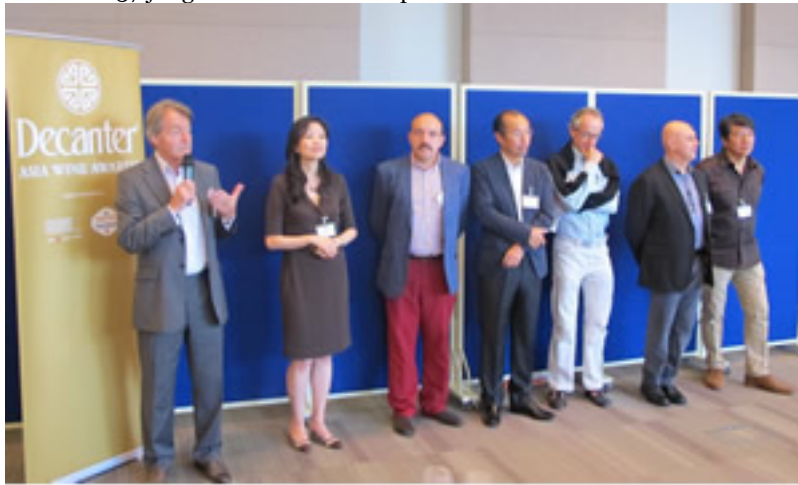




## Decanter Asia Wine Award 2013 begins at Hong Kong

Sep 17: The second edition of Decanter Asia Wine Awards organized for the second year at Cyberport in Hong Kong under the auspices of Decanter China, from September 16-19 started under the co-chairmanship of Steven Spurrier and Jeannie Cho Lee MW, writes Subhash Arora who has been invited as one of the 37 judges and is the sole representative of India



### The Magnificent Seven

Under the co-chairmanship of Steven Spurrier and Jeannie Cho Lee MW, the Decanter Asia Wine Awards (DAWA) competition focuses on wines available in the Asia markets and rewards wines of quality by expert palates in Asia. Gold, Silver and Bronze medals are awarded based on the pre-defined criteria, in addition to the Commended certificate for the wines not making the medals cut, to the wines submitted based on the recommendation of a Panel of 4 judges. Unlike most other competitions, there is no lower or upper limit to the total number of awards and each wine gets judged singularly on its own merit.

Judges taste in panels under the watchful eye of the competition's five vice-chairs, Gerard Basset OBE MS MW MBA (UK), Michael Hill-Smith MW AM (Australia), Andrew Jefford (UK/France), Ch'ng Poh Tiong (Singapore), and Shinya Tasaki (Japan). Besides Spurrier and Jefford representing Decanter and the special guest Basset, all the judges are residents of Asia, Australia and New Zealand, giving the Asian touch to the palates for wine. Each panel is monitored by one of these five experts as Vice-Chairs who taste the wines being poured for the panels under their charge, independently on the table assigned to them.



The voting style is more in terms of the consensus for a medal within the panel, though the marking system of 20 or 100 may be adopted by an individual judge to reach the conclusion. In case of disagreement on the medal-worthiness of a wine, the vice-chair is referred to-he may advise the panel about his opinion after discussing the merits openly. If the panel still does not come to a consensus, the matter may be referred to the co-chair whose decision is final. With experts like Steven and Jeannie co-chairing - both of them were on their toes the whole day yesterday with over 60 wines being tasted by each panel - they made sure each of the wines got the due share of respect and attention.

While the panel president is expected to mark the silver and gold strip on the outside of the sleeve of each such winning wine, they will be further tasted by the Vice-chairs to ensure that an undeserving wine does not get the silver or gold. The gold medal winners will be tasted once again by the Co-chairs and the Vice-Chairs for the Regional Trophies and eventually International trophies on September 19, the last day of the competition.

Subhash Arora		
	Categories	Panel
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup>	Tasmania & Victoria / New Zealand	2
Tues 17 <sup>th</sup>	South Australia / Northern, Central & Eastern Europe & Mediterranean	4
Wed 18 <sup>th</sup>	Bordeaux (communes) / India	1
Thurs 19 <sup>th</sup>	Southern Italy	5

The event is very well structured and professionally organised. Apart from being totally blind like all other competitions (if a judge pulls down the sleeve of a wine, that bottle is disqualified and the judge is asked to leave the competition, according to the rules), each judge is informed in advance about the tasting schedule for the 4 days and he is not allowed to make any changes. Thus the panel number changes every day with the Vice-chair changing too. For instance, I knew a week in advance that the first day tasting would be wines from Tasmania and Victoria and New Zealand as panel no. 2 with Michael Hill-Smith MW AM as the Vice-Chair.

The competition is very 'new world- like' (in our college parlance-an open book exam) in that the judges are pre-informed about the country, region, even sub region, grape varieties in the varietals and the blends, vintage, alcohol levels and residual sugars where required. It instantly brought to memory how it differs from the 'old world' competitions like the OIV-sponsored competitions in Europe and other OIV member countries. Mundusvini, the well recognised wine competition in Germany had been an OIV- sponsored competition for the first 12 editions. But when I enquired with the organisers while judging at the 13th edition earlier this month, I was surprised to learn that OIV had withdrawn the sponsorship because the organisers had wanted to incorporate the information about grape varieties in the blends/varietals to the judges based on a strong feedback from them but OIV had refused!

The results for DAWA will be published on DecanterChina.com on 23rd October.