

The world's best wine competition Awards edition £4.99

Decanter

WORLD WINE AWARDS



INTERNATIONAL TROPHIES



Sweet Fortified under £15

Campbells, Topaque, Rutherglen, Victoria, Australia NV (17.5%)

Lovely golden rich toffee and butterscotch fruit with lush Christmas pudding and caramelised orange aromas. Sleek and spicy with toffee-apple character, smoky notes, roasted hazelnuts, dried fruit and flowers.

UK £11.49 (375ml); Con, Quf, Vgy

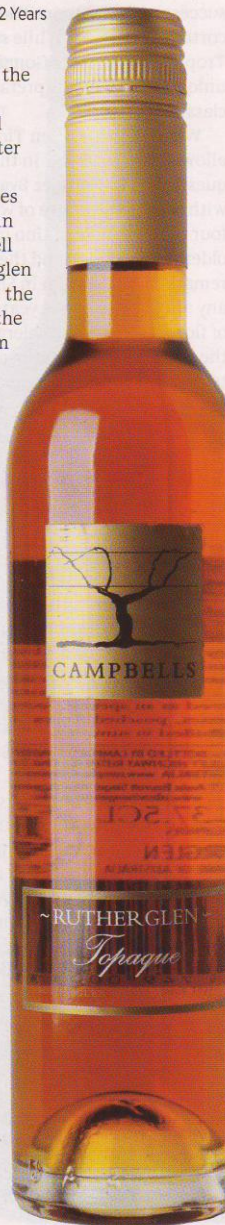
Tasted against • Offley, Late Bottled Vintage, Port, Portugal 2008 • Graham's, Six Grapes Reserve, Port, Portugal NV • EOSS, Grand Cru, Samos, Aegean Islands, Greece 2012 • Sainsbury's, Taste The Difference 12 Years Sweet Pedro Ximenez, Sherry, Spain NV

OFTEN A TRADITIONAL stronghold for the more established, Old World fortified-producing countries, this International Trophy is now heading Down Under after two years with Bacalhóa in Portugal.

A member of Australia's First Families of Wine, Campbells' story begins back in 1870 when the Scotsman John Campbell established the vineyard in the Rutherglen region of northeastern Victoria. Today, the vineyards and winery are operated by the fourth-generation viticulturist Malcolm Campbell and his brother Colin, who makes the wines.

Campbells has extensive Muscat and Topaque soleras to draw from. Probably because of its warm, Rhône-like location, the producer is best known for its stickies, the lusciously rich fortified and aged Rutherglen Muscats and Topaques, which, uniquely, combine grape variety, sunny, dry autumn weather and generations of experience to produce wines with astonishingly high natural sugar levels and great flavours. One block may be picked early, another selectively pruned for low yields, and another left to mature long into autumn, allowing the grapes to raisin on the vine for an even greater concentration of sugars.

The solera method of blending and ageing also plays an important role, with a series of five stages of casks, each containing wine at successive stages of maturation. Colin Campbell's desire to see Rutherglen Muscat and Topaque recognised as unique has led to the development of a classification system of four levels: Rutherglen, displaying fresh bright fruit aromas (Campbell's Topaque is in this one); Classic, imparting greater richness and complexity; Grand, textured, complex and viscous; and Rare, with intensely rich fruit and rancio character. **Anthony Rose**



Sweet Fortified over £15

Barbeito, 20 Anos, Lote 12089 Malvasia, Madeira, Portugal NV (19%)

Spicy, figgy nose on a nutty, vibrant style. Dried orange peel, smoky oak richness, caramel and toffee with slightly bitter notes. Loads of weight and complexity, and an almost dry, nutty finish. Delicious.

UK £98; BBR, Ryn

Tasted against • Graham's, Quinta dos Malvedos, Port, Portugal 2004 • Yaldara, 20 Year Old Tawny, South Australia NV • Bacalhóa, Moscatel de Setúbal, Portugal 2000 • Sandeman, 40 Year Old Tawny, Port, Portugal NV • Domaine de Rancy, Rivesaltes Ambré, Languedoc-Roussillon, France 1993 • Finca Moncloa, Tintilla de Rota, Cádiz, Spain 2009 • Lustau, VORS Pedro Ximenez 30 Years Old, Sherry, Spain NV

FOR FOUR YEARS out of the past six, Australians have won this International Trophy, despite the stream of Old World contenders. This time it's Madeira's turn.

Ricardo Diogo has carved out a distinctive niche among Madeira shippers. Inheriting the family company from his mother in 1990, Diogo bravely set about changing its direction, ending shipments of bulk wine, eschewing caramel as colouring, and turning to younger wines. The company's turnover immediately fell by half but quantity is now more than made up for by quality.

Diogo says that he was heavily influenced by late-harvest wines from other parts of the world and felt that he could put Madeira on the same track. As a result, Barbeito's wines are paler, fresher, subtler and somehow more expressive than those of other shippers.

Only 1,020 bottles of the 20-year-old Malvasia were made. It comes from vineyards at Arco de São Jorge on the north side of the island and at Fajã dos Padres on the south where some of the best and sweetest Malvasia is grown. The wine was aged in French oak casks in the ambient heat.

Diogo explains that 'I chose to blend younger wines with older ones obtaining a wine that, at the beginning, has a very moderate impact on the nose but is then followed by an explosion of elegant flavours, where the long acidity at the end in the mouth really stands out.' A truly great wine.

Richard Mayson

