

THE BERLIN TASTING NYC

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Chilean wine beats two Bordeaux Premier crus in NY blind tasting

A Chilean wine beat two of Bordeaux's Premier crus, two California wines and a Super Tuscan in a blind tasting by 100 of New York's top critics, sommeliers and retailers on Monday.

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A bottle of 2005 Errazuriz KAI, the same brand that won the prize

In an experiment similar to the famed "Judgment of Paris" in which California wines were blind tasted against the best of France - and won - the Chileans had a similar result.

The New York tasting was actually a repeat of tastings that had been conducted for critics and connoisseurs in Berlin, Tokyo, Beijing, Amsterdam and London.

Errazuriz KAI captured first place. Napa Valley's cult classic Opus One was ranked second and Bordeaux's Chateau Haut-Brion came third. All the wines competing - including Chateau Lafite-Rothschild, Tuscany's Sassicaia and Napa's Stag's Leap SLV - were of the 2006 vintage.

None of the wines tasted were cheap, but the five Chileans, which included Errazuriz Don Maximiano, which placed fourth, La Cumbre, number six, and Vinedo Chadwick, tied for ninth place, cost less in some cases a lot less.

Errazuriz Kai, which is made mostly of the Carmenere grape, retails for about \$80 (£53) a bottle in the US, while Opus One 2006, a Bordeaux blend, costs about \$160 and Haut-Brion, a Bordeaux, can command up to \$500 a bottle.

Don Maximiano, a Bordeaux blend, carries a retail price of \$90 a bottle, while fifth place Chateau Lafite Rothschild commands about \$1,000 a bottle.

The La Cumbre, a Syrah, placed sixth at \$80; its sister wine Sena, another Bordeaux blend, came in seventh with a price of \$100 a bottle.

Stag's Leap SLV, which placed eighth, can now be found at \$70 a bottle.

Tying for 9th place was Chile's Vinedo Chadwick at \$180 a bottle and Tuscany's famed Sassicaia for about \$160.

"The aim here is not for recompense but for recognition," said Steven Spurrier, the host of the 1976 tasting in Paris that put California wines on the map.

He was also a featured speaker at the invitation-only tasting held in New York's Mandarin Oriental.