

Moët UK Sommelier of the Year 2014: semi-finalists revealed

The Academy of Food & Wine Service (AFWS) has announced the names of the sommeliers going through to the semi-finals of the **Moët UK Sommelier of the Year 2014** following the regional finals held earlier this week in Bristol, two London venues and Stafford.

The 2014 semi-finalists are:

Loic Avril, The Fat Duck, Bray
Romain Bourger, The Vineyard at Stockcross, Newbury
Lukasz Kolodziejczyk, Pollen Street Social, London W1
Olivier Marie, Coq d'Argent, London EC2
Stefan Neumann, Dinner by Heston Blumenthal, London SW1
Adam Pawlowski, Northcote, Blackburn
Emanuel Pesqueira, Summer Lodge, Dorchester
Damien Trinquel, Lucknam Park Hotel & Spa, Chippenham
Roberto Zanca, Hotel du Vin, Cheltenham

They will be joined by **Tobias Brauweiler**, The Ritz, London W1 (2013 runner-up), **Kathrine Larsen** (2013 Young Sommelier of the Year), and **Tanguy Martin**, Hotel TerraVina, Southampton (winner of 2014 Chaînes des Rôtisseurs Young Sommelier of the Year).

Moët & Chandon marketing director Elsa Corbineau commented: 'The standard of this year's regional finalists was extremely high and we are particularly pleased to welcome back some of last year's entrants, but it's also rewarding to see some new sommeliers coming through as they start to climb the ranks of their profession.'

This is the third year that Moët & Chandon has sponsored the competition, and the first time the Champagne House will take all 12 semi-finalists to its cellars in Epernay for an in-depth tour and tasting of past vintages with Chef de Cave Benoît Gouez. In addition all the sommeliers who entered this year's Moët UK Sommelier of the Year have been invited to a lunch hosted by the London Wine Fair at Olympia on 2 June 2014.

The 12 sommeliers will now compete in the semi-finals at London's Mandarin Oriental, Hyde Park on 12 June 2014, which will see them whittled down to just three. The final three will contest the grand final in the afternoon, in front of an audience of invited guests.

The panel of judges at the semi-finals and final will be chaired by Gerard Bassett OBE, MS, MW, MBA and winner of Best Sommelier in the World 2010.

Now in its 35th year the Moët UK Sommelier of the Year competition seeks to find the best wine waiter or sommelier based on wine and spirits expertise, ability to deal with customers under pressure, and front of house beverage service skills. Last year's winner was Clement Robert, head sommelier at Medlar Restaurant, London.

The Moët UK Sommelier of the Year 2014 will receive an all-expenses paid trip to Maison Moët & Chandon to taste the Grand Vintage collections with chef de cave Benoît Gouez, followed by a gourmet dinner at Moët's Château de Saran. The winner also receives the Boutinot bursary, which this year includes a study visit to Piedmonte in Italy accompanied by Clement Robert and Boutinot's master sommelier Nigel Wilkinson.

All three finalists will be given a 12-month complimentary membership of The Wine Guild of the United Kingdom, including an invitation to its annual winter banquet held at Vintners' Hall in London, the historic home of the UK's wine trade.

With thanks to additional sponsors: Riedel; The Westbury Hotel, London; Hotel du Vin, Bristol; and the Moat House, Stafford.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

About the Academy

The Academy of Food & Wine Service (AFWS), established in 1988, is the professional body for food and beverage 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

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 and generosity for nearly 270 years.