

Spurrier's World

Decanter's globetrotting consultant editor gives us a round-up of recent tastings, his views on current issues in the wine world and top bottles to drink or keep

Paris 1976-2016

'Look back in wonder' was the theme of a lunch and a dinner at Macéo restaurant in Paris on 25 May, a day after the 40th anniversary of the now-famous blind tasting that my L'Académie du Vin wine school organised, to show nine of France's best palates our pick of Chardonnays and Cabernet Sauvignons from California alongside the benchmarks from Burgundy and Bordeaux. From 12-28 May, I was involved in continuous re-creations and celebrations of the Judgement of Paris on both sides of the Atlantic, all well documented in our June 2016 issue and on *Decanter.com*.

On 24 May, Grant Ashton of London wine club 67 Pall Mall held a blind tasting of all the same wines as the original 1976 tasting but from younger vintages, asking the 55 guests to rank them. The results were: white – **Chalone Vineyard 2011; David Bruce 2010; Chateau Montelena 2002; Roulot, Charmes 1er Cru, Meursault 2006; Freemark Abbey 2012; Drouhin, Clos des Mouches 1er Cru, Beaune 2002; Spring Mountain 2012; Leflaive, Les Pucelles 1er Cru, Puligny-Montrachet 2002; Veedercrest, Ruhl Vineyard 2009; Ramonet-Prudhon, Bâtard-Montrachet 2000;** red – **Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, SLV 2005; Château Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan 2001; Ridge, Monte Bello 2005; Freemark Abbey, Bosché 2001; Château Montrose, St-Estèphe 2001; Château Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac 2001; Clos du Val 2001; Heitz, Martha's Vineyard 2005; Château Léoville-Las Cases, St-Julien 2001; Mayacamas 2002.**

The following day in Paris the focus was on California, matched by Macéo's elegant dishes. Three Chardonnays – **Raymond Vineyards, Generations 2013; Grgich Hills, Paris Tasting Commemorative 2013 and Ridge, Monte Bello 2012** – were followed by four Cabernets – **Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Artemis 2013; Joseph Phelps, Insignia 2012; Ridge, Monte Bello 2012; and Clos du Val, Reserve 1999.** My favourites were **Ridge's Chardonnay and Clos du Val**, both of whose winemakers had flown in from California to attend.

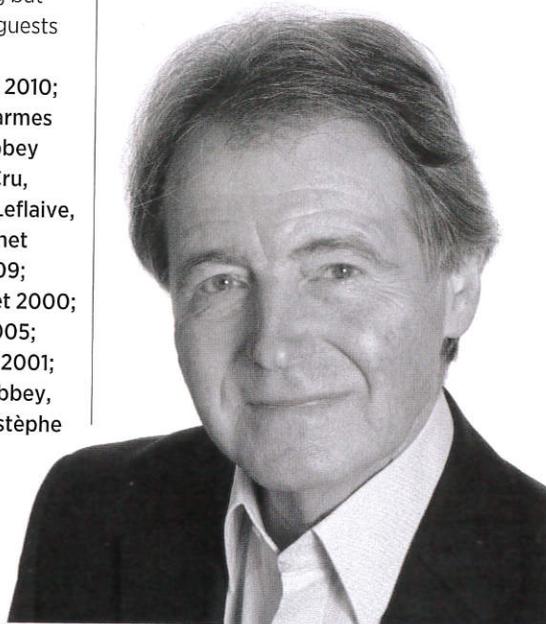
California in the ascendant

The next evening found me back at 67 Pall Mall to present five flights of two wines, mostly

from my own cellar, of the same vintage and similar price points, to a group of 16 wine aficionados who were asked to give their preferences after each flight, before the labels were shown. The results: **Ridge, Estate Chardonnay 2013** was preferred over **JP Droin, Montée de Tonnerre 1er Cru, Chablis 2013; Domaine Tessier, Les Poruzots 1er Cru, Meursault 2011** over **Grgich Hills, Paris Tasting Commemorative 2011; Peter Michael, Clos de Ciel Pinot Noir 2011** over **Henri Gouges, Les Pruliers 1er Cru, Nuits-St-Georges 2011; Bernard Burgaud, Côte-Rôtie 2010** over **Qupé, Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard, Sonnie's Syrah 2010;** then the **Robert Mondavi, Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1998** won the deciding round over **Château Léoville-Barton, St-Julien 1998.** It was fitting that the wine of the great Robert Mondavi clinched the night for California, three rounds to two, even above my favourite of the three Léovilles.

Then on 28 May it was off to Sir Peter Michael's The Vineyard at Stockcross near Newbury in Berkshire for an elaborate dinner accompanied by six flights of two wines, director of wine James Hocking selecting European wines, not just from France.

'May involved almost continuous re-creations and celebrations on both sides of the Atlantic'



Steven recommends... (for full details of UK stockists, see p103)



Benjamin Bridge, Méthode Classique Rosé, Nova Scotia, Canada 2011 91

£33.50 Friarwood

A 43% Pinot Meunier, 42% Pinot Noir, 15% Chardonnay from the coolest of cool climates in Nova Scotia's Gaspereau Valley. A vivaciously lively, pale pink sparkler whose 14% dosage balances the 11% acidity.

Drink 2016-2017 Alc 11.5%



Broglia, Gavi di Gavi, Piedmont, Italy 2015 91

£15-£16 AC Gaillie, Love Wine, Waitrose, Waitrose Cellar

A fine, fruity Gavi with a touch of spice and dry honey notes from high vineyards in the heart of the commune. Tank-fermented, no oak, lively and fresh with lots of character. Drink 2016-2019

Alc 12.5%



Domaine des Moirots, Le Vieux Château, Montagny 1er Cru, Burgundy, France 2014 91

£15.95-£19 AC Gaillie, Love Wine, Oddbins

Much Montagny Chardonnay lacks the character of its neighbours Rully and Mercurey, but this is an exception: long with citrus fruit and integrated oak. Drink 2016-2019 Alc 12.5%