

Jeannie Cho Lee launches major website
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Adam Lechmere in Hong Kong



Jeannie Cho Lee MW launched her new website at the end of Vinexpo Hong Kong-Asia Pacific last night.

The renowned wine and food writer, and Decanter contributor, told a packed assembly room that the site, AsianPalate.com, is the distillation of 54 notebooks amassed over a period of 15 years.

Around 1994, she said, she lost sight of her original calling, to 'write the next great novel', and started to record her impressions of food and wine.

It took her two years to transcribe the archive of notes – because, she said, 'I just wanted to be able to search them.'

AsianPalate.com is the result. At launch, the website database holds 7,000 wines, with '1000 or more notes' free to view.

The paid section of the site, Club Rouge, costs US\$50 a year and gives access to food and wine pairings, investment advice and other information.

The majority of the notes are on red wines, Cho Lee said, because the Hong Kong community drinks 70% red wine. The writer, Korean by birth, is based in Hong Kong.

There is also a 'huge focus on Bordeaux, because that is what is poured and enjoyed here'.

There is also a strong focus on Germany and Burgundy, though all wine regions of the world are represented in the database.

Her mission, Cho Lee said, is to 'start the dialogue between Asian food and wine. Wine should not be relegated to only western restaurants.'

The site also contains a database of different Asian foods, arranged by the ten 'Culinary Capitals of Asia'. Users can search for matches both by food and wine.

The site will be multilingual, with forums and listings of wine events worldwide.

The audience – demob-happy after the three day wine event – included luminaries of the international wine world, senior wine merchants, producers, and journalists.

www.AsianPalate.com