

Media Release  
May 2009

## The Chaîne International Young Sommelier of the Year Competition in association with Gaggenau and Pernod Ricard UK Wednesday June 10th 2009

Next month sees the national final of the Chaîne International Young Sommelier Competition held at the Gaggenau showroom in Central London.

Now in its second year, this prestigious competition, organised by the International gastronomic society Chaîne des Rôtisseurs in association with Gaggenau and Pernod Ricard UK, will see the country's leading young sommeliers competing for the title of Great Britain's Young Sommelier of the Year 2009 under the scrutiny of a high-profile panel of judges.

The Chaîne International Young Sommelier of the Year Competition is open to those aged from 21 to 35 years with the knowledge and tasting skills to excel in this highly skilled area and, above all, passion for wine. Says Philips Evins, Head of Chaîne des Rôtisseurs in Great Britain explains: "The steady composure that comes with self-confidence in the face of competitive situations can only happen when specialized knowledge is buttressed by passion and a love for the subject."



The young sommeliers face a series of rigorous tests in three sections: a written theory test; blind tastings with points being awarded on description of appearance, nose, palate and accuracy of vintage, variety, country and appellation; and, a service test including decanting, champagne service and food and wine pairing.



One of the goals of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs is to provide encouragement and support for these young professionals and this year's partners Gaggenau and Pernod Ricard UK share the Chaîne's commitment to nurturing young talent and leading excellence.

"We are continuing our partnership of the Young Sommelier Competition this year as part of our ongoing support of the future faces of this highly-skilled and demanding arena and to share in and learn from their mastery and uncompromising commitment," says Helen Shaw, Marketing Manager of Gaggenau.

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*"We are delighted to be involved with this competition for the first time. Developing and fostering young talent and expertise is fundamental to the continued success and quality reputation of our industry", says Adrian Atkinson, Pernod Ricard UK's Wine Development Director. "This important initiative will encourage increased knowledge, innovation and exceptional customer service standards."*

Headed by Gerard Basset, Master of Wine and Master Sommelier and founder of the Hotel du Vin chain and Hotel Terra Vina, the panel of judges includes leading International wine consultant and judge, Stephen Spurrier and Xavier Rousset, who in 2002 became the youngest ever sommelier to pass the Master Sommelier exam. They will assess the competitors based on the format of the Master Sommelier Advanced Examination with scoring based on its deductive method.

Role-playing is introduced to show poise, competence and professionalism. Contestants are asked leading questions during the service portion on grape varieties, vintages, appellations and characteristics to test how well they cope under the demands concurrent with fine dining establishments.

All competitors taking part in the final will be awarded the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs (GB) Young Sommelier Competition Medal. The national winner will go forward to represent Great Britain at the international heat of the Chaîne International Young Sommelier of the Year Competition 2009 held in Stratford-upon-Avon on September 25th 2009. The British contestant will battle it out against other winners of national finals in countries across the globe for the title of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs International Young Sommelier 2009.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### The Young Sommelier Competition

The Young Sommelier Competition (Concours des Jeune Sommelier) was first organized by the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs in Germany in 2007 to support and promote future young sommeliers by giving them the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills.

The competition is held at regional, national and international levels in countries around the world and is open to sommeliers between the age of 21 and 35 with a working interest in the wine and crafted beverage industry. Entrants must be a citizen or legal resident of the country they are representing.

A candidate for competition at any level must be nominated by their employer, who must be a Maitre member of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs and accepted by the Competition Committee. Members of local 'Bailliages' (area clubs) who are proprietors, managers, chefs or instructors at Chaîne-affiliated restaurants, hotels and schools are asked to nominate candidates, who complete and submit application forms to the National Echanson.



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# GAGGENAU



Pernod Ricard UK

## PARTNERS INVOLVED

### The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs

The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs is an international gastronomic society. Founded in Paris in 1950, the society is dedicated to bringing together professional and non-professional members from around the world who appreciate wine cuisine and fine dining. Its long culinary history and tradition can be dated back to as far as 1248 and continues to be promoted today through its extensive local, national and international events. In an age of fast food culture, the Chaîne aims to sustain the appreciation of high quality food and drinks of all types and provide recognition for excellence.

The Young Sommelier Competition is just one of a calendar of world-renowned events hosted and promoted by the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs to encourage the aspirations of young professionals and provides a platform for them to compete with their peers. The Chaîne provides a network across 70 countries where the spirit of camaraderie helps and welcomes traveling members.

### Gaggenau

Gaggenau brings the professional kitchen into the home and uses the highest quality materials for built-in kitchen appliances combining uncompromising performance and design. Working alongside both professional chefs and product designers, Gaggenau's researchers and developers have consistently been at the forefront of the industry, launching technically innovative appliances and achieving a number of 'firsts': the world's first built in oven; first glass ceramic cook top; first pyrolytic self cleaning oven system and combination steam oven for domestic use.

Gaggenau is associated with fine wine and dining as well as the support, nurturing and development of some of Europe's finest chefs. Michelin starred chef, Raymond Blanc, has selected Gaggenau appliances for the working kitchen in his world-renowned cookery school, Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons found near Oxford.

As well as offering professional standard kitchen appliances across all categories, Gaggenau's also offers a sophisticated line up of specialist wine cooling cabinets of 'professional' performance for the domestic environment. For details of the full product line-up please visit [www.gaggenau.com](http://www.gaggenau.com).

### Pernod Ricard UK

Pernod Ricard UK is part of the Pernod Ricard Group, co-leader of the global wines and spirits industry. Globally, Pernod Ricard now represents 91 million cases of spirits and 25 million cases of wine, and owns 19 of the world's top 100 brands.

Pernod Ricard UK has identified 14 key brands as priorities in the UK market: ABSOLUT, Campo Viejo, Chivas Regal, Havana Club, Jacob's Creek, Jameson, Malibu, Martell, The Glenlivet, Tia Maria, Montana, G.H. Mumm, Pernod and Perrier-Jouët. Pernod Ricard UK is a member of The Portman Group promoting responsible drinking, [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk).

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## Young Sommelier Competition Judges Profiles

### **Gerard Basset, Master of Wine, Master Sommelier, (Chair) Echanson, La Chaîne des Rôtisseurs**

Gerard Basset was born in St Etienne but now holds both British and French nationalities. After training in Lyon, Gerard moved to England to start his career as a sommelier quickly becoming Head Sommelier at Chewton Glen, the Michelin-starred hotel in Hampshire. In 1989 he qualified as a Master of Wine and won UK Sommelier of the year in 1989 and again in 1992. He has subsequently been named Best Sommelier in Europe and three times 2nd best Sommelier in the World. Gerard serves as the Worldwide Vice President at the Court of Master Sommeliers. In 1994 Gerard and Robin Huston established the Hotel du Vin hotel chain and more recently the Hotel Terra Vina.

### **Stephen Spurrier, International Wine Consultant & Judge, Consulting Editor, Decanter**

Stephen Spurrier joined the wine trade in 1964 as a trainee with Christopher & Co. London's oldest wine merchant. In 1970 he moved to Paris where he opened Les Caves de la Madeleine, a highly regarded specialist wine shop in Paris. In 1973 he opened L'Academie du Vin, France's first private wine school. Today his roles include a director of Christie's Wine Course, which he founded with Christie's Education in 1982, wine consultant to Singapore Airlines and consultant editor of Decanter. He has received several international awards for wine writing including the Bunch Prize and Le Prix de Champagne Lanson. He is the author of several books on wine.

### **Xavier Rousset, Master Sommelier & Founder of Texture**

Born in France Xavier Rousset studied to be a sommelier in Saumur and at the early age of 20 started as an Assistant Chef Sommelier at Gerard Basset's Hotel du Vin in Bristol. In 2002 Xavier was promoted to Head Sommelier at Hotel du Vin and won Ruinart UK sommelier of the year. He also passed the Master Sommelier exam and became the youngest Master Sommelier in the world. In 2004 he became Head Sommelier at Raymond Blanc's two Michelin-starred Le Manoir aux Quat Saisons. In 2007 Xavier and Agnar Sverrisson opened Texture, which was recently named Newcomer of the Year by Hardens Restaurant Guide.

### **Philip Evins, Chairman of Winchester Wine Appreciation Society & Head of Chaîne des Rôtisseurs GB**

Philip Evins comes from a business background in high tech industries and his career involved him travelling to and living in a number of different countries. These two factors meant that he was continually exposed to the world's different customs and foods. It was on his travels that he first came to know Chaîne des Rôtisseurs and the benefits of its camaraderie and high dining standards. Philip joined the Chaîne in USA but now spends most of his time in the UK where he established a branch in Winchester. Since 2007 he has represented the UK on the International Board. Philip has been Chairman of the Winchester Wine Appreciation Society for the past 10 years.

### **Bryan Julian, Master Sommelier & CEO Court of Master Sommeliers**

Bryan has worked in all areas of the hospitality industry and held numerous positions including Cellar Master, Event Consultant for The Lord and Lady Clifford of Chudleigh and Catering Manager for Summer Army camps. His consultancy clients have included The Grosvenor House, The Savoy, The Ritz Hotel and Millennium Cophorne Hotels in London. In 1972 he passed the prestigious Master Sommelier Diploma and in 1977 proposed the formation of the Court of Master Sommeliers, a worldwide examining body providing education, training and certification in wine knowledge, wine tasting and service. Bryan is an International Judge for wine, restaurant service, national and international sommelier competitions.

### **Sophie Roberts-Brown, Director and General Manager of The Academy of Food and Wine Service**

Sophie Roberts-Brown joined the Academy, the industry's professional training body in 2003. Her background in PR and her previous role at the Restaurant Association has proved invaluable for re-positioning the Academy as a highly respected, professional organisation. Sophie combines day-to-day management with developing the Academy's strategy and member relations. She also spends much of her time, liaising with potential sponsors for the Academy and developing new events, competitions and fundraising activities.

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