



**GIMBLETT GRAVELS WINEGROWERS ASSOCIATION
2009 LONDON MASTERCLASS Q & A SHEET**

Q:	A:
<i>WHAT was this event?</i>	A Masterclass tasting held in London to further assist the members of the Gimblett Gravels Winegrowers Association (GGWA) to benchmark their finest wines against wines considered to be the reference as “the best in class, in the world.”
<i>WHEN was this event?</i>	Thursday 19 February 2009
<i>WHERE was the event held?</i>	Rooftop Penthouse, New Zealand House, London.
<i>WHY was this event called a 'MasterClass' rather than a 'Challenge' or 'Competition'?</i>	<p>This was not a sanctioned challenge or competition purely because the GGWA had only ever undertaken one previous benchmarking exercise (Taupo, NZ, late 2008).</p> <p>This event was held to build upon the Taupo exercise and also to expose the wines to a wider assembly of recognised 'Bordeaux educated' palates. The underlying rationale is the GGWA members' ongoing desire for continuous improvement and to develop wines within a context of 'best practise' as demonstrated by wines acknowledged as the world's finest.</p>
<i>WHICH wines were tasted?</i>	<p>Six wines were selected from each region:</p> <p>2005 BORDEAUX, France Château Angelus, St Émilion Château Cos d'Estournel, St Estèphe Château Haut-Brion, Pessac-Leognan Château Lafite Rothschild, Pauillac Château Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac Vieux Château Certan, Pomerol</p> <p>2006 HAWKE'S BAY, New Zealand Craggy Range, The Quarry, Gimblett Gravels Mills Reef, Elspeth Cabernet Sauvignon, Gimblett Gravels Newton Forrest, Cornerstone, Gimblett Gravels Sacred Hill, Helmsman, Gimblett Gravels Trinity Hill, The Gimblett, Gimblett Gravels Villa Maria, Reserve Cabernet Merlot, Gimblett Gravels</p>

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Q:

HOW were the wines selected?

WHO selected the wines?

WHO led the Masterclass panel?

WHO attended the Masterclass?

A:

Each flight of wines was selected separately to ensure that the six considered 'best of class' was chosen for each region in an independent and fair manner.

The **Bordeaux** wines were selected by Alun Griffiths, Master of Wine and Wine Director for Berry Bros & Rudd of London, the UK's oldest wine merchants with royal appointment. Alun was independently proposed to select the Bordeaux wines and his choices were determined based on a request by GGWA for classed growth quality 2005 vintage wines representative of their respective communes.

The **Gimblett Gravels** wines were selected by James Halliday MW. James is a highly respected wine critic and vigneron based in Australia and was co-panel leader at the 2008 Taupo Masterclass. He chose wines in a blind tasting from a selection of 2005 and 2006 vintage Merlot and /or Cabernet Sauvignon predominant wines presented by members of the GGWA.

Jancis Robinson MW	Panel Leader - Winewriter/Critic - JancisRobinson.com
Neal Martin	Panel Leader - Winewriter, contributor for Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
Michael Schuster	Panel Leader - Winewriter/Critic - Decanter and other publications - adviser to the Bordeaux Index

Those in attendance in addition to the panel included a selection of writers and trade identities:

Beverly Blanning MW	Winewriter - Decanter & other publications
Stephen Browett	Director - Farr Vintners: UK leading Bordeaux Wine merchants
Oz Clarke	Winewriter & TV personality
Alun Griffiths MW	Director- Berry Bros & Rudd: UK's oldest wine merchants with Royal appointment
James Lawther MW	Winewriter, based in Bordeaux: Decanter and other publications
Jane MacQuitty	Winewriter - The Times
Pierre Mansour	Wine buyer (NZ wines) - The Wine Society
Jonathan Ray	Winewriter - The Daily Telegraph
Jess Peden	Sommelier - The Providores, Marylebone
Richard Nunn	Director - Louis Latour Agencies - trade distributor
Greg Sherwood MW	Wine judge, columnist and manager Handfords Wine Merchants
Keith Lyon	Wine Buyer - Waitrose
Roger Jones	Wine Educator and Restaurateur: The Harrow at Little Bedwyn
Simon Howland	Wine Buyer and Consultant
Margaret Rand	Winewriter - Decanter and other publications



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HOW was the Masterclass conducted?

The event was held as a double-blind tasting. Event convenor, Geoff Wilson, who is also the GGWA Executive Officer, was the only person at the tasting that knew the entire selection of the two flights of wine.

Participants tasted the wines and, without obligation, were invited to submit their top 6 ranked wines in order of preference.

After the tasting, the panel leaders led discussion on the 12 numbered wines and advised how they had individually rated each wine.

Once the scores had been collected, the wines were revealed, without reference to the order with which they were tasted, and further discussion was undertaken.

Finally the wines were individually identified against their tasting order and the aggregated panel scores given.

WHAT scores were allocated?

A total of 18 score sheets were submitted. It is important to note that, in the interests of achieving a completely impartial result, the rankings of those participants connected with the arranging of the event were not included towards the overall ranking.

IF this tasting was mainly undertaken by a group with palates highly-attuned to Bordeaux wines, was this reflected in the results?

It was evident that the Bordeaux specialists present sought first and foremost to identify the Bordeaux wines. Whilst this did not prove completely impossible, almost all present agreed that the task had been much more difficult than initially envisaged.

WHAT is the relevance of the exercise for the Gimblett Gravels wines?

This is primarily about the ongoing development of the GGWA member wineries who all take this class of wines seriously and wish to work towards being considered as one of the world's premier wine producing districts particularly in terms of Bordeaux-style blends, as well as Syrah, Chardonnay and a number of other speciality varietals.

WHAT is the impact of the exercise for Hawke's Bay wines?

The Hawke's Bay is New Zealand's second largest wine-growing region and produces a broad variety of wine types and styles. The full-bodied red wine category is the world's highest in value and these results prove that the Hawke's Bay is rapidly heading toward an exciting future.

It should be noted that the Gimblett Gravels represents less than 3% of the national NZ vineyard, or around 16.5% of the Hawke's Bay Regional vineyard.



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Q:

WHAT is the overall effect of this outcome for New Zealand wines and why has this been called a 'Tipping point' for New Zealand red wines?

WAS there a chance that this event could have ended up illustrating a great divide between the two flights of wine, suggesting that the Gimblett Gravels wines were not comparable with the Bordeaux wines?

WHAT comes next?

A:

In key export markets such as the UK, China, USA, and a number of other significant wine markets, the highest value wines, the wines that are cellared and in many cases appreciate in value, are within the full-bodied red (or "Bordeaux-style blend") category. For many years NZ production was overlooked for a number of reasons, not the least of which was vine age and viticultural management.

To even be considered in the same tasting as the best from Bordeaux illustrates major progress. To have been favourably scored at such an event means that these wines are now considered as a high-quality product by the palates that matter.

The common expression 'things could have turned pear-shaped', was a very real possibility as the selected Bordeaux wines represent the very best from their region, further strengthened by their selection from one of the very best recent vintages.

The risk for the Gimblett Gravels wines was somewhat mitigated by the "Taupo Surprise" where a small group gathered around two internationally renowned critics in the first masterclass of its type. On that occasion 4 of the 6 top rated wines were Gimblett Gravels.

The GGWA is very keen to continue to benchmark their wines against other great wines around the world.

This will likely mean that further similar masterclasses will be held and these will likely involve variance in the tasting panels, vintages and other renowned regions such as Napa Valley.

There is also the likelihood that the two flights of wines tasted in London will be set aside and tasted in ten or so years' time to assess how well they have aged.



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Q:

WHAT were the final results?

A:

The panel's cumulative results were published as below:

Rank	Vintage	Wine	District	Region	RRP UK £	Equiv. NZ \$	Vine Age
1	2005	Chateau Lafite Rothschild	Pauillac	Bordeaux	975.00	2,715.00	40 yrs
2	2005	Chateau Mouton Rothschild	Pauillac	Bordeaux	675.00	1,880.00	48 yrs
3	2005	Chateau Angelus	St Emilion	Bordeaux	295.00	821.00	30 yrs
4	2006	Sacred Hill – The Helmsman	Gimblett Gravels	Hawke's Bay	18.00	50.00	7 yrs
5	2005	Chateau Haut-Brion	Pessac-Leognan	Bordeaux	700.00	1,950.00	30 yrs
6	2006	Newton Forrest Cornerstone	Gimblett Gravels	Hawke's Bay	15.00	42.00	12 yrs

WHAT were the key differences in the two flights of wines?

The comparison table below outlines key factors such as vintage, blend and pricing (note these prices are recommended retail levels in the UK market, and are indicated in Pounds Sterling net of VAT).

WINE	VINTAGE	COMMUNE /DISTRICT	BLEND	AVERAGE VINE AGE	PRODUCTION (12 x 750ml)	PRICING
Chateau Angelus	2005	Saint Emilion	60% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Franc	30 years	7000 cases	£295.00
Chateau Cos d'Estournel	2005	Saint Estephe	78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc	35 years	20000 cases	£225.00
Chateau Haut-Brion	2005	Pessac-Leognan	56% Merlot, 39% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc	30 years	9000 cases	£700.00
Chateau Lafite-Rothschild	2005	Pauillac	89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10.5% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot	40 years	25000 cases	£975.00
Chateau Mouton-Rothschild	2005	Pauillac	85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc	48 years	25000 cases	£675.00
Vieux Chateau Certan	2005	Pomerol	80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc	50 years	4000 cases	£190.00
Craggy Range The Quarry	2006	Gimblett Gravels	95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc	7 years	350 cases	£25.00
Mills Reef Elspeth Cabernet Sauvignon	2006	Gimblett Gravels	85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Cabernet Franc	12 years	155 cases	£19.95
Newton Forrest Cornerstone	2006	Gimblett Gravels	45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot, 22% Malbec	12 years	600 cases	£15.00
Sacred Hill Helmsman	2006	Gimblett Gravels	45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 41% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc	7 years	130 cases	£17.95
Trinity Hill The Gimblett	2006	Gimblett Gravels	57% Merlot, 17% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Petit Verdot, 6% Cabernet Franc, 5% Malbec	11 years	1180 cases	£14.50
Villa Maria Reserve Cabernet Merlot	2006	Gimblett Gravels	56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot	13 years	610 cases	£15.99

For further information & further comment from the Gimblett Gravels Winegrowers Association:

Geoff Wilson
Executive Officer
Tel (027) 405 2115

Rod Easthope
Deputy Chair
(027) 570 3248

John O'Connor
Chairman
Tel (021) 585 811