

California vs France: The 1976 Paris Tasting That Revolutionized Wine



Judgment of Paris: California vs. France and the Historic 1976 Paris Tasting That Revolutionized Wine

by George M. Taber

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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In the world of wine, there are few events that have had as much impact as the 1976 Paris Tasting. This blind tasting, in which nine California wines competed against nine French wines, shocked the world and forever changed the way we think about wine.

The tasting was organized by Steven Spurrier, a British wine merchant who was living in Paris at the time. Spurrier had been impressed by the quality of California wines that he had tasted, and he wanted to see how they would fare against some of the best wines from France.

The tasting was held on May 24, 1976, at the Hôtel InterContinental in Paris. The judges were all experts in the wine world, including wine merchants, sommeliers, and journalists.

The wines were tasted blind, meaning that the judges did not know which wines they were tasting. They were only given the vintage and the appellation of the wine.

The results of the tasting were astonishing. The California wines won six of the nine categories, including the top prize for the best red wine.

The French judges were shocked by the results. They had never imagined that California wines could be so good.

The 1976 Paris Tasting was a watershed moment in the history of wine. It showed that California wines were just as good as, if not better than, the best wines from France.

The tasting also had a major impact on the global wine market. After the tasting, demand for California wines soared. Today, California is one of the leading wine-producing regions in the world.

The Wines

The nine California wines that competed in the 1976 Paris Tasting were:

- Château Montelena Chardonnay 1973
- Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon 1973
- Freemark Abbey Cabernet Sauvignon 1973
- Ridge Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon 1971
- Heitz Cellars Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 1974
- Spring Mountain Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 1973

- Joseph Phelps Vineyards Chardonnay 1974
- Chalone Vineyard Chardonnay 1974
- David Bruce Chardonnay 1973

The nine French wines that competed in the tasting were:

- Montrachet 1973
- Cheval Blanc 1961
- Haut-Brion 1966
- Lafite Rothschild 1970
- Mouton Rothschild 1970
- Latour 1970
- Coche-Dury Corton-Charlemagne 1973
- Meursault Perrières 1973
- Puligny-Montrachet Les Combettes 1972

The Judges

The nine judges who participated in the 1976 Paris Tasting were:

- Steven Spurrier (organizer)
- Pierre Bréjoux
- Jean-Claude Breton
- Claude Dubois-Millot

- Patrice Gaboriaud
- Raymond Oliver
- Michel Robichon
- Christian Vanneque
- Jean-Pierre Vilain

The Impact

The 1976 Paris Tasting had a profound impact on the world of wine. It showed that California wines were just as good as, if not better than, the best wines from France.

The tasting also had a major impact on the global wine market. After the tasting, demand for California wines soared. Today, California is one of the leading wine-producing regions in the world.

The 1976 Paris Tasting is still considered to be one of the most important events in the history of wine. It forever changed the way we think about wine.

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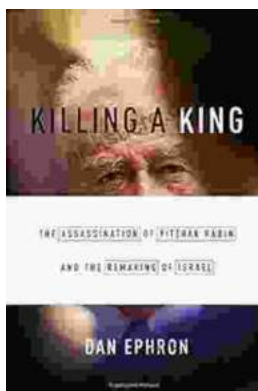


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