

Harpers

WINE & SPIRIT TRADES REVIEW

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A photograph of Paul Henry, a man with dark hair wearing a dark jacket, sitting on a tufted yellow leather sofa in a restaurant. Behind him is a bar with shelves of bottles. A glass of whisky is on a table to his right.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THIS ... BOISDALE TAKES ON LONDON MUSIC SCENE

LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA: PAUL HENRY ON WHAT OZ SHOULD DO NEXT

NEWS

How low-alcohol wine opens door to sub-£5 category

TASTE

Latest products; the Henry Root and Indigo Wine

REPORT

All the news and views from Vinexpo 2011

AGENDA

Female sommeliers have their say in Setting the Agenda



In Brief

Diageo plans Scotch upgrade

Diageo is planning a £9.5 million upgrade of its Scotch whisky production in Speyside and consultations with residents there will begin this week. Diageo is also proposing to increase production capacity at existing distilleries by over 10 million litres per annum over the next two to three years.

BA serves up English sparkler

British Airways has become the first airline to serve English sparkling wine and has selected Balfour Brut Rosé 2007 for first-class customers. The 2007 vintage, made from Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier, is being released exclusively for British Airways.

New ranges for Origin Wine

Origin Wine is set to introduce three new ranges into the UK and international wine markets, covering low-alcohol, organic, Fairtrade and premium wines. All the ranges were first presented to the trade at last week's Vinexpo exhibition in Bordeaux and are part of Bernard Fontannaz, Origin's chief executive's strategy to keep the company fresh and relevant in the international wine markets.

EUROPE

Austria shifts focus to reds for 2009 vintage

By Laura Clark

The Austrian Wine Marketing Board is pinning its hopes on its red wines this year after shortages in the 2009 white vintage.

The country's indigenous reds, plus Pinot Noir, will be the stars when the 2009 Grand Vins are released in September, according to the generic body's managing director Willi Klinger. This comes after a smaller than average harvest of more well-known white varieties.

This year's (2010) grape harvest in Austria is the smallest in 25 years, according to Klinger. The harvest is normally around 2.5 million hl, but this year it has fallen to 1.7 million hl.

Klinger described 2009 as "an excellent vintage for reds",

with the wines displaying "fresh acidity to balance opulent fruit".

In contrast, the 2009 vintage saw a dramatic reduction in white wine yields after varieties including Riesling, Grüner Veltliner, Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc), Morillon (Chardonnay) and Sauvignon Blanc were hit hard by heavy rains in mid-September. There was also widespread hailstorm damage.

Official vintage reports stated that the 2009 harvest dropped to approximately 2.2 million hl.

Klinger highlighted red varieties Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch and St Laurent as native varieties which have the potential to sell well, particularly in specialist wine shops and restaurants. There is also a growing interest

among the trade and consumers in Austrian Pinot Noir, he added.

Austrian reds in general are suited to connoisseurs because they lack softness, according to Klinger: "They are a little bit more demanding with more personality," he said.

Klinger added that the board's mission to get consumers trialling Austrian wine has been successful thanks to this year's Wine by the Glass promotion in leading restaurants, wine bars, pubs and hotels including Heston Blumenthal's Dinner, Chez Bruce and Brighton's Hotel du Vin.

Klinger revealed the promotion will be repeated next year, with a focus on signing up more on-trade establishments outside London.

Bordeaux's new wine cultural centre, designed to look like a swirl of wine in a glass, is set to open its doors in 2014 at a cost of around €50 million. Construction has not yet begun, but when it is finished it will measure 10,000m² and organisers hope it will attract around 400,000 visitors each year.



SMART CURRENCY UPDATE

- Sterling fell against the euro, hitting an eight-week low, after Bank of England policy-makers opened the door for further quantitative easing.
- The Greek crisis continues to dominate market movement, however early this week investors chose to focus on an expected European interest rate hike next month, strengthening the euro.
- US house prices fell by 4% on the year, and consumer confidence and spending figures are also coming in lower than expected.

EXCHANGE RATES

(Wednesday am)

EUR/GBP 1.1112
 USD/GBP 1.6011
 AUD/GBP 1.5109
 NZD/GBP 1.9523
 ZAR/GBP 10.930
 HUF/GBP 297.68



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