

Entries sought for UK Sommelier of the Year 2012

The Academy of Food and Wine Service (AFWS) has this week launched its 2012 UK Sommelier of the Year competition and is seeking entries from sommeliers and wine waiters keen to test their knowledge and skills in this prestigious event.

Now in its 33rd year the UK Sommelier of the Year competition has become one of the most closely contested titles in sommellerie with past winners including Yohann Jousselin of the Vineyard at Stockcross (2011), Christopher Delalonde of Sarment Wines (2010) and Laura Rhys from Hotel TerraVina (2009).

This year's judging panel includes three past winners - Matthieu Longuère MS of La Trompette (2000), Ronan Sayburn MS of Hotel du Vin (1998) and renowned sommelier and hotelier Gerard Basset OBE, MW, MS (1992).

The UK Sommelier of the Year competition seeks to find the best sommeliers by judging their wine and drink expertise as well as their ability to deal efficiently and knowledgeably with customers by demonstrating exemplary front of house skills.

The competition starts with a first round questionnaire, from which the top scoring candidates will be chosen to compete in the regional finals. Winners of the regional finals will then go forward to the final, being held on 23 May 2012 at the London International Wine Fair (LIWF) at ExCel London.

'We are very excited about this year's competition and hope to receive a record number of entries from sommeliers with great wine and drink knowledge as well as good service skills. Holding the final at ExCel during the London International Wine Fair puts the competition at the heart of one of the wine trade's most important events,' commented Academy executive director Sophie Roberts Brown.

Entry forms and further information can be obtained on the event's website at www.sommelieroftheyear.co.uk or from the Academy website at www.afws.co.uk. Alternatively call the Academy on 020 8661 4646. All entries must be accompanied by an employer nomination. The closing date for entries is 23 March 2012.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available, contact Sophie Roberts Brown at the Academy on 020 661 4646 for details.
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For further information, please contact: Academy of Food and Wine Service
Linda Pettit
T. 01737 823721, M. 07973 789853, Linda@tilburstowmedia.co.uk

EDITOR'S NOTES

About the 2012 Academy of Food and Wine Service UK Sommelier of the Year

The competition is open to professional sommeliers and waiting staff working in the UK. All entries must be supported by an employer nomination. Entrants who achieve a 75% pass mark on an initial written questionnaire are selected to go through to one of five regional finals.

Twelve candidates will then compete in the national finals in the Waterfront Rooms at the London International Wine Fair on 23 May 2012. Attendance is by invitation only.

The winner will be announced the same day and will be awarded with a trophy and an all-expenses paid trip to South America's leading organic and biodynamic wine producer, Emiliana. The Emiliana Bursary, in association with Boutinot Wines, will be a five-day tour of Chile's vineyard regions.

About the Academy

The Academy of Food and Wine Service (AFWS), established in 1988, is the professional body for front-of-house service. It is dedicated to improving the status and awareness of food and beverage service as a viable career choice, raising standards across the industry and encouraging teamwork with other colleagues. AFWS can offer advice and training to anyone following, or considering, a career as a sommelier, wine waiter, waiter, bar manager or restaurant manager. www.afws.co.uk.