importers are actively interested in.
- Delivers fortnightly updates **straight to inboxes of key trade decision-makers.**
- Extends the **impact of IWC medals** beyond competition week, keeping your wines in front of the right people year-round.

Sign up to receive Insight in your inbox and **get 5% off** your next order.

[SUBSCRIBE HERE >](#)



## Discovery Tasting

For those **seeking a route to market**, the **IWC Discovery Tasting** provides direct access to UK buyers.

Participating medal-winning wines can be selected by verified UK importers, distributors, retailers, and sommeliers via IWC’s secure online sample portal.

Each wine is rebottled into 50 ml bottles, shipped direct to buyers, and remains in perfect condition for up to 3 months.

**Buyers can taste your wines, see your medal status**, tasting notes and contact information, making follow-up seamless giving your wine **hands-on exposure in the UK market** without the need for travel or in-person tasting events.

Partners include **Majestic, M&S, Co-op, Wine Society, Bibendum, Enotria** and all key UK based players.

Fee: **£90 per wine** (plus 2 extra samples). Open to all medal-winning still wines & sake, enter at the time of medal entry.



## How to Enter

### Step 1

Visit our website and log in to your profile/or register.

### Step 2

Complete entry details (include Discovery Tasting opt-in).

### Step 3

Ship wines via IWC's consolidated service or direct to warehouse.

### Step 4

Judging takes place – every wine tasted blind, feedback recorded.

### Step 5

Medal results announced; winners receive certificates, assets, and stickers

## Key Dates

### Tranche 1

- **Entries now open**
- **Consolidated shipping deadline:** 26 October 2025
- **Direct Shipping deadline:** 14 November 2025

### Tranche 2

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <b>Entries Open:</b><br>Early Dec 2025                                      | • <b>Medal Judging:</b><br>15–27 Apr 2026   |
| • <b>Early Bird Deadline:</b><br>23 Jan 2026                                  | • <b>Medal Results:</b><br>15 May 2026      |
| • <b>Consolidated Shipping Deadline:</b><br>27 Feb 2026<br>(arrival by 6 Mar) | • <b>Trophy Judging:</b><br>26–27 Apr 2026  |
| • <b>Direct Shipping Deadline:</b><br>20 Mar 2026<br>(arrival by 27 Mar)      | • <b>Trophy Results:</b><br>22 May 2026     |
|   | • <b>Awards Dinner:</b><br>8 September 2026 |



## Contact Information

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# #IWC2026

