

TOP SPEAKERS & TOP ATTENDANCE AT 33rd SOCIETY OF WINE EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE IN CALIFORNIA

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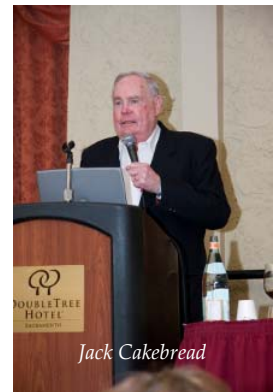
August 11, 2009, New York, NY...Over 300 members of the wine and spirits trade, as well as passionate consumers, gathered last week in Sacramento for the Society of Wine Educators' 33rd Annual Conference. Arguably the most fascinating and challenging wine conference of the year, this week-long wine and spirits extravaganza kicked off with 2 days of certification exams, which included both prep and exam sessions, for: Certified Specialist of Wine (CSW), Certified Specialist of Spirits (CSS) and Certified Wine Educator (CWE). The following 3 days of intensive seminars consisted of 63



Jancis Robinson

different seminars on a wide range of subjects, led by 81 different speakers, the top in their respective fields. These lively presentations, many of which featured tastings of rare wines and spirits, covered diverse, imaginative and occasionally controversial topics. As a bonus, over the following weekend, conference attendees could also sign up for a series of special guided tours to Napa, Lodi and Spring Mountain.

Some of the most popular sessions included: Jack Cakebread's plenary session, "The Survival of a Family Winery in a Predatory Market"; Andre Morgenthal's double session "The New South Africa: Old World Elegance; New World Fruit-Driven Wine"; Jancis Robinson's provocative topic, "Wine Communicators – An Endangered Species?"; Paul Wagner's seminar "The Price is Wrong"; "Iconic Wines of Spain", which featured live streaming video from winemakers in Spain, who interacted with the audience in real time, guiding the tasting and answering questions from the winery itself; a double session on Sake; "Can Absinthe Cause Insanity?" with Harriet Lembeck, which included an overview of the history of Absinthe and a tasting of 10 new versions; and "Luxury Wines for Tough Times: Tête de Cuvée Champagne," conducted by Mary Ewing-Mulligan and Ed McCarthy.



Jack Cakebread



Andre Morgenthal

While the stated goal of the Society is to "advance wine education through professional development and certification," the Society also believes that a "wine educator" is not just someone who can stand in front of a group of people and conduct a tasting seminar, or identify a Coutet 2003 Barsac, blind. The Society's concept of an educator applies not only to professionals in the beverage, food or hospitality industries, but also to those people who are passionate about wine and spirits, and want to learn more – to educate themselves, their colleagues, their family and friends. And whether they come from Sonoma or Singapore, this year's 300+ attendees left the 33rd Annual Conference with far more knowledge and excitement about these subjects, than when they arrived. It's even a safe bet to say that it changed the way they think about, experience, and enjoy wine.

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Fast Facts from the Society of Wine Educators' 33rd Annual Conference

Attendees Professional Certifications:

- 64 Certified Specialists of Wine (Society of Wine Educators' degree)
- 56 Certified Wine Educators (Society of Wine Educators' degree)
- 18 Certified Specialist of Spirits (Society of Wine Educators' degree)
- 10 Diploma Wine and Spirits
- 8 Master Sommeliers
- 6 Masters of Wine
- 5 Certified Sommeliers
- 4 Ph.D.s
- 3 AIWS-Advanced Certificate in Wine and Spirits (AIWS)
- 2 Sommeliers
- 2 Certified Wine Professional
- 1 Wine and Spirit Education Trust
- 1 Certified Executive Chef
- 1 Wine MBA

Number of Sessions & Speakers: 63 sessions with 81 speakers

Wine-producing countries represented:

US (primarily California and Oregon), France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Austria, Germany, Greece, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, South Africa

Range of Topics:

Subjects ranged from individual varieties to the Green Revolution and organic wines; fortified wines; sparkling wines; cocktails; traditional vs. modernist styles; blending; the pairing of food and wines.

Number/Type of Bottles:

- Approximately 2,000 bottles were opened and poured.
- 17 different major wine-producing regions were represented

Number of Wine Glasses Used: Approximately 20,000.

For more information about the Society, its certification process, and to sign up for next year's Conference in Washington DC, July 28 - 30, 2010, go to www.societyofwineeducators.org or call 202-408-8777.

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