

# Austrians pass blind taste test

Blind wine tastings have a way of shaking up preconceived notions about wine.

In the legendary tasting known as the Judgment of Paris in 1976, Californian wines famously trumped mighty French ones, a feat that made it onto the cover of Time magazine.

Then in 2002, Austrian white wine varietal Gruner Veltliner also found itself thrust into the global limelight when it beat top French wines in a blind tasting judged by international experts.

Since then, Austrians have been adopting the savvy method of blind tastings to prove that they are as good as the best in the world.

Two months ago, I attended one such tasting at Fifty Three restaurant here.

Orchestrated by Mr Michael Thurner, former managing director of the Austrian Wine Marketing Board and current chief executive of wine representative Austria's Fine Brands, the tasting was divided into eight flights, ranging from Gruner Veltliners, Sauvignon Blanc, red

wines such as Blaufrankisch, to sweet wines.

We were informed in advance that there were possibly "dud wines" in the flights - wines that were not Austrian.

When the results were unveiled, the "dud wines" turned out to be top French names such as Leflaive Puligny Montrachet Les Pucelles 2007, Didier Dagueneau-Pouilly-Fume Sillex 2006, Meo Camuzet-Clos de Vougeot, Grand Cru 2006, Mouton Rothschild-Pauillac 2004, and Guigal-Cote Rotie La Turque 2004.

As with blind tastings, there is always that bit of controversy. Some thought the French wines, such as the Leflaive Les Pucelles, were too young and, hence, did not show well.

Whatever the case, it did not hide the quality of the Austrian wines, especially the Gruner Veltliners, Rieslings and sweet wines.

The problem with such tastings is that the wines showcased are often not readily available. With its limited quantity, higher prices and niche image, it is

no secret that Austrian wines are not high on the priority of most distributors here.

Out of the 20 Austrian wines tasted, only eight of the wines, which are from three wineries, have found distribution in Singapore - all in one retail shop.

But here is a bit of good news for those who would like to explore the world of Austrian wines.

Mr Thurner will organise a series of Austrian wine activities at the Esmirada group of restaurants from the end of the month to the end of November, including two tutored tastings of seven to eight Austrian wines on Tuesday and on Nov 14 at Brasserie Wolf in Robertson Quay, at \$39++ a person.

As he says, "Just like the way all the races mingle well in Singapore, Austrian wines also mingle well with the best wines in the world."



## Taste test

Think "terroir" when you taste this wine, which has apples and pear notes underpinned by a layer of minerality.

## Pair with

Asian dishes such as grilled fish with a slightly spicy sauce, or with Austrian wienerschnitzel (fried breaded veal).

## Available at

Artisan Cellars  
390 Orchard Road  
B1-01 Palais Renaissance.  
Call 6838-0373, e-mail  
sales@artisan-cellar.com  
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## TOP TIPPLE

### LEARN TO MAKE

Raspberry Daisy

**Ingredients**  
5 raspberries  
40ml Ciroc vodka  
20ml fresh lemon juice  
10ml sugar syrup  
1 egg white

### Garnish

3 raspberries on a skewer

### Method

1. Muddle the raspberries lightly in a cocktail shaker.
2. Add lemon juice, sugar syrup, egg white and vodka into the shaker and shake. Add ice and shake again.
3. Strain mixture into a chilled glass.
4. Garnish with a skewer of three raspberries.

### Taste

Sweet, sour and creamy

### Price

\$18 at Bedrock Bar & Grill, 96 Somerset Road, 01-05 Pan Pacific Serviced Suites, tel: 6238-0054

