



## **2010 AXA Millésimes Scholarship**

For the second year running, students in the Institute of Masters of Wine international education programme will have a unique opportunity to spend time with the winemaking teams at the AXA Millésimes portfolio of châteaux, domaines and estates in Bordeaux, Burgundy, the Languedoc, Portugal and Hungary.

In 2009, Institute students from the United States, Ireland, Germany, Australia and the UK were the recipients of the inaugural Scholarship.

AXA Millésimes, a long standing Principal Supporter, contributes annually to the Institute's education and events programmes around the world - currently involving more than 240 students from 25 countries. The education programme encourages a cross-disciplinary approach to understanding and communicating about wine and prepares candidates for the rigorous Masters of Wine Examination.

The 2010 scholarship, open to students at any stage of their studies towards achieving the title Master of Wine, will include:

- Two to three days at AXA Millésimes' Bordeaux properties with, according to the season, tours of the châteaux estates, work in the vineyards and cellars, tastings and blending with the individual winemakers.
- Two days at either Mas Belles Eaux in the Languedoc or Domaine de l'Arlet in Burgundy.
- An optional visit to either Quinta do Noval in the Douro or Disznókő in Tokaj.

Selection will be by essay, written in either French or English and not exceeding 1,000 words, addressing the following topic:

*“Imagine that you are a producer of a great vin liquoreux, such as Sauternes or Tokaji. These are among the loveliest wines in the world and yet their commercialisation is a significant challenge. Why do you think this is so and what strategy would you adopt, both in terms of production and marketing, in order to ensure their future success?”*

The deadline for essay submissions from Institute students is mid-June and the 2010 scholars will be announced in July, ready for their visits in autumn 2010.

Christian Seely, Managing Director of AXA Millésimes, explains: “As last year, the idea behind the scholarship is to give the winners some practical experience of daily life in a vineyard. We hope that the question will stimulate some lively essays. I am a great lover of *vins liquoreux*, and believe they are much undervalued. However, there are no right or wrong answers: we are looking for original insight, passionate argument and coherence of thought.”

Dr. Josef Schuller MW, Chairman of the Institute, said: “This scholarship, generously provided by our principal supporter AXA Millésimes, provides students in our education programme with a truly unique opportunity to experience at firsthand the work of winemakers at leading properties in some of the world’s most renowned wine producing regions. This opportunity is of enormous value to students as they pursue their goal of becoming Masters of Wine because the insights they will gain will enhance their knowledge of many different wines.

“The Institute is very grateful to Christian Seely and his team at AXA Millésimes for their continuing commitment to our goal of promoting educational and professional excellence in the wine community.”

Ends (28.04.10)

### **Media Contacts**

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### **The Institute of Masters of Wine**

Founded in 1955, The Institute of Masters of Wine is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting educational and professional excellence in the global wine trade.

The Institute has 279 members (Masters of Wine, normally abbreviated to MW after a member’s name) based in 22 countries. Masters of Wine are active in all aspects of the wine industry and include winemakers, importers, buyers, retailers, consultants, journalists, educators, sommeliers and senior executives.

More than 240 students from 24 countries are currently engaged in the Institute’s education programme which encourages a cross-disciplinary approach to understanding wine and

communicating that knowledge at the highest level and prepares students for the Masters of Wine Examination

The annual Masters of Wine Examination takes place concurrently in London, Napa (USA) and Sydney (Australia), over a four-day period, usually during the month of June. There are three practical papers, each with 12 wines. Candidates are required to blind taste and identify wines of varying quality levels and origins. In four theory papers, candidates need to demonstrate, through essays, knowledge of a wide range of subjects including winemaking, grape growing, business and social issues. Students must also write a 10,000-word dissertation on a subject of their choice. Only after passing all parts of the examination and dissertation can someone be admitted to the membership of the Institute, agree to abide by its Code of Conduct and use the title Master of Wine, or its abbreviated form MW.

In addition to its education and examination programmes, the Institute organises annual events which are open to its members, students, the wider wine trade and, usually, private individuals with a serious interest in wine. These events offer outstanding professional development opportunities and include tastings, seminars, debates, visits to wine producing regions and master classes with the world's leading wine producers.

The Institute's work around the world is generously supported by a number of corporate supporters, each of whom helps to fund a specific area of activity which is usually aligned with their own corporate objectives. The Institute's principal supporters are AXA Millésimes and the Austrian Wine Marketing Board.

More information about the Institute and its activities, including biographies of Masters of Wine, can be found at the Institute's [www.mastersofwine.org](http://www.mastersofwine.org) website.

### **AXA Millésimes**

AXA Millésimes, a subsidiary of the French insurance group AXA, was established in the mid-1980s when Claude Bébéar, President of AXA at the time, and a great lover of fine wines, wished to create the "wine arm" of the company. The aim was to invest in wine properties which had a potential for making great wines. The first purchase, in 1987, consisted of two properties in Pauillac, Château Pichon-Longueville and Château Pibran as well as one property in Burgundy, Domaine de l'Arlot. Important investments, both in the vineyards and in the cellars, were carried out in the years following these purchases.

Then succeeded a string of other acquisitions in Bordeaux: Château Petit-Village in Pomerol (1989) and Château Suduiraut in Sauternes (1992). The same year as the latter, following the fall of communism in the eastern bloc, AXA Millésimes was able to acquire the historic vineyard of Disznókő in Tokaj.

In 1993, Quinta do Noval was purchased and Christian Seely was appointed Managing Director. At the end of 2000 Christian Seely was appointed Managing Director of AXA Millésimes in

Bordeaux, thus leaving Portugal but not his management functions at Quinta do Noval. In 2001, AXA Millésimes purchased Château Tour Pibran, the neighbouring property of Château Pibran, thus enlarging the surface of the property from 10 to 17 hectares. Finally, in December 2002, a brand new acquisition, Mas Belles Eaux in the Languedoc area, was completed by Christian Seely and his technical team.