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IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Still Wines and New Names Shine at IEWA21

Bristol-based independent wine competition the Independent English Wine Awards (IEWA) announced the results of its annual English wine competition on 22 September 2021.

Now in its fifth year, and held at the historic Averys Wine Merchants, this year's competition was its largest to date, both in terms of entrants (69) and wines entered (155) - reflective of the growth and interest in the category.

With a 24-judge panel Chaired by Liam Steevenson MW, the consumer-focused blind tasted competition states its primary goal as 'delivering ROI value for participating producers', and drives this primarily through social media.

IEWA21 awarded 17 gold medals, and 119 medals in all, which while delivering a huge amount to celebrate and promote, is a medal frequency of 77% - less than other wine competitions in this space - significantly so in some cases. IEWA founder and Bristol-based marketer Alex Taylor believes this is important for the value of the medals awarded, the industry, and the awards' credibility.

Taylor commented:

"The results this year were so exciting - see also: fascinating, uplifting, intriguing, surprising, affirming, and full of variety... all neatly reflective of the category we're seeking to help promote here.

As well as the now standard flights of world class classic cuvées, and Essex fruit leading the way, we saw so many notables - medals for magnums (The Grange) and half bottles (Furleigh Estate), for varieties from Solaris (Burn Valley) to Chardonnay (Bride Valley), golds awarded to wines from all the way from Yorkshire (Dunesforde) to Somerset (Fenny Castle), and with charmat method wine (Wolstonbury) taking IEWA silverware for this first time.

Then after a lean flight in 2020 there was a red redemption with two gold medals there (Gifford's Hall and Whitehall Vineyard), and another awarded to a Champagne house (Louis Pommery England), plus the sparkling trophy for a totally under the radar Dorset producer (D'Urberville). So much to enjoy"

The top spots for still and sparkling went to:

- Best Still Wine: Oastbrook Vineyard, Chardonnay 2020
- Best Sparkling Wine: D'Urberville, Extra Brut 2016

"In the two 'trophy' winners, it seems to me that we've identified two wonderful standard bearers for English wine," said Alex. "Both wines are undeniably world class and are not only objectively outstanding and technically excellent, but crucially they're also really consumer-friendly and super-accessible."

On the event and results, Chair of Judges Liam Steevenson MW commented:

"It's impossible for me to overstate how important this competition has become. The IEWA highlights the very best of English Wines, and although there are other competitions, I don't think any of them come close to the quality of the judges at the IEWA.

Other competitions should take notice – this is how to do it! Winemakers, journalists, industry experts and the UK's greatest wine advocates working together in one room – it's very special indeed. These people not only individually and collectively have outstanding palates, but they truly understand the category that they are judging.

Alex and his team as always create an impeccable event that is not just interesting, but also a great deal of fun. This year, unsurprisingly quality was better than ever, and if felt to me that we awarded more Silver and Gold medals, as quality wine followed quality wine, underlining the exciting, evolving state of the English wine industry today.

The Trophy Winners, Oastbrook Chardonnay 2020 and D'Urberville Classic Cuvée 2016 were truly world class, I will be seeking them out for my cellar for sure."

The IEWA judging panel comprises five separate sub-panels and includes some of the UK wine industry's best tasters and communicators, led by panel chairs Liam Steevenson MW, broadcaster and journalist Susy Atkins, Anne Kriebiehl MW, educator and presenter Lee Isaacs, and winemaker and columnist Ben Hulland.

On the event, Ben Hulland - of Huxbear Vineyard in Devon - reflected:

"Judging this year was fascinating: The sparkling wines entered were to me much more individual and 'English' this year, probably owing to quite a few of them being from smaller estates. So many of them, and especially the trophy winner from D'Urberville were more fruit forward, which I associate with English fizz and think is a key difference between our domestic fizz and Champagne.

I thought that the still wine category was really interesting generally (move over Bacchus?) and maybe shows a shift to more recognisable varieties in the improving climate. It was really good to see a toss up between several Chardonnays for the top placed still wine. The winner (Oastbrook) was absolutely lovely. Well balanced with a judicious use of oak. Really nice to see this trend happening. Really great English wine needs really great varieties."

And Susy Atkins was full of praise for the overall standard seen:

“It was a pleasure to be a panel chair at the fifth annual IEWA. Standards of the wines overall were the highest I have seen yet at this competition, with the still wines continuing to gain in quality. Also notable was the number of top awards given to smaller, less-widely known wineries. It’s inspiring to unearth any of the top medal winners, but especially so when they come from wineries which are new to the competition.”

Debutant panel chair Anne Krebiehl MW added:

“What an exciting day of judging and what a great opportunity to spot new producers. It is wonderful to know how many new estates make exciting wines and I am glad we homed in on such worthy winners. I found the sparkling categories generally stronger than the still wine category, however, the still wine trophy really stood out with its luminosity and balance. England has much to be proud of.”

Steevenson concluded:

“I’m so excited to see that the UK wine scene is no longer the preserve of big, well-funded estates. The quality change can be seen across the board, but it’s in the small, artisan producer set where it is the most obvious - we found a wealth of evidence of that here.

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GOLD MEDAL LIST

Still:

FENNY CASTLE Rosé 2020
FOLC Rosé 2020
GIFFORDS HALL Pinot Noir 2019
WHITEHALL VINEYARD Pinot Noir 2019
HEPPINGTON Chardonnay 2020
HIDDEN SPRING Chardonnay 2019
OASTBROOK Chardonnay 2020
TUFFON HALL Bacchus 2020

Sparkling:

LOUIS POMMERY Classic Cuvée NV
DUNESFORDE BDN 2018
FURLEIGH ESTATE BDN 2015
SWANAFORD Classic Cuvée 2018
D’URBERVILLE Extra Brut 2016
HUNTER Classic Cuvée 2018
THE GRANGE ESTATE Classic Cuvée Magnum 2016 (*pre-release)
COOLHURST Sparkling PN Rosé 2016
D’URBERVILLE Sparkling Rosé 2018

More information about the annual competition and the full list of winners, including the silver and bronze categories, can be found online at www.iewa.uk.

To speak with IEWA founder, Alex Taylor, or any of the people mentioned above, please get in touch. Contact: Alex Taylor on alexander.taylor@iewa.uk, or 07599799266. Full list of result can be viewed at: iewa.uk/gallery/2021

About the IEWA

The IEWA is the only solely English focused independent wine competition, and is held annually in Bristol. With the aim of helping raise the profile of English wine, specifically among UK consumers, the team behind the competition are unaffiliated independent professionals experienced in wine competitions, events and marketing.

Web: www.iewa.uk / Twitter: [@theIEWA](https://twitter.com/theIEWA) / Instagram: [@theIEWA](https://www.instagram.com/theIEWA)