



International Jeunes Sommeliers Competition Report

Stratford-upon-Avon, England, September 2009

The 3rd International Final of the Jeunes Sommeliers Competition took place in the birthplace of William Shakespeare during the Grand Chapitre celebrating the historic 50th Anniversary of the Bailliage of Great Britain.

The rigorous competition included theory and practical elements as well as a blind wine tasting. It was overseen by a panel of judges comprising Bryan Dawes, MS (Chairman), João Adtiano Melo Pires, MS, Nigel Wilkinson, MS, Dimitri Mesnard, MS; and Isa Bal, MS.

Ten competitors took part – there were due to be eleven but South Africa’s representative, Mortimer Bester, was unable to be present. After a gruelling day of testing their knowledge and skills, Jusselin Yohann, representing the host Bailliage of Great Britain, was declared the winner at the Awards and Induction Dinner. He received an engraved trophy and Gold Medal. Second place went to Spain’s Bruno Murciano with Samuil Angelov from Finland coming Third. They received engraved Silver and Bronze Medals respectively.

It is wine that immediately comes to mind when ‘Sommelier’ is mentioned, but the brewer’s craft is equally rooted in antiquity. On the day before the Final, the competitors, judges and committee members enjoyed a visit to Hook Norton brewery and museum. Hook Norton is still ‘a real local brewery’ and this is a rarity these days. One of only 32 independent family-run breweries, there is no finer example of a Victorian tower brewery anywhere. It is also the only brewery still driven by a steam engine which supplies most of the motive power to produce the beer. James Clarke, Hook Norton’s Managing Director, was warmly thanked for his time and generosity in making the visit a great success.

In the evening there was a Champagne Masterclass and Dinner at The Kings Head, Aston Cantlow, whose proprietors, Peter and Louise Sadler, ensured that we had a marvellous time. Champagne houses Piper-Heidsieck and Charles Heidsieck generously sponsored this event, the Masterclass being tutored by Christian Holthausen, International Communications Director for the two companies.

In the review of the 2009 Final, the Jeunes Sommeliers Committee made special mention of Philip Evins, Bailli Délégué of Great Britain, and his team for their significant contribution in the planning and smooth running of the programme. Grateful thanks were also given: to the Welcombe Hotel (Greg Fehler, General Manager; Robin Smith, Head Chef) for hosting the Final and the excellent Awards’ Night Dinner; also to the Mallory Court Hotel (General Manager Mark Chambers, Maitre Hôte; Executive Chef Simon Haig, Maître Rôtisseur) for hosting the Jeunes Sommeliers’ Dîner de Gala, as well as to all the hotels and restaurants that provided excellent support for all of our judges and participants.

Marie Jones
Managing Editor