

Jan Konetzki becomes 2012 Moët UK Sommelier of the Year



Jan Konetzki completes the champagne pour

Sommelier Jan Konetzki, 31, of Restaurant Gordon Ramsay, was announced last night as the 2012 Moët UK Sommelier of the Year.

The prestigious competition, organised by the Academy of Food & Wine Service, was held yesterday at the London International Wine Fair at ExCel.

Born in Hamburg, Germany, Jan came to London five years ago to join the Gordon Ramsay team at Maze. He has since worked for the group at Claridge's and then at Restaurant Gordon Ramsay in Royal Hospital Road, where he became head sommelier 18 months ago.

'It's very exciting ? I'm delighted to have won,' he said on receiving his award. 'I really enjoyed the competition today, there was a real feeling of camaraderie amongst all the sommeliers. It was tough, but it was also fun.'

Jan triumphed after a dramatic final against runners-up Laurent Richet of Restaurant Sat Bains in Nottingham and Clement Robert of Medlar Restaurant in London SW10.

In front of an audience of invited guests the three top sommeliers, whittled down from 12 throughout the day, were set rigorous tasks designed to test their wine and drink knowledge, service skills and ability to manage staff and deal with customers under pressure.

In the restaurant scenario the sommeliers were tested on their serving skills and their food and wine matching ability. The extremely demanding customers in the scenario were made up of eight previous winners of the competition. The finalists were also asked to correct errors on a wine list, complete a blind drinks tasting and finally the infamous perfect Champagne pour, in which a magnum of Moët & Chandon Rosé Champagne was poured equally into 16 glasses, without returning to any of them.

'It was a fantastic final against three really top class sommeliers and the marks were very close,' commented chairman of judges Gerard Basset OBE, MW, MS. 'But Jan completed the tasks with true panache and demonstrated a real talent and considerable knowledge in all aspects of being a sommelier.'

Joe Rorke, on-trade account manager at Moët Hennessy UK Limited and a former sommelier was also on the judging panel. He commented: 'We were impressed with the level of knowledge and skill shown by all the finalists today. Moët & Chandon has been dedicated to and actively involved in sommelier education since 1989, so it's fantastic to see that these young sommeliers are so enthusiastic about wine and about improving their level of knowledge. The drinks trade can be a fast-moving industry, and it is the

job of a good sommelier to keep abreast of these changes while also remaining true to customers' needs. Well done to Jan, Laurent and Clement for standing out against such strong competition.?

Moët & Chandon has a long-standing commitment to and investment in sommelier education. It has been the dedicated partner of the World's Best Sommelier Competition ? last won in Santiago in 2010 by Gerard Basset OBE ? and of the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale since 1989. As part of his prize Jan will visit Maison Moët & Chandon, and have the chance to taste the Grand Vintage collection with Chef de Cave, Benoît Gouez. He will also have the opportunity to enjoy the renowned hospitality at the estate of the world's most loved champagne.

Additionally he receives an engraved jeroboam of Moët & Chandon Champagne and a jeroboam of Coyam 2009 from Emiliana Wines with an all-expenses paid trip to their vineyards and winery in Chile and a sommeliers' selection of glasses from Riedel Glassware.

Jan also qualifies for selection for the European Sommelier of the Year competition, organised by the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale.

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PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE COMPETITION AND THE WINNER CAN BE DOWNLOADED [HERE](#)]

For further information or to organise an interview with the winner, please contact:

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EDITOR'S NOTES

About the 2012 Moët UK Sommelier of the Year

The competition is open to professional sommeliers and waiting staff working in the UK. Entrants who achieve a 75% pass mark on an initial written questionnaire go through to the regional finals.

The regional finals were held earlier this month in London, Tunbridge Wells, Bristol, and Manchester, where some 60 competitors were whittled down to 12.

The 12 who made it through to the final spent the day completing a series of high-level tasks set by world famous sommelier and hotelier Gerard Basset OBE, MW, MS, technical director of the Academy of Food & Wine Service. The tasks included a blind tasting, knowledge questionnaire, a series of snappy questions and a service skills test. The top six then went on to perform one of two champagne pours, the first from a bottle of Moët & Chandon Champagne into eight glasses.

Just three of the six were selected to go through to the afternoon's grand final where, in front of an audience of invited guests, they completed an errors on a wine list task, a blind tasting and a food and wine matching task involving a staged restaurant set-up, with real customers with extremely demanding requests!

The final task was the infamous Moët & Chandon Champagne pour, where the finalists were asked to pour a magnum of Moët &

Chandon equally into 16 glasses without returning to any.

The winner was announced at a Moët & Chandon Champagne Reception held after the judges had made their decision.

The winner was awarded with a trophy, a fantastic trip to Maison Moët & Chandon to taste the Grand Vintage collections with the Chef de Cave, Benoît Gouez, the Emiliana Bursary ? a five-day tour of Chile's vineyard regions in association with Boutinot Wines, and a set of glasses from Riedel Glassware.

2012 finalists

Loic Avril, The Fat Duck, Bray

Arnaud Bardary, Maze Gordon Ramsay, London W1

Tobias Brauweiler, Ellenborough Park, Cheltenham

Remi Cousin, The Fat Duck, Bray

Sergio Dos Santos, Atlantic Hotel, Jersey

Bavand Foroughi, Savoy Grill, London WC2

Lukasz Kolodziejczyk, The Fat Duck, Bray

Jan Konetzki, Restaurant Gordon Ramsay, London SW3

Kathrine Larsen, Orrery, London W1

Stephen Raducki, Hotel du Vin, Winchester

Laurent Richet, Restaurant Sat Bains, Nottingham

Clement Robert, Medlar Restaurant, London SW1

The 2011 winner was **Yohann Jouselin** of the Vineyard at Stockcross, Berkshire.

The panel of judges

Gerard Basset OBE, MW, MS (winner of the World's Best Sommelier competition 2011, and the UK Sommelier of the Year competition in 1992). Owner, Hotel TerraVina, Southampton. Technical director of the Academy of Food & Wine Service. (chairman of judges)

Brian Julyan, MS, CEO, Court of Master Sommeliers

Dominic Laporte, best sommelier of France

Victoria Moore, wine correspondent, The Telegraph

Joe Rorke, on-trade account manager, Moët Hennessy UK Limited

Ronan Sayburn MS, director of wines, Hotel du Vin (UK SOY winner in 1998)

Judging the restaurant scenario were eight of the competition's previous winners: Gearoid Devaney MS (2008 winner), Matt Wilkin MS (2005), Nicolas Mobbs (1993), Laura Rhys MS (2009), Nicolas Clerc (2007), Claire Thevenot (2006), Matthieu Longuere MS (2000) and Yohann Jousselin (2011).

About Moët & Chandon

Moët & Chandon has been the Champagne of success and glamour since 1743. Renowned for its achievements, firsts and legendary pioneering spirit, Moët & Chandon is the Maison that introduced Champagne to the world. Synonymous with the most venerable of traditions and the most modern of pleasures, Moët & Chandon has celebrated life's most triumphant moments with grandeur for nearly 270 years.

Moët & Chandon Champagnes

Moët & Chandon shares the magic of Champagne with the world, offering a range of unique wines for every occasion, mood and palate. From the iconic Moët Impérial to the Grand Vintage Collection, the extroverted Moët Rosé Impérial to the innovative Moët Ice Impérial, each Champagne dazzles and delights with bright fruitiness, a seductive palate and an elegant maturity.

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