

The Wine Oscars – A Toast to Tastour

Tastour shortlisted in the world's most prestigious and influential independent wine competition

Note: Free tickets available for readers/editors – see end of press release.

August 2, 2010 (FPRC) -- The International Wine Challenge (IWC) Awards are the Oscars of the wine industry, regarded as the world's most influential independent wine competition. Each year, hundreds of companies submit their entry in the hope of winning one of these prestigious and internationally recognised awards. Contenders for the titles include restaurants, supermarkets, agents, on-trade suppliers, mail order businesses as well as independent and high street retailers.

Chris Ashton, IWC Event Director, says: 'As usual the standard was very high and made for some difficult and interesting discussions around the judging table!'

In only its second year, Tastour has beaten off stiff competition from over 200 competitors to gain, not one, but two coveted places on the IWC Merchant Awards shortlist: 'Wine Club of the Year' and 'Wine Educator of the Year.'

Kelly Bayliffe, the founder, 30, on why Tastour is different: 'We encourage people to interact with food and drink, to get them thinking about what they are eating and drinking and we make learning fun by creating unforgettable experiences.'

Kelly expressed her delight at being shortlisted: Tastour is in the final four of each category. Many of the UK based companies have been running for over 20 years and have an annual turnover of over £100 million. 'For such a young company to be shortlisted for two awards is a testament to the hard work and effort we've put in to creating entertaining, educational events at very competitive prices for private members and corporate clients. We only showcase excellent quality wines. The distinguished IWC jury has recognised this by putting us head to head with more established names such as Tesco.'

On starting a business and becoming a mum, Kelly says: 'I love sharing what I've learnt, which makes being a mum very enjoyable. But it was really tough.... I worked 80 hours a week when I was eight months pregnant. How did I do it? Members' Comments such as 'I drink Malbec because of you' remind me that I'm helping people to make more informed purchases and save money. It's this that makes it all worthwhile.'

ENDS

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1. The Regional and Specialist Merchant Awards will be presented event on 7th September 2010 at the Hilton Park Lane, London. More information on the shortlist is available at: <http://merchantawards.internationalwinechallenge.com/page/shortlist.html>

2. Complimentary tickets for editorial purpose:

-To celebrate being shortlisted, Tastour is giving away a limited number of complimentary tickets (worth £45 each) to one of its most popular events - Introduction to Champagne - on 20th November. To offer your readers tickets to this event or any others, please contact Kelly (details above)

-If you or a member of your team would like to attend an event, please contact Kelly (details above)

3. For more information about Tastour and a full programme of future events, please visit www.tastour.co.uk or contact Kelly Bayliffe.

-Tastour offers exhilarating experiences revolving around food and drink. Meeting new people is central to the Tastour concept; whether guests are single or partnered, it's where good taste and good company meet. Events range from educational food and drink tastings to exclusive dinners, recipe swaps, day trips and walking tours as well as monthly drinks nights. Go to www.tastour.co.uk for more information.

-A sample list includes: Bollinger fuelled day at Royal Ascot, learning about diamonds and Cristal Champagne, a distillery tour of Sipsmith, an English Rosé tasting in an English Rose garden, the history of afternoon tea, and introductory courses such as its flagship 'How to taste wine without wasting time' event. For those wanting to whet their appetite, the monthly mini-wine tasting for only £5 is a good initiation.

-Tastour also creates bespoke events for companies; the events are the 'perfect blend' of teambuilding and employee enrichment.

-Over the last 18 months, Tastour's high quality food and drink tasting events have become very popular: over 200 members have attended five events or more.

-Members (known as 'Tastourians'), are mainly young professionals aged 25 to 45. Interests include: travel, art and dining out. They consider the balance of education and entertainment as a 'perfect blend'.

-Currently, membership is free and Tastourians only pay for events they attend.

4. Tastour is a new company set up by 30 year old mum Kelly in October 2008.

-Kelly, a classically trained chef and wine educator, presents, writes and designs the interactive tastings with her team. The Tastour team includes a Certified Wine Educator and a Master of Wine student.

-Kelly also hosts wine lectures at Books for Cooks in Notting Hill, is writing 2 books and is developing downloadable audio files for wine education.

-Kelly became a mum in August 2009. In addition to delivering swimming lessons, she is also on the committee of the National Childbirth Trust - Chiswick branch and runs a social group for babies and mums in West London (The BMWs)

5. Tastour Social Networking sites

www.facebook.com/tastour - 700 Friends

www.twitter.com/tastour - 2500 Followers

www.meetup.com/tastour - 1500 Members

Qype – Winenut – 700 Contacts

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Contact Information

For more information contact Kelly Bayliffe of Tastour (<http://www.tastour.co.uk>)

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