

## Eric Zweibel to represent UK at ASI world sommelier contest

**Eric Zwiebel MS**, sommelier at Summer Lodge, Evershot, Dorset, has been chosen to represent the UK at the prestigious ASI World Sommelier contest being held in Japan in 2013.

Eric contested his place at the world event against two former UK Sommeliers of the Year - Matthieu Longuere MS of La Trompette, London, and Nicolas Clerc MS from D&D London - and the current holder of the title Jan Konetzki of Restaurant Gordon Ramsay.

'It's a true honour to be chosen to represent the UK in this important competition,' said Eric. 'The selection contest was extremely tough as I was up against three fantastic sommeliers. I am delighted to have won.'

The competition, organised by the Academy of Food & Wine Service, was held earlier this week at Hotel TerraVina in Hampshire. The four candidates were asked to complete a written paper, a blind tasting of two wines and five spirits, and a skills test involving a food and wine matching test and a decanting task. The four candidates then went on to identify 12 errors on a wine list and a wine tasting.

The decanting task demanded the candidates think quickly on their feet as a table of diners ordered a 2005 Petrus, which needed decanting, and a 1990 Chateaux Latour. Halfway through decanting one of the guests said it was the white Petrus, rather than a red, that he ordered, so the candidate had opened a £2000 bottle of wine unnecessarily!

The best answer given was: 'I'm sorry sir, but we don't list a white Petrus here. However, the red is excellent and drinking very well. I can ask chef to do you a special dish to complement the flavours perfectly'.

'We really put these four sommeliers through the mill and tested their skills to the limit,' commented chief judge Gerard Basset OBE, MW, MS and owner of Hotel TerraVina. 'Each candidate was strong in a particular area and not so in others, but we chose Eric as the candidate with the best all round skills and the runner-up as Nicolas Clerc.'

Basset judged the competition alongside the AFWS executive director Sophie Roberts-Brown, AFWS event manager Sarah Peters, Hotel TerraVina's head sommelier and former UK Sommelier of the Year Laura Rhys MS and 1998 winner Ronan Sayburn MS, director of wines at Hotel du Vin.

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Editor's notes

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 to foster good relations with other industry sectors. The Academy 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](http://www.afws.co.uk).