

# GAGGENAU



Pernod Ricard UK

## Media Release

June 2009

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

Six of Great Britain's leading young sommeliers gathered at Gaggenau showroom, Central London, yesterday for the national final of international gastronomic society, Chaîne des Rôtisseurs' International Young Sommelier Competition in association with Gaggenau and Pernod Ricard.

The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs' International Young Sommelier Competition is the only international level competition of its kind and one of only two competitions dedicated to the art of sommellerie. The other is the UK Sommelier of the Year Competition run by the front-of-house professional body, the Academy of Food & Wine, the UK branch of the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale.

*"As the UK's professional body for sommelier, we have been delighted to support this competition," commented Sophie Roberts-Brown, executive director of the Academy of Food & Wine and member of the competition's judging panel. "Our mission has always been to promote best practice and to promote and encourage young people into the front-of-house profession. It was particularly rewarding to see the impressive skills of these young sommeliers and to see how dedicated and professional they were."*

The prestigious panel of judges, lead by Master of Wine Master Sommelier Gerard Basset, assessed contestants through a series of rigorous tests designed to test their drinks knowledge, tasting skills and service skills including decanting, champagne service and food and wine pairing. Personality and passion for wine also plays a big part. *"A top sommelier has a great personality and good communication skills and also the ability to help a customer feel at ease without lecturing or over-selling. Wine and food knowledge can be taught, but much of a sommelier's skill is intuitive,"* Gerard Basset said.

Judge Xavier Rousset, Master Sommelier and owner of Texture restaurant in London added: *"It's very interesting to see the different angles to approach the same job, where they work and their culture really determines their outcome and how they are perceived."*



*The panel of judges: L-R, Bryan Julian, Stephen Spurrier, Sophie Roberts-Brown, Xavier Rousset, Gerard Basset, Philip Evins*

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Winner Yohann Jousselin

25-year-old Yohann Jousselin (French) from Hotel du Vin in Winchester scooped the title of Great Britain's Young Sommelier of the Year. Jousselin first became interested in wine helping his uncle in his vineyard in the Loire valley and has grown into a seasoned sommelier currently studying to become a Master Sommelier.

Judge Stephen Spurrier, international wine consultant said: *"I tend to only judge wines and very seldom judge wine people so I enjoyed the experience. The competition was very interesting, there was one clear winner and then as a judging panel we debated over the second place. The winner was very knowl-*

*edgeable, second place went to a brilliantly intuitive individual."* In second place was 24-year-old Erica Laler (Swedish) of Texture restaurant in London. Laler first became interested in wine at the age of 18 when a friend sommelier gave her four different red wines to blind taste: *"After that I was mesmerized"*, she said.



2nd place Erica Laler



Finalist Thomas Wellwood

26-years-old Daniel Kubini (Czech Republic) Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Great Milton came third place. Also participating in the competition were 20-year-old Tom Pridham of Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Great Milton, 29-year-old Jiri Chovan of Royal Crescent Hotel in Bath and 30-year-old Thomas Wellwood of Myres Estate in Fife.

First time sommelier competitor, Wellwood said: *"It was very intense, and it was definitely interesting to see the format of a professional competition. I suppose you are taken out of your comfort zone as all your skills are put into a completely different context. I've worked*

*in the industry for the past 10 years but never taken a competition, if I was to do it again my whole take would be different."* Bryan Julian, Master Sommelier and CEO of the Court of Master Sommeliers said: *"They all performed extremely well but first time entrants in sommelier competitions always find it difficult. They need to learn how to be 'competition wise'"*.

In September, winner Yohann will represent Great Britain at the international final of the competition competing against 30 winners of national finals in countries across the globe for the title of Chaîne des Rôtisseurs International Young Sommelier 2009.



## 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 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 has an unrivalled portfolio of market leading wine and spirit brands including the UK's favourite wine Jacob's Creek, the world's number 1 Rioja Campo Viejo and the world's leading New Zealand brand Montana. Complementing these well known brands is a collection of small premium wine brands from Australia, Argentina, New Zealand and Spain and an outstanding portfolio of sparkling wines and Champagne including famous houses such as G.H.Mumm and Perrier Jouët. Pernod Ricard UK is committed to the responsible sales and marketing of wine through our customers and to our consumers in the UK market and is a member of The Portman Group promoting responsible drinking,  
[www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk).

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## 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 TerraVina.

### **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 Copthorne 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.

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