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Gimblett Gravels: 'Serious Contenders'.

Red wines produced from a tiny 800 hectare appellation, the 'Gimblett Gravels', continue to gather international attention and recognition.

"This just confirms that the results of our Masterclasses in Taupo and London were not one-off's – now Gimblett Gravels wines from 3 different vintages (2005-2007) have outranked top Bordeaux wines from 2005/6".

So says John O'Connor, Chairman of the Gimblett Gravels Winegrowers' Association (GGWA), regarding another outstanding performance by Gimblett Gravels wines in San Francisco recently.

In an event organised by Gimblett Gravels member, Craggy Range, wines from Craggy Range, other GGWA member producers and leading wines from Bordeaux were tasted blind by a panel of leading, West Coast based, USA wine critics.

According to Harvey Steiman of The Wine Spectator, the Gimblett Gravels wines "... proved that they belong on the same table as those from big-name Bordeaux chateaus".

Craggy Range's own Sophia 2007 topped the group ranking, followed by Church Road Tom 2005 and Sacred Hill Helmsman 2007.

John O'Connor adds, "We are planning a further Gimblett Gravels Winegrowers Association Masterclass for the USA and the San Francisco result sets things up nicely. The quality of members' wines is there for all to see and we have other members with wines of similar standing. Let me reassure everyone that, whilst the top wines are made in relatively small volumes at present, the Gimblett Gravels has the capacity to produce more of these ultra-premium quality wines."

Founded in 2001, the Gimblett Gravels Winegrowers' Association brings together a small group of New Zealand's finest wine producers, each with a small parcel of this 800 hectare appellation. Members share a fervent respect for the concept of terroir: harnessing this philosophy with the vineyard soils and microclimate to produce character filled fruit, the essential catalyst for superb wines.

The full list of wines tasted in San Francisco was (Gimblett Gravels wines highlighted):

Craggy Range Sophia 2007 (\$50): group rank: 1

Church Road Tom 2005 (\$85): group rank: 2

Sacred Hill Helmsman 2007 group rank: 3 (tie)

Château L'Evangile Pomerol 2005 (\$250): group rank: 3 (tie)

Blake Family Vineyard Redd Gravels 2006 (\$54): group rank: 5

Craggy Range Sophia 2005 (\$50): group rank: 6

Château Pavie St-Emilion 2006 (\$200): group rank: 7

Château Pontet-Canet Pauillac2005 (\$190): group rank: 8

Vieux-Château-Certain Pomerol 2006 (\$175): group rank: 9

Château Rauzan-Ségla Margaux 2005 (\$140): group rank: 10

Château Mouton-Rothschild Pauillac 2006 (\$695): group rank: 11

Trinity Hill The Gimblett 2006 (\$30): group rank: 12

(prices in US\$)

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