

Australia dominates Decanter Asia Wine Awards

By Stephen Quinn, Special to The China Post

(Feb 14, 2013) Australia dominated the first Decanter Asia Wine Awards held in Hong Kong in the week of Chinese New Year, winning six of the 13 international trophies. France won three trophies, with one each for Argentina, Italy, New Zealand and Spain.

The initial judging took place in Hong Kong late last year. Decanter received 2,249 entries from around the world. Of these, 43 won gold medals and 35 received regional trophies. The international trophies were chosen from those 35, and represented a mere 0.6 percent of the original wines submitted.

Sarah Kemp, Decanter's publishing director, said wines were judged first and foremost within their region by a panel of judges who "look for typicity above all, rewarding wines that are true to their terroir."

"Wines are judged in flights of 12, grouped by region, color, grape (variety), style and vintage, giving wines an equal chance to shine. Individually, judges taste wines within the context of their style and then compare notes to reach a consensus."

Forty-five of the 50 judges at the Decanter Asia Wine Awards came from or were based in Asia. They included Masters of Wine, top sommeliers, wine critics and wine buyers.

Judging was rigorous. All silver medal winners were tasted twice. All gold, regional trophy and international trophy winners were tasted up to four times.

The inaugural Decanter Asia Wine Awards was the sister competition to the Decanter World Wine Awards, founded in 2004 and considered one of the world's most respected and influential competitions. The latter is the largest wine competition in the world. Last year it received 14,120 entries.

The international trophies were judged by a separate panel consisting of the award's co-chairs, Steven Spurrier and Jeannie Cho Lee MW, plus four vice-chairs.

Full results of the Decanter Asia Wine Awards and profiles of each of the judges can be found at www.decanterchina.com.

Here is a full list of the winners. These wines will be discussed in future columns.

Sparkling International Trophy: 2004 Piper-Heidsieck Brut, Champagne, France.

Riesling International Trophy: 2008 Eden Springs, High Eden Riesling, Eden Valley,

South Australia.

Single-Varietal White International Trophy: 2006 Brokenwood, Maxwell Vineyard Semillon, Hunter Valley, New South Wales, Australia.

Chardonnay International Trophy: 2010 Bay of Fires, Chardonnay, Tasmania, Australia.

Red Bordeaux Varietal International Trophy: Fox Creek, Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale, South Australia 2010.

Red Rhone Varietal International Trophy: Cave de Roquebrun, Seigneur d'Aupenac, St-Chinian-Roquebrun, Languedoc-Roussillon, France 2009.

Red Spanish Varietal International Trophy: 2009 Protos, Selecccion Finca el Grajo Viejo, Ribera del Duero, Spain.

Red Italian Varietal International Trophy: 2009 Marchesi Alfieri, Barbera d'Asti Superiore, Piedmont, Italy 2009.

Single-Varietal Red Best Value International Trophy: 2010 Finca el Origen, Gran Reserva Malbec, Uco Valley, Argentina.

Pinot Noir International Trophy: 2009 Tarras Vineyards, The Canyon Pinot Noir, Bendigo, Central Otago, New Zealand.

Red Blend International Trophy: 2009 Wynns Cabernet-Shiraz-Merlot, Coonawarra, South Australia.

Sweet International Trophy: 2005 Chateau Suduiraut, Sauternes, Bordeaux, France.

Sweet Fortified International Trophy: Non-vintage All Saints Estate, Rare Muscat, Rutherglen, Australia.

A special digital edition of Decanter featuring all of the international trophy winners has been available at the Apple Newsstand since Feb. 6.

Art and Wine

Italian painter Elisabetta Rogai, whose unique method involves painting with wine instead of conventional colors, launched 17 of her creations in Asia for the first time in the same week the Decanter trophies were announced. She has had many solo and group exhibitions in Europe and the United States.

Rogai, based in Florence, uses Tuscan wine with no other chemicals added, to produce captivating paintings that evolve into an ever-changing array of colors, expressions and feelings.

She has created a unique paint formula that prevents colors from fading. Wine

ageing, which normally occurs over many years, takes only a few months on the canvas.

The difference between a freshly-painted artwork and the same painting half a year later is clearly visible — the textures change and the colors translate from young purples and cherry reds into more mature tones of amber, orange and brown.