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## Gimblett Gravels first ever tasting in Bordeaux

Led by Steve Smith MW Director of Wine and Viticulture for Craggy Range, Ch'ng Poh Tiong, Publisher of Chinese Bordeaux Guide and The Wine Review, and Henri Lurton of Chateau Brane- Cantenac a tasting of Bordeaux varietal blends from the Gimblett Gravels region was held in Bordeaux at Chateau Brane- Cantenac on Monday 28th June 2010.

This historic occasion was the first ever tasting of these fine wines of New Zealand in Bordeaux and for that matter, the whole of France. Co- organiser Steve Smith MW says the “the inspiration for a tasting such as this reflects the natural inquisitiveness of those involved in the fine wines of the world and where our future as wine producers lie.”

The event was attended by some of the most influential chateau proprietors, representatives and oenologists of Bordeaux as well as press and media. Guests included Christian Seely of Pichon Longueville, Jean Claude Berrouet, Winemaker of Chateau Petrus and Jane Anson of Decanter.com. Wines from Craggy Range, Trinity Hill, Church Road, Villa Maria and Sacred Hill across three vintages were presented to the group. Steve Smith MW noted “These wines, crafted by the inspiration of Bordeaux, are from a young fledgling part of New Zealand, the Gimblett Gravels Winegrowing District. They represent some of the very best of the wine style that are produced in our country. They make no aspiration to be ‘Bordeaux like’ as these wines are ours. They make no statement of a comparison. They simply speak of our place and our people and this is why we invited the Bordelaise to that have experience.”

The response from the Winemakers of Bordeaux was enthusiastic. Lilian Barton of Chateau Leoville Barton, “We loved the tasting of this new region from New Zealand. It was interesting to note that the terroir is also important and that vintages are very distinct too. I found that the 2007s are fresh and well balanced. We had a great time and look forward to our next bottle of Gimblett Gravels wine.” Jean Claude Berrouet of Chateau Petrus noted “from New Zealand where men of character enhance an original nature by producing wines with unexpected complexity and subtlety. They do not create wines that compete with ours but rather wines which are ambassadors, expressing the classic basics taught in college, namely harmony and balance, and which do not fall into the trap that excess is so as to give the illusion of quality. Basically, they are the image of their rugby: they defend the real values of life!”

The quality of the wine was commented on by many including Nathalie Schyler of Chateau Kirwan who commented “A magnificent tasting! Remarkable 2007’s...great balance, finesse, great harmony and complexity.”

Smith was understandably delighted with the response of the Bordelaise to this historic tasting, “For those of us on the other side of the world much of our fine wine inspiration comes from the great wines of France and their producers. Many of us have visited these great producers and all who have ambitions to make fine wine have crafted their inspiration from those visits.”

It appears that the stories of the wine from the Gimblett Gravels are beginning to be heard in the hallowed grounds of Bordeaux where the wine styles were first conceived.

For Further details and for a list of the wines tasted please contact:  
Michael Henley – [Michael.henley@craggyrange.com](mailto:Michael.henley@craggyrange.com) (06) 873 7126