

Results of Airline Wine Competition Released

Global Traveler determines the best in airline wines during its annual tasting.

By Kim Krol
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Aug. 1, 2011, Yardley, Pa. – *Global Traveler*, the only ABC-audited magazine for business and luxury travelers, is releasing the results of its seventh annual Wines on the Wing Airline Wine Competition.

The contest was held May 25 at Accademia di Vino in New York City. Thirty-one expert judges participated in the blind tasting of airlines' white, red and sparkling wines. The judges hailed from a wide range of specialties, including sommeliers, wine shop owners and winemakers. In total, 28 airlines participated, providing 136 samples for tasting.

Airlines are required to submit five different wines — two red wines, two white wines and one sparkling wine/Champagne — to be eligible for the Best Overall International Business Class Wines on the Wing award. This year, 55 reds, 55 whites and 26 sparkling wines were submitted, and the overall winner was OpenSkies. This year, for the first time in the survey's history, *Global Traveler* also accepted submissions from airlines' international first-class cabins. The Best Overall International First Class Wines on the Wing award went to Asiana Airlines.

In the white wine category, **Best International Business Class White Wine was the Dr. Fischer Riesling 2008, Germany**, submitted by Etihad Airways. For first class, the winner was EL AL Israel Airlines, with the Carmel Winery Gewürztraminer, Israel.

The best business-class Champagne was V Australia's Lanson Gold Label Brut 1999. The best first-class Champagne was Asiana Airlines' Comtes de Taittinger Blanc de Blancs 1999. This year, *Global Traveler* awarded a Best Sparkling Wine award, won by South African Airways for their Philip Jonker Entheos Brut, NV, South Africa.

When it came to red wine, TAP Air Portugal reigned supreme in the business-class category. The airline's Casa de Santar Dão Reserva 2007, Portugal, was the favored choice. This is TAP's first survey win. For first-class red wines, the judges tied. The joint winners were Lufthansa's Astrales Ribera del Duero 2005, Spain, and Asiana Airlines' Château Gruaud Larose, France, making Asiana a three-time winner in this year's survey.

For the third consecutive year, *Global Traveler* awarded the Best North America Wines on the Wing. North American airlines submitted first-class wine samples. (In instances where first class was not applicable, samples from domestic business class were accepted.)

For the second year in a row, American Airlines dominated the category, taking top honors in Best North America Wines on the Wing, Best North America Sparkling Wine (Gloria Ferrer Sonoma Brut, NV) and Best North America Red Wine (Pellegrini Family Blend).

When it came to white wines, US Airways was the cream of the crop. The airline's De Bortoli Willowglen Chardonnay, Australia, was the finest domestic white on offer. For the second year, *Global Traveler* awarded the Best Alliance Wines on the Wing. The participating airlines were divided by their airline alliance. The overall points for each airline were tallied and averaged to determine the alliance with the highest total. Congratulations to the SkyTeam alliance and its participating airlines, Delta Air Lines and Alitalia.

Competition director Eunice Fried spent months preparing for the blind tasting. Fried, an accomplished wine journalist and respected wine expert, resides in New York City.

"It's always satisfying to see the quality and diversity of airline wines grow," said Fried. "And that was especially apparent this year. Business- and first-class travelers on these airlines can look forward to a variety of tantalizing tastes."

Global Traveler is the only U.S.-based publication to conduct such a survey in the United States.

"We are incredibly proud of our wine survey," said Francis X. Gallagher, publisher and CEO, *Global Traveler*. "A big congratulations to all the winners. It's amazing how much the survey has grown in the past seven years. I'm glad the survey has expanded to include North American premium cabins and international first class, as there is much time, effort and money spent on providing premium travelers with a top-notch experience."