

Blind Tasting yields excellent Results for Austria

(AWMB, November 2002) - Austrian wines have once more successfully defended their top ranking among the world's greatest. A comparative blind tasting on 30 October 2002, organized by the fine wine dealer and collector Jan-Erik Paulson, and hosted by Jancis Robinson MW and Tim Atkin MW, highlighted the astounding potential of Austria's Chardonnays and of its "secret weapon", the Grüner Veltliner grape, a varietal with immense profundity and expressiveness. Austrian Chardonnays and Grüner Veltliners were compared to some of the world's most prestigious Chardonnays from Burgundy, California, and Australia.

Grüner Veltliner has been recognized to be a white grape capable of producing wines with a richness, profundity, complexity and ageing potential equalled only by great Riesling and Chardonnay. "It seemed a logical choice to compare the greatest Grüner Veltliners and the greatest Chardonnays," says Jan-Erik Paulson, "especially as the two can often have very similar aromas. Both are good food wines, and both reflect their terroir, though Grüner Veltliner often shows more fruit and freshness than Chardonnay."

The tasting, which was attended by wine journalists, importers, and sommeliers from leading London restaurants, comprised six flights of prestigious Grüner Veltliner and Chardonnay, classed into three vintage categories. The results were astounding.

Seven of the first ten places were occupied by Austrian wines, with Knoll, Bründlmayer (2x), Velich, Prager, Loimer, and Freie Weingärtner Wachau, beating an international field including famous names like Louis Latour (Burgundy), Gaja (Italy), Mondavi (California), and Baron Thénard (Burgundy). The highest-rated Chardonnay of the tasting, on place three, was the Chardonnay Tiglat 1997 by Velich (Burgenland, Austria).

The first place was awarded to a 1990 Grüner Veltliner „Vinothekfüllung“ Smaragd, Knoll (Wachau, Austria) with an average rating of 18.09 points, followed by a 1997 Grüner Veltliner „Ried Lamm“, Bründlmayer (Kamptal, Austria) with 17.78 points. The first non-Austrian wine in the rating was a 1998 Byron Chardonnay, Nielson Vineyards, Mondavi (California) at place five. Astonishingly, all three categories of wines tasted were won by Austrian wines.

Tasting Panel:

Tim Atkin, Harpers
John Avery, Averys of Bristol
Bill Baker, Reid Wines and Conran restaurants
Stephen Browett, Farr Vintners
Richard Ehrlich, Independent on Sunday
Brett Fleming, BRL Hardy
Matthew Jukes, Daily Mail and Bibendum restaurant
Martin Lam, Ransome's Dock restaurant
Jason McAuliffe, Sommelier, Chez Bruze
Steve Pannell, BRL Hardy
Jan-Erik Paulson, Paulson Rare Wine
Jancis Robinson, Journalist, Financial Times
Gordon Roddick, The Body Shop and vigneron
Anthony Rose, The Independent
Hugo Rose, Lay & Wheeler
Steven Spurrier, Decanter
Charles Taylor, Charles Taylor Wines
Simon Woods, free lance

Final Result - Blind Tasting, London, Groucho Club, October 30th, 2002
Chardonnay & Grüner Veltliner

Overall Result Flight 1-6

1	2000 Grüner Veltliner Exceptionell, Freie Weingärtner Wachau, Austria	17,54
2	1999 Grüner Veltliner Spiegel Alte Reben, Loimer, Austria	17,51
3	1999 Chardonnay 100% Barrique, Mulderbosch, South Africa	17,48
4	2000 Grüner Veltliner Lamm, Schloss Gobelsburg, Austria	17,06
5	1999 Chardonnay Rey, Gaja, Italy	17,03
6	1999 Grüner Veltliner Wösendorfer Hochrain Smaragd, Rudi Pichler, Austria	16,82
7	2000 Chardonnay Grand Select, Wieninger, Austria	16,74
8	2000 Chardonnay Kumeu River, New Zealand	16,69
9	1999 Chardonnay, Gantenbein, Switzerland	16,55
10	1999 Eileen Hardy Chardonnay, Australia	16,51
11	1999 Kongsgaard Napa Valley Chardonnay, California	16,48
12	2000 Morillon (Chardonnay) Ratscher Nussberg, Alois Gross, Austria	16,34
13	2000 „Weiss“ (Chardonnay/Grüner Veltliner), Schwarz, Austria	16,25
14	1999 Grüner Veltliner Rosenberg Reserve, Bernhard Ott, Austria	16,24
15	1999 Grüner Veltliner Piri Privat, Nigl, Austria	16,13
16	1999 Meursault „Charmes“, Louis Jadot, Burgundy	15,59
17	2000 Puligny Montrachet „Clavoillons“, Domaine Leflaive	15,32
18	1999 Chardonnay Tiers, Petaluma; Australia	14,87

Flight 4-5 (1995-1998)

1	1997 Grüner Veltliner „Ried Lamm“, Bründlmayer, Austria	17,78
2	1997 Chardonnay Tiglat, Velich, Austria	17,67
3	1998 Byron Chardonnay, Nielson Vineyards, Mondavi, California	17,63
4	1996 Kistler, Dutton Ranch, California	17,51
5	1997 Yattarna, Penfold, Australia	17,15
6	1997 Morillon „Zieregg“, Manfred Tement, Austria	16,87
7	1995 Grüner Veltliner Kellerberg, F.X. Pichler, Austria	16,84
8	1997 Chardonnay, Hamilton Russel, South Africa	16,67
9	1997 Montrachet, Domaine Baron Thénard, Burgundy	16,48
10	1995 Grüner Veltliner Steinertal, Alzinger, Austria	16,25
11	1996 Chevalier Montrachet, Etienne Sauzet, Burgundy	14,87
	1995 Grüner Veltliner „Honivogl“ Smaragd Magnum, Hirtzberger, Austria	Cork

Flight 6 (1990-1992)

1	1990 Grüner Veltliner „Vinothekfüllung“ Smaragd, Knoll, Austria	18,09
2	1990 Grüner Veltliner Steinriegl Smaragd, Prager, Austria	17,66
3	1990 Chardonnay, Bründlmayer, Austria	17,33
4	1990 Corton Charlemagne, Louis Latour	16,72
5	1990 Les Clos Chablis, Dauvissat	16,21
6	1992 Chassagne-Montrachet „La Boudriotte“, Ramonet	14,84