

## **The 14<sup>th</sup> A.S.I. Contest of the “Best Sommelier of Europe” is coming to Vienna!**

It has been a full 19 years since Austria hosted its last International Sommelier Competition. Now, in 2017, the Austrian Sommelier Union is once again hosting a very prestigious event. Sommeliers from all over Europe will gather in Vienna from 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017 to compete for the title of “Europe’s Best Sommelier”! Tickets are available for visitors who wish to join the program.

Candidates from 38 European and 3 African nations are travelling to Vienna, Burgenland and Lower Austria to joust for this once-in-a-lifetime award for the best sommelier in Europe. To support the participating nations and their contestants, sommelier delegations from all 59 member countries of the A.S.I. (Association de la Sommellerie Internationale) are also travelling to Austria. In addition, around 100 journalists have been invited by the Austrian Wine Marketing Board (a partner of the Austrian Sommelier Union) to witness the skills of the competing sommeliers, to network and to enjoy the atmosphere with their international colleagues.

Here to are visitors welcome

The Austrian Sommelier Union, under the leadership of President Annemarie Foidl, aims to present the very best that the wine regions of Austria and their wine growers have to offer. While the competition takes place throughout the day at the Schoenbrunn Park Hotel and other locations, the other guests will be going on wine tours exploring the surrounding wine-growing regions of Austria. Highlights will include: **Lower Austria**, with a vineyard tour down the Danube river, top level masterclasses (Campus) in the Kamptal and Kremstal regions and a dinner at Klosterneuburg Monastery. **Burgenland**, with stops at Esterhazy Castle and the Hotel St. Martins Therme & Lodge. The trips will include regional wine tastings combined with a taste of authentic Austrian wine culture. **Vienna** will also be the focus of attention for one whole day, including a walk through its vineyards, getting to know Viennese wines in masterclass tastings, and of course a visit to the famous “Heurigen”. (*Heuriger*: A family-run wine tavern in Eastern Austria, where local winemakers serve their wines...)

A rare opportunity

The World and European Sommelier Championships only take place every three years. 1998 was the last year in which an international competition (the World Championship at the VieVinum wine fair) was held in Vienna. This shows what an honour it is to be hosting such a large international competition again. A separate expert committee from the A.S.I. headed by Gerard Basset MS, MW and Sommelier World Champion, will be coordinating the competition, thus ensuring uniform standards for all member countries.

On 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017 the 41 contestants will take up their starting positions at the Schoenbrunn Park Hotel. The following day will see the semifinal at Castle Esterhazy with the remaining best 12 finalists. During this round, the other participants will join the programme as spectators. The Grand Finale with the top 3 candidates will take place on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in the Grand Ball Room of the Schoenbrunn Park Hotel.

**Registration for the visitors program:**

<https://secure.ruefa.at/forms/sommeliere-em-2017/>

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