



2011 AXA Millésimes Scholarship Winners Announced

Six students in the Institute of Masters of Wine study programme have been announced as the winners of the prestigious 2011 AXA Millésimes' Scholarship.

The 2011 scholars are:

- Philip Hedger, co-founder and principal of VinumXtremus LLC
- Anne Krebiehl, freelance wine and food journalist
- Nova McCune Cadamatre, winemaker for Emma Pearl and associate winemaker for Souverain at Asti Winery in the Alexander Valley, California
- Ray O'Connor, commercial manager for the International Wine Challenge
- Patrick Schmitt, editor of the The Drinks Business magazine
- Nigel Sneyd, director of international winemaking at E & J Gallo Winery

AXA Millésimes, a long standing principal supporter of the Institute, contributes annually to its study programme around the world. The scholarship, now in its third year, is open to students of the Institute at any stage of their studies towards achieving the title Master of Wine. Applications for the scholarship were by essay addressing the question: "Biodynamics: a mere marketing tool or a fundamental transformation of viticultural practices?"

The 2011 scholars will make their visits this autumn, including:

- Three days at AXA Millésimes' Bordeaux properties: Château Pichon-Longueville; Château Petit-Village; and Château Suduiraut.
- Two days at Domaine de l'Arlot in Burgundy.
- An optional visit to Mas Belles Eaux in the Languedoc, Quinta do Noval in the Douro or Disznókő in Tokaj.

Christian Seely, Managing Director of AXA Millésimes, said: "Once again the competition yielded a number of excellent essays, and the selection was very difficult due to the high standard overall. There was no right answer, and we were not looking for essays that came down particularly on one side or the other, but for well reasoned, balanced replies that answered the question in a well-thought out way, and added something to the overall debate. All the winners achieved this. Reading all the essays was stimulating and enjoyable, and I would like to thank everyone who took part and to offer my congratulations particularly to the outstanding group of six who are the winners this year."

Lynne Sherriff MW, Chairman of the Institute, said: “This scholarship offers our students unrivalled insight to winemaking at leading properties. The understanding they gain of what goes into making great wine is essential to acquiring the breadth of knowledge required to pass the Masters of Wine Examination. The Institute is enormously grateful to AXA Millésimes for its generous provision of this scholarship.”

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Media Contacts

Nathaniel Anderson, Communications Manager, The Institute of Masters of Wine

T: +44 (0)207 621 2830

E: nanderson@mastersofwine.org

Marie-Louise Schÿler, Communications Director, AXA Millésimes

T: +33 (0)5 56 73 17 18

E: mlschyler@axamillesimes.com

The Institute of Masters of Wine

Master of Wine is internationally recognised as the foremost title in the world of wine. It was established in 1953 and is today held by professionals across the international wine community who have demonstrated both theoretical knowledge and practical ability in the art, science and business of wine and who are committed to professional excellence.

It is membership of the Institute of Masters of Wine and abiding by its Code of Conduct, not only passing the Masters of Wine Examination, which confers the right to use the title Master of Wine or its abbreviated, post-nominal form MW.

A Master of Wine is someone who has demonstrated, by way of rigorous examination, a thorough knowledge of all aspects of wine and an ability to communicate that knowledge clearly. They actively encourage others in the pursuit of knowledge as well as seeking to bring wine communities together.

The Institute’s vision is one of knowledge and integrity. Through its members – the international community of 300 Masters of Wine – and its activities, it promotes excellence, interaction and learning, across all sectors of the global wine community.

In keeping with its original aims, the Institute promotes a cross-disciplinary approach to understanding wine at the highest level. It also organises and contributes to wine trade events around the world. Annual visits are made to wine producing regions whilst the Institute’s annual tasting and seminar programme provides an independent and authoritative perspective on wine. Every four years, its international symposium brings together leading figures from the wine community to address topical issues in an independent forum.

For more information on the Institute see its 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.