



Press release

Zurich-Sierre, May 21st 2019

Mondial du Merlot & Assemblages: foreign judges firmly in favour of Swiss Merlot

The 12th edition of the Mondial du Merlot & Assemblages competition took place in Sierre from April 26th – 28th, with 460 entries from 18 countries. The judges (a majority of non-Swiss wine trade members) awarded 135 medals, including 4 Grand Gold medals which were given to Swiss wines, plus 43 Gold medals and 88 Silver. All the award-winning wines will be available to taste at the 4th edition of the Festival of Award-Winning Merlots, to be held on May 21st in Zurich.

The tasting sessions for the Mondial du Merlot & Assemblages were held in Sierre under the auspices of the OIV (Organisation internationale de la Vigne et du Vin), Vinofed (Fédération Mondiale des Grands Concours de Vins et Spiritueux) and the USOE (Union Suisse des Œnologues), over the last weekend of April. The 23 judges from 12 countries (only 6 judges were Swiss) tasted their way through the 460 wines entered in this year's competition.

A president (and Merlot producer) from the Bordeaux region

For its 2019 edition the Mondial du Merlot & Assemblages was delighted to welcome Philippe Nunes, technical director at Château la Fleur de Boüard (Lalande Pomerol). In his role as President of the competition, he took part in the tasting and will also be present at the awards ceremony. Brazilian-born OIV president Regina Vanderlinde also featured amongst this year's judges.

Swiss Merlots in the spotlight

The OIV rules limit the number of medals awarded to a maximum of 30%, and this year no less than 135 awards were made. Swiss wines distinguished themselves by taking no less than 119 medals, including all four of the Grand Gold awards (given to wines scoring at least 92/100 points), 37 Gold medals (from 89/100 points) and 78 Silver medals (from 87/100). Winning wines from outside of Switzerland came from France and Italy (5 medals each), followed by Germany, the Czech Republic, Argentina, Uruguay, Portugal and Turkey.

Best Merlot is from Ticino

It came as no surprise that the greatest number of medals were carried off by wines from the southern canton of Ticino. The winner of the Best Wine of the Competition award (not forgetting the Prix Vinofed for Best Dry Wine, and of course Best Swiss Wine) was Stefano Fuso's *Cime 2016*. The Best Older Vintage award was won by Delea's *Carato Riserva Oro 2012*.

Canton Vaud's Cave de la Côte scored a double hit, taking two Great Gold medals with its rosé *Expression 2018* (which also won the title of Best Rosé of the Competition), and its Merlot-Gamaret blend *Emblem 2017*, which also won the Best Wine in its Category award.

A hard-fought battle for the Gran Maestro title

With 36 wines competing for the title of Gran Maestro, this was a very close fight. In the end it was Delea's *Carato Riserva Oro* which took the highly-coveted award with its 2012, 2011 and 2010 vintages, followed by Azienda Agricola Bianchi's *Piaz* 2017, 2016 and 2015. Third place went to a canton Valais wine, namely Cave Colline de Daval's Merlot de Sierre 2011, 2010 and 2009. This was a remarkable line up which included several older vintages, proving that Swiss terroir can produce Merlot with excellent ageing potential.

Competition president Philippe Nunes, who was also a jury member for this special category, observed: "It's fascinating to judge the Gran Maestro category, featuring wines that are truly outstanding. An individual judge might make a mistake tasting a single wine, but not a group of five tasters, and when a wine is unanimously chosen under these conditions, and over three vintages, the producer who takes the Gran Maestro title can be rightly proud of his or her work..."

Finally, last but not least, the prize for Best Organic Wine of the Competition went to *Nez Noir 2017*, a Merlot by Sierre's Domaines Rouvinez.

A festival to showcase the award winners

For the fourth consecutive year, a festival open to the general public will be held in Zurich's Widder Hotel on May 21st from 4pm – 8pm. Some 15 producers will be in attendance, pouring their award-winning wines from this year's Mondial du Merlot & Assemblages competition.

Full results can be found at www.mondial-du-merlot.com. [Click here for the results brochure.](#)

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VINEA is a multidisciplinary association specialised in the organisation of wine competitions, including the Grand Prix du Vin Suisse, the Mondial des Pinots and the Mondial du Merlot et Assemblages, but also in the organisation of events and initiatives designed to promote Swiss wines, such as VINEA Le Salon (Swiss Wine Fair) and VINEA On Tour, as well as the Swiss Wines app. For further information, see www.vinea.ch