

American Wins Gold at International Chaîne des Rôtisseurs Young Sommelier Competition

NOTE: Christopher Bates works in both Milford, PA, and the Finger Lakes Wine Country in NY; he is a graduate of the Cornell School of Hotel Management.

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702.240.4944 (Las Vegas) Photos attached; captions at end of story

(September 25): **Christopher P. Bates, 31, general manager and executive chef at historic Hotel Fauchère in Milford, Pennsylvania, and co-owner of Element Winery in the Finger Lakes region of New York**, has brought home the gold as winner of the 6th Concours International des Jeunes Sommeliers (International Young Sommeliers Competition) sponsored by the International Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs and held in Capetown, South Africa, on September 21. In addition to his gold medal, Bates received a crystal trophy and a ceremonial saber used to shear open a large champagne bottle with a flourish.

To compete at the international level, Bates not only had to win in the U.S. at his regional level (Mid-Atlantic Region) but also had to defeat representatives of nine other regions to become the National “Best Young Sommelier 2012” at the U.S. competition. It was held in May in Napa Valley by the Société Mondiale du Vin USA, the wine section of the U. S. Chaîne.

The international contest attracted 12 national winners, nine men and three women, all of whom were under 35, the oldest age allowed. Runner-up was Great Britain's Arnaud Bardary from Gordon Ramsay's *Maze* in London, and third place went to Australian contestant Yuki Hirose of the Rockpool Bar and Grill, Sydney. The other nine countries represented in the international finals were: Austria, China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, and Turkey. This is the second year in a row that the U.S. entrant has been the winner.

Originally from upstate New York and a graduate of Arkport (NY) Central School, Bates received his BS degree from the Cornell School of Hotel Management. He holds Advanced Sommelier Certification from the Court of Master Sommeliers and is a candidate for Masters designation. A member of the Society of Wine Educators, he has earned Certified Specialist of Wine (CSW), Certified Wine Educator (CWE), and Certified Spirit Specialist (CSS) titles. A competitor in the Best Sommelier in America Competition for several years, he placed third in 2011. The biennial contest is sponsored by the American Sommelier organization. He is also a teacher for the American Sommelier Association, occasionally writes for the *Sommelier Journal* and is a contributor to the ASA's new textbook.

In 2010, Bates vied for honors at the First Annual Somm Slam at the StarChefs.com International Chefs Congress in New York and won the Wines of South Africa World

Cup of Wine competition.

In addition to his career at Hotel Fauchère and his frequent competitions, Bates and his father, Robert W. Bates, co-own Element Winery in the Finger Lakes Region of New York, with Isabel Bogadtke, also a general manager at Hotel Fauchere, collaborating in the winery's operation. In fact, they were crushing and pressing grapes just prior to Christopher's departure for South Africa. The winery produces around 800 cases of Riesling, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, and Syrah, as well as *vin de liqueur* and apple brandy.

How does Bates plan to celebrate his success? He's remaining in South Africa to tour the Cape Town area, especially the "Wine Country," for a week!

Bates' vacation is well deserved. The three-part, eight-hour exam tested both the knowledge and endurance of the competitors, encompassing as it did Theory, Practical Skills and Service, as well as a demanding Blind Tasting. The panel of distinguished judges was headed by Brian Julyan, Chief Executive of the Court of Master Sommeliers of Europe and widely considered the Dean of the sommelier world. Other judges were Brian Dawes, Education Chair of the Court of Master Sommeliers; Neil Grant, Chairman of the South African Sommeliers Association; and Frank Kammer, Master Sommelier, who has judged previous competitions in London and Athens.

Commenting at the dinner and awards ceremonies, Dawes remarked about the contestants, "They've been through a grueling day. The examination was rigorous, the competition was keen, and the standard was exceptionally high. They did a superb job. They're all winners. They all deserve our recognition."

"Winning this award required a tremendous amount of dedication and hard work from Christopher," said U. S. Grand Echanson Bruce Nichols, "but more than that, it takes passion. To be at the very top of your game, to compete on the world stage, is a rare trait that many aspire to, but few achieve. So my genuine and heartfelt gratitude to Christopher. I'm extremely proud of him."

"Chris combines an impressive resume with boundless enthusiasm," added Vice Enchanson Charlie Bennett, "a rare combination."

Chairman of the competition was Klaus Tritschler, Bailli Délégué of Germany and a member of the international Chaîne's Conseil d'Administration, who announced the winners and inducted all the contestants into the Chaîne, while International Vice President Marie Jones presided over the awards ceremonies.

The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, which has 22,000 members worldwide, has chapters throughout the United States and around the globe. Two important programs of the Chaîne are the Young Sommeliers competition and a Young Chefs competition to encourage younger members of the hospitality industry. Additional information about the U.S. Chaîne des Rôtisseurs is available at www.chaineus.org and about the international

organization at its website, www.chainedesrotisseurs.com.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

#1826: Chairman of the competition, Klaus Tritschler, Bailli Délégué of Germany and a member of the international Chaîne's Conseil d'Administration, left, presents the first place trophy to 2012 Best Young Sommelier of the Year to winner Christopher Bates. Looking on is runner-up Arnaud Bardary of Great Britain.

#1840: Surrounded by the other competitors, 2012 Best Young Sommelier of the Year gold medal winner Christopher Bates of the U.S. proudly lofts his trophy. At the far left is Klaus Tritschler, Chairman of the competition, Bailli Délégué of Germany, and a member of the international Chaîne's Conseil d'Administration. At the far right is Marie Jones, International Vice President, who presided over the awards ceremonies.

#1845: Ready to celebrate with Gold Medal winner Christopher Bates, second from right, are, from left, head of the judges panel Brian Julyan, Chief Executive of the Court of Master Sommeliers of Europe, and, representing the U.S. Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, Grand Echanson Bruce Nichols and Vice Echanson National Charlie Bennett.

3 Attached Images