

## BLIND TASTING RIVALRY MARKS MILESTONE IN STYLE

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of what is thought to be the oldest blind tasting contest in the world saw the traditional Oxford and Cambridge university rivalry matched by a competition pitching the UK wine trade against the wine press.



The Oxford and Cambridge teams tackle the red wine flight

The two close-fought matches, which took place yesterday simultaneously and with the same wines, saw Oxford and the wine trade team triumph narrowly over their opponents.

Despite these overall victories, the individual award for best taster was shared between representatives from Oxford and Cambridge, while Anthony Rose claimed top spot from within the MW-packed professional teams.

Held at the Oxford & Cambridge Club in London, the competition's long-term sponsor Pol Roger celebrated this anniversary year by compiling what the house's UK sales manager Cassidy Dart described as "the greatest selection of wines that you could possible have in a blind tasting."

The 12-strong line-up included Joseph Drouhin Le Montrachet 2008 and Egon Müller Scharzhofberger 1987 among the whites, while the reds were represented by wines such as Vega Sicilia Unico 1953 and Château Haut Brion 1995.

Explaining the Champagne house's support for this annual event since 1992, Nick James, managing director of Pol Roger UK, told *the drinks business*: "It's a way of inspiring people. In our industry it's very much about people and we've got to follow the younger people. That was the mistake that Sherry made – they forgot the young."

Originally established by Harry Waugh, the annual Varsity blind tasting match has seen many current members of the wine trade pass through its ranks. Several alumni returned to take part in this anniversary event, including Oz Clarke, Jasper Morris MW and Alex Hunt MW.

To mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this blind tasting match, Pol Roger is working with the Anova publishing house and editor Jennifer Segal to produce a book documenting its history and evolution, complete with photographs and contributions from past competitors.

*Reds, Whites, and Varsity Blues: 60 Years of the Oxford & Cambridge Blind Wine-Tasting Competition* is due to be published later this Spring.



The UK wine press team

