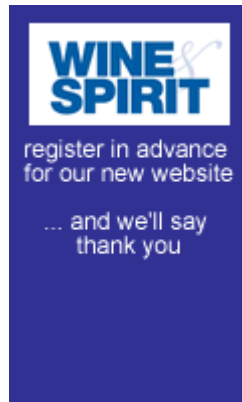




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News

Chateau Pavie underwhelms in blind tasting

10 June 2005

By Panos Kakaviatos, in France

In a blind tasting of vintage 2000 1st growth Saint Emilion wines, the celebrated if somewhat controversial Chateau Pavie failed to shine, as Chateau Beau-Séjour Bécot rather suprisingly received the most votes – overshadowing even Chateau Cheval Blanc.

The wines were tasted by 12 independent and international wine tasters gathered in Strasbourg, France to taste bottles donated by the "Groupement des premiers grand crus".

Bordeaux-based Groupement spokeswoman Karine Devilder said that the tasting represents the Groupement's "first official evaluation of the 2000 vintage in two years." The Groupement includes all top classed Saint Emilion wines, except for Chateau Ausone.

Tasters included celebrities from the French food and wine world: Laurence Faller, winemaker at Domaine Weinbach in Alsace and Emile Jung, chef of the two-star Michelin restaurant Au Crocodile, also in Strasbourg. Others included Charles Johnson, judge of the annual Atlanta International Wine Competition (USA) and Francois Mauss, **Luxembourg**-based president of the Grand European Jury, whose members named Pavie the top wine of the 2000 vintage earlier this year.

The June 5th tasting was conducted "double blind" as the list of wines was not known beforehand, although the theme was. Participants then voted for their top three wines, before they were revealed.

"Very round and fine, with lovely fruit aromas," remarked Faller about the Beauséjour Bécot, for which she voted and which was the chosen favourite by a wide margin (nine out of 12 possible votes). Cheval Blanc came in second, with six votes, while both Beauséjour Duffau Lagarosse and **Clos Fourtet** obtained five votes each.

Among others receiving votes were Chateau Angélu, with three votes, and Chateau Pavie, a château recently

purchased by Gerard Perse who is known for making wines from low yields and very ripe grapes - and the subject of some controversy for its 2003 vintage, which was criticized by wine writer Jancis Robinson and adored by Robert Parker. At the Strasbourg tasting, it received just two votes.

Chateaux Belair, Figeac and Magdelaine each obtained one vote and the rest, none (La Gaffeliere and Trottevieille). Unfortunately, Chateau Canon was a problematic bottle, and thus not included in the tasting.

"Among the premiers crus, not one was weak. All reflected the richness of the 2000 vintage," said Emile Jung after the tasting. "Beau-Séjour Bécot was particularly generous, as if enriched by a small drop of port!"

He also said that the Cabernet-dominated Figeac and Cheval Blanc were perhaps less flattering immediately when compared to the other wines with more **Merlot**.

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