



Media Release – for immediate release
Gimblett Gravels, June 2011

Outstanding quality of Gimblett Gravels wines reaffirmed in Hong Kong ***Masterclass reveals a gulf in price but not in quality***

Leading media, trade and collectors from Hong Kong and mainland China packed into Club Lusitano, Hong Kong, late last week for an exclusive opportunity to taste eight 2009 vintage Gimblett Gravels blended red wines alongside eight 2008 vintage classed growth Bordeaux, including all five first growths, Haut-Brion, Latour, Lafite, Margaux and Mouton-Rothschild.

For many of the audience, most of whom are very familiar with Bordeaux wines, this was the first impression of wines from the 800ha Gimblett Gravels appellation of Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, and they were not disappointed.

Led by Singapore based MW, Lisa Perrotti - Brown, the tasting was conducted blind and, as with past Masterclasses held around the world, the overriding sentiment was that the quality of the Gimblett Gravels wines was far closer to the Bordeaux than the price points suggest.

While it was, perhaps, no surprise to see first growths Mouton Rothschild (price approximately NZ\$1500 per bottle) and Haut-Brion (price approximately NZ\$1000) ranked overall as the preferred wines on the day, all were stunned to note the third overall ranked wine was Gimblett Gravels - Mission Estate Jewelstone Cabernet Merlot (price approximately NZ\$39).

Of 27 participants who volunteered their ranking preferences (in interests of impartiality, no one connected with Gimblett Gravels or the event organisation was eligible), twelve selected a Gimblett Gravels wine as their most preferred wine.

Chantal Chi, Independent wine writer of China, and Honorary Chief editor of magazine Wine Press based in Shanghai commented, *"Six years ago, when I visited New Zealand, I was amazed by your Pinot Noir. Today I am amazed by the Bordeaux (varietal) blends of Gimblett Gravels...."*

Ronny Lau, media representative from Hong Kong, neatly summarised the overall sentiment: *"Given that there is a big price difference between Bordeaux and GG (Gimblett Gravels) wines, but not a big difference in quality, GG is doing a great job"*.

Chairman of the Gimblett Gravels Winegrowers Association (GGWA) Nick Aleksich was justifiably proud, saying *"The tasting was a compelling means to demonstrate, against a highly respected line-up of benchmark Bordelaise wines, the very high standard achieved by Gimblett Gravels in only 10 years since the GGWA was formed"*.

He added that *"quality will continue to soar even higher as we benefit from increased vine age and further fine tune winemaking to best express our unique terroir. For us that is extremely exciting, Gimblett Gravels is a very special place and a rising star to follow closely"*.

The featured wines, in alphabetical order, were as follows:

Wine	Vintage	Production cases (12 x 750ml)	Pricing per bottle NZ\$ (approx)
Alluviale, Gimblett Gravels	2009	500	\$30
Babich The Patriarch, Gimblett Gravels	2009	260	\$60
Craggy Range Sophia, Gimblett Gravels	2009	1,200	\$70
Kidnapper Cliffs Ariki, Gimblett Gravels	2009	130	\$55
Mills Reef Elspeth Cabernet Sauvignon, Gimblett Gravels	2009	240	\$45
Mission Estate Jewelstone Cabernet Merlot, Gimblett Gravels	2009	800	\$39
Trinity Hill The Gimblett, Gimblett Gravels	2009	700	\$35
Vidal Reserve Series Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot, Gimblett Gravels	2009	450	\$23
Ch Angelus, St Emilion	2008	7,500	\$300
Ch Cos d'Estournel, St Estephe	2008	20,000	\$250
Ch l'Eglise-Clinet, Pomerol	2008	1,500	\$275
Ch Haut-Brion, Pessac Leognan	2008	7,000	\$1000
Ch Lafite-Rothschild, Pauillac	2008	15,000	\$2500
Ch Latour, Pauillac	2008	10,000	\$1600
Ch Margaux, Margaux	2008	10,000	\$1100
Ch Mouton-Rothschild, Pauillac	2008	25,000	\$1500

Editors Note

The Gimblett Gravels wines were independently selected from a blind tasting conducted by Lisa Perrotti - Brown MW in May 2011.

The Gimblett Gravels wine-growing district is home to around 30 vineyards, is just 800 hectares (less than 2000 acres) and stretches along New Zealand's state highway 50 west of the city of Hastings in the Hawke's Bay.

Once dismissed as useless land by sheep farmers, in the 1980's a small group of pioneering wine entrepreneurs recognised the potential of the free-draining gravel soils and warm climate locale for top quality wines.

In just over quarter of a century this tiny district has developed as a world-beater, renowned for its Bordeaux varietals such as Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon as well as the sky-rocketing popularity of its intense Syrah wines.

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