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Five New Masters of Wine Crowned

Global Wine Community Gains Five New Experts

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Victoria Mason MW

The world of wine continues to evolve, driven by passionate individuals who strive for excellence in every facet of the industry. Recently, five new professionals have been inducted into the esteemed ranks of the Masters of Wine (MW), a title that symbolizes an unparalleled level of knowledge and dedication to viticulture and oenology. The latest recipients of this prestigious honor are Neil Bernardi from the United States, Tone Veseth Furuholmen from Norway, Benjamin Hasko from Singapore, Victoria Mason from the United Kingdom, and Wei Xing from mainland China. Their addition brings the total number of Masters of Wine to 421, representing 30 countries across the globe.

Earning the title of Master of Wine is no small feat. The process is notoriously demanding, designed to test not only the candidates' expertise but also their endurance and commitment to the craft. The examination is divided into three main components: theory, practical assessment, and a research paper. Each segment is crafted to evaluate the candidate's breadth and depth of knowledge, from the technical aspects of viticulture and wine production to the nuances of global wine markets.

The final step, the research paper, is a scholarly investigation into a specific aspect of wine. This phase of the examination is crucial, as it requires candidates to contribute original research to the field, demonstrating not only their expertise but also their ability to advance the industry's collective knowledge. It is only after successfully completing this rigorous journey that a candidate is awarded the title of Master of Wine.

Moreover, each new MW must adhere to a strict code of conduct, pledging to uphold the values of honesty, integrity, and a commitment to sharing knowledge—a core tenet of the Institute of Masters of Wine.

Cathy van Zyl, the current Chair of the Institute of Masters of Wine, emphasized the significance of this achievement, highlighting the dedication and sacrifices required to reach this level of mastery. Van Zyl also expressed gratitude to the existing Masters of Wine who have mentored and supported the new inductees throughout their journey. This collaborative spirit is a hallmark of the Institute, fostering a global community dedicated to excellence in wine.

Spotlight on the New Masters of Wine

Each of the new Masters of Wine brings a unique background and perspective to the table, further enriching the diversity of the global wine community.

Neil Bernardi, hailing from the United States, serves as the Chief Operating Officer at Colgin Cellars in Napa Valley. With an extensive career that includes a significant tenure at The Duckhorn Portfolio, Bernardi has become a respected figure in the American wine industry. His research focused on the sensory impact of lees stirring treatments in traditionally made sparkling wines, shedding light on an important aspect of winemaking that influences the final product's character and quality.

Tone Veseth Furuholmen represents Norway, where she holds a senior product manager position at the Norwegian Wine Monopoly. Her role involves managing a diverse portfolio of wines from various countries, making her a key player in the Scandinavian wine market. Furuholmen's research delved into the phenomenon of "mousiness" in wine, exploring how repeated exposure and systematic training affect wine professionals' sensitivity to this specific fault, offering insights that could impact quality control and wine education.

Benjamin Hasko, based in Singapore, has carved out a niche in the Asia-Pacific region, currently overseeing the beverage program for a prominent restaurant group. His research paper examined how Singaporean consumers perceive subregional identities within the Margaret River wine region in Australia. This work contributes to understanding the growing significance of regionality in consumer preferences, particularly in a market as diverse and evolving as Singapore's.

Victoria Mason from the United Kingdom transitioned from studying literature to becoming a wine buyer, ultimately focusing on viticulture. Her research explored the barriers and facilitators to adopting regenerative viticulture practices in Stellenbosch, South Africa. This study is particularly relevant as the global wine industry grapples with sustainability challenges and seeks to promote environmentally friendly practices.

Wei Xing, a leading wine educator and judge in China, merges his passion for philosophy with his deep understanding of wine to influence the burgeoning wine culture in his country. His research investigated the factors that shape Chinese consumers' wine preferences in direct and indirect sales channels, offering valuable insights into one of the world's most dynamic and rapidly growing wine markets.

A Global Community of Masters of Wine

The addition of these five new Masters of Wine reflects the growing diversity and global reach of the Institute of Masters of Wine. Each new member brings with them not only a wealth of knowledge but also the cultural and regional insights that will continue to shape the future of the wine industry. As these professionals share their expertise with the broader community, they will undoubtedly inspire and mentor the next generation

of wine enthusiasts and professionals.

The Masters of Wine title is more than just a recognition of individual achievement; it is a testament to the collaborative and ever-evolving nature of the global wine industry. As these new members join the ranks, they do so with a commitment to excellence and a passion for sharing their knowledge, ensuring that the world of wine continues to flourish and innovate.