

Averys Celebration Of Wine 2007

With such a rich and lengthy association with the wine trade, the city of Bristol has been no stranger to major wine tastings over the years. Averys own biannual tasting, held in our historic cellars has been growing in popularity over the last few years, so much so that we had to triplicate our Christmas tasting last year to accommodate demand. So we thought it was about time, as the oldest established wine merchant in Bristol, that we organised our own wine festival.

As an established and growing wine merchant, Averys has the whole range of wine styles and price range to offer our customers - from the old guard who know what they like and demand recognised styles, to the new wine converts who are happy to taste all styles of wine. Because of this diversity there is nobody in Bristol better placed to hold a wine festival in which people are able to taste almost every style conceivable from the humble Italian Pinot Grigio to the finest Grand Cru Burgundy.

Our festival, christened the "Celebration of Wine" was held on Saturday 10th November in the spectacular Great Hall at Bristol Grammar School. A date that I learned soon after planning coincided with the Bristol leg of Tesco's newly launched wine tasting road show. On the Saturday there were two two-and-a-half hour sessions held with close to 200 wines to taste in each, a challenge which perhaps was taken literally by a happy band of hardcore tasters. Each of the many stalls was manned by a wine maker or vineyard owner who did their best to answer the myriad of questions fired at them.

The first session (an unfortunate or appropriate term for a daytime drinking function) started at 11.30am. This was attended by the more serious of our customers, and much note taking and reflection was to be found. The evening session started at 5pm and had an all together different atmosphere.

One of the most popular features of the tasting was the bank of Champagnes that greeted eager tasters as they entered the hall. After tasting through 10 champagnes including different styles of Baüchät, Gosset, Pol Roger, Roederer and Bollinger, with some vodka and brandy sprinkled in, enthusiasm for tackling all the rest of the tables laden with wines was heightened.

Other highlights included: three master classes where some fantastic wines were shown; a blind tasting competition of New Zealand wines; and demonstrations of the different nuances that Reidel glasses can make to a wine. I would like to give my special thanks to the food producers who came along. They added the perfect accompaniment to our wines and gave some extra interest and colour to the festival. These were Romy Cuisines for their pâtés and chutneys, Fresh and Wild for their cheeses, The Real Olive Company, and Choucochoute for their lovely matching of truffles with Banyuls.

With over 500 satisfied customers to testify, our festival was a resounding success. The ice test for me was a comment by one hardcore wine fan who had attended the Tesco fair and then had jumped in a taxi to come straight to ours. When asked by me which of the events he had preferred, he laughed and said "it wasn't in the same league as yours." The only down side of this success is that it seems I will have to do it all again next year. I better start planning now!

About the Author

Duncan White is the Events manager for [Averys Wine Merchants](http://www.averys.com). Averys holds regular wine tastings, including En Primeur, dinners and events in Bristol and the surrounding areas. Our historic cellars can also be booked for private and corporate events and tastings. For more information go to: www.averys.com

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