

BORDEAUX WINES
GOOD FOOD WOULD CHOOSE BORDEAUX

The dinner gongs

The Bordeaux Wine Council invited restaurants to host a food and wine matching dinner with the chance to win a trip to one of the world's most famous wine regions. *Restaurant* reveals details of the prize-winning entries

'Good Food Would Choose Bordeaux' is the strapline for the latest campaign run by The Bordeaux Wine Council (CIVB). And so too do good restaurants and gastropubs, judging by the calibre of establishments up and down the country that recently held a dinner featuring wines from the famed French region.

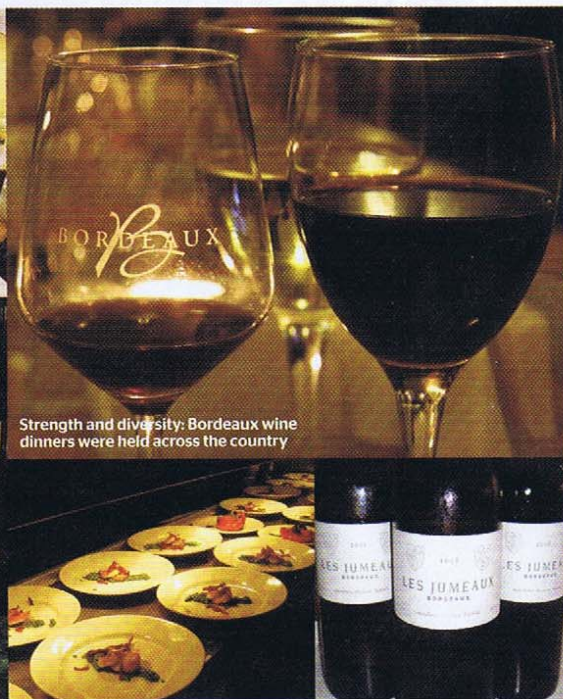
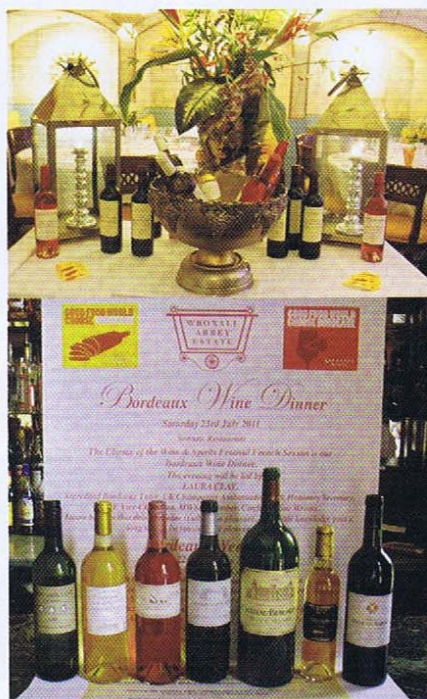
The restaurants were taking part in the CIVB campaign, with the chance to win a place on an all-expenses-paid trip to Bordeaux, and the dinners they were hosting were designed to demonstrate not only the range and quality of Bordeaux wines but also their food-matching suitability. Now, *Restaurant* has picked the 15 lucky winners who

will get the chance to visit the centre of the fine wine world and home to estates of international renown such as Margaux, St Julian, Pauillac St Estephe and St Emillion.

Participating in the promotion was simple. Restaurants were given £250 by the CIVB to contribute towards

a dinner where at least four wines from the region had to be served – none with a retail off-trade value of more than £25. All they had to do was supply details and pictures of the event for judging purposes.

How the restaurants promoted the event, the price they charged diners and how each dinner was held was entirely up to the individual. The judges – made up of a panel of *Restaurant* magazine staff and representatives of the CIVB – were looking for clever promotion of the event beforehand and an expertly created menu that



Strength and diversity: Bordeaux wine dinners were held across the country

brought out the best Bordeaux wines have to offer.

In particular, the judges were impressed by the enthusiasm for Bordeaux wines displayed by many of the restaurants and the different approaches taken to make the evenings a success. Feedback from the various dinners demonstrated the depth and diversity of wines from Bordeaux as well as the different styles of food with which they can be paired. It also showed the wide-ranging demographics the wines appeal to.

Some restaurants took a strong Gallic approach, matching the wines with an overtly French menu, such as Samphire in Christchurch, whose menu included baked goats' cheese, French onion soup, and almond-crusted duck breast – paired with a Château La Borne 2009, Lussac St Emillion 2008,

and a Château du Breuil 2005 respectively. Others, such as The Yellow House in London, showed the wines worked equally well with a more Mediterranean-inspired menu. Neighbourhood bar and kitchen The Hideaway in London, which specialises in pizza, created an 11-strong Bordeaux list to demonstrate the wines are just as suitable for the casual restaurants as the fine dining table.

Bordeaux's diversity of styles and grape varieties, from vibrant rosés, elegant dry whites and rich, smoky reds to full-bodied dessert wines, meant restaurants were spoilt for choice when putting together a list and the winning dinners demonstrated excellent food and wine pairings. Interesting and successful combinations included London-based Le Cercle's match of a Château des Gravières Graves 2006 with confit tuna and crackling; a Château de Rouquette AOC Lupiac 2002 with pan-fried goose liver and brandy-soaked prunes at Regatta restaurant in Winchmore Hill and The Sandrock in Farnham's duo of the vibrant Château De Sours Rosé 2010 with moules à la marinière.

Representatives from all the winning restaurants will get the chance to hone their wine and food matching skills further during next month's trip to Bordeaux, details of which will feature in a forthcoming issue of *Restaurant*.

The 15 winning restaurants

- Browns Hotel, Devon
- Le Cercle, London
- Oscar's French Bistrot, Leamington Spa
- Radcliffe Arms, Hitchin
- Ransome's Dock, London
- Red Lion Wine Pub, Leicestershire
- Regatta, Winchmore Hill
- Samphire, Christchurch
- The Hideaway Bar, London
- The Milestone, Sheffield
- The Sandrock, Farnham
- The White Swan, London
- The Yellow House, London
- Worsley Arms Hotel, Yorkshire
- Wroxall Abbey Estate, Wroxall