

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

Bugatti Veyron, Château Pétrus, El Bulli... These famous names are synonymous with luxury and are in very high demand, but are certainly not within the financial reach of everyone. But *caveat emptor*: all that glitters is not gold! BILANZ sent nine editors on a mission to test the luxury they had always dreamt of. And the results are astonishing.

Château Pétrus, a magical sound. What wine lover would not be moved into respectful anticipation when hearing the name of this Bordeaux estate? The only barrier for wine lovers to get a taste of this myth is its exorbitant price, which is the direct result of this grape juice's aura and the fact that it is only available in extremely limited quantities: just 24 000 to 30 000 bottles per year, over half of which end up in wine collections.

My dream of tasting a Château Pétrus became reality thanks to a private tasting organized by Philipp Schwander, the only Swiss 'Master of Wine'. The Pétrus 1999 was accompanied by other Premier Cru Bordeaux wines, including a Château Margaux 2004, a La Tour Figeac 2001 and a Cheval Blanc 2001. But to add a little spice to this blind tasting session, Schwander slipped three 'imposters' in amongst the Bordeaux grandes: two wines from Austria and one from the south of France.

Several hours were dedicated to inhaling, sipping, swirling the wines, talking oenology and grading the wines. The result was astonishing: the Margaux finished third; the second place went to an imposter: a Blaufränkisch Schloss Halbturm 2006 from Austria.

And the Gold Medal position? Well it wasn't the Pétrus which made it, but a **Mas Gabinèle Rarissime 2006 from the Languedoc-Roussillon**. So what happened to the Château Pétrus? There was only one wine specialist at the table, accompanied by three true wine enthusiasts. The verdict was unanimous: the most famous Bordeaux wine of all (ok, it was hidden) came last.

The wine writer Hugh Johnson qualified Pétrus in these terms: "incomparable, but reserved for millionaires". I would willingly leave this exorbitantly priced wine to the millionaires while preferring to take a closer look at great wines which offer good value, for example the Mas Gabinèle Rarissime from the south of France. This wine, which exploded the myth of Pétrus when it took first place at the blind tasting is part of the Schwander selection at a price of 40 Swiss Francs.

Tested by Stefan Lüscher.

Château Pétrus 1999

2350 Swiss Francs

Source: Mövenpick, various merchants, internet auction platforms

www.moueix.com

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