

Moët Serves the Golden Globes

Plus, Bordeaux goes organic and China's domestic wine industry faces fraud accusations

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• Moët has the right bottle of bubbly for those planning to entertain during this weekend's Golden Globes awards ceremony. Now available is the Moët & Chandon Gold Award Season Impérial (\$39 for the 750ml version—not a full 6-liter imperial), which will be poured for the guests at the 2011 Golden Globes Awards hosted by comedian Ricky Gervais Sunday night. The special-edition cuvée is in honor of Moët's status as the official Champagne of the Golden Globes. At last year's ceremony, nearly 10,000 glasses of Moët were consumed. Unfiltered is interested to hear what this year's Cecil B. DeMille Award for lifetime achievement winner, Robert De Niro, thinks of the Moët—when De Niro presented director, vintner and Wine Spectator Distinguished Service Award winner Francis Ford Coppola with the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award this past November, he channeled his inner wine critic: "Who can forget his 2007 Director's Cut Cabernet Sauvignon? It's dense richness lightened by hints of cherry, mint and tobacco." Unfiltered looks forward to hearing De Niro's tasting notes come Sunday night.



Xavier Planty inspects one of the «insect hotels» at Château Guiraud.
Suzanne Mustacich

• Sweet news from Bordeaux: Château Guiraud of Sauternes has received organic certification. In celebration, the winery uncorked imperials of the 2006 vintage to fete the Agence Bio (AB) certification. "This is just one step," said Guiraud co-owner Xavier Planty. Guiraud combines organic viticulture with biodiversity, including genetically diverse vines. Planty said the resulting wines are "fresh, complex and elegant ... with a spine." The 2011 Guiraud vintage will have AB printed on the back label. Guiraud also trademarked their sustainability program, BioViticulture. Guiraud is the second 1855 classified growth to go organic. Château Pontet-Canet was certified both AB and Biodyvin (biodynamics) this past July, but has no plans to put AB on the label. Pontet-Canet director Jean-Michel Comme said the certification was to "prove we were sincere in our project." And he stands by the results in the glass. "It seems to be clear that the wines of the estate have gained in aromatic complexity, finesse and nobility in the quality of tannins," Comme said. (Pontet-Canet was originally certified organic in 2006, but after an attack of downy mildew in 2007, they elected to spray with chemicals, forcing the winery to go through the certification process all over again.)

• While China's growing thirst for wine has grabbed the world's attention, most of the headlines have focused on the small number of wealthy Chinese consumers scooping up Château Lafite-Rothschild and other top growths at Hong Kong auctions and Shanghai stores. In reality, the vast majority of wine consumed in China is made in China (largely by state-owned corporations). A recent government food-safety crackdown has found that some of that "wine" isn't wine at all. Officials shut down five wineries and arrested six people in the northern province of Hebei last December for allegedly producing fake wines, some of which contained hazardous chemicals. A state television news report revealed that wineries were doctoring their products with sugar water, food coloring and artificial flavorings, and then falsely using famous brand names. One expert said some of the ingredients were carcinogenic. Another said it wasn't uncommon for cheap brands to contain only 20 percent wine. Officials seized 5,000 cases of wine, bank accounts were frozen and Beijing Wal-Mart stores pulled the wines from their shelves.