

SAM HARROP

BIOGRAPHY

Sam Harrop's 20-year international career in the wine industry marks him as one of the world's leading consultant winemakers.

Sam began his career as a winemaker in New Zealand, training at Villa Maria's wineries in Auckland, Blenheim and Hawke's Bay. He gained further experience, heading overseas to work at Littorai Wines in California and Rosemount Estate in the Hunter Valley, Australia.

In 1997 Sam re-located to the UK to take on the role of winemaker for Marks & Spencer, one of the UK's leading retailers. During his seven years at M&S he worked with producers in the world's key wine regions and the quality of the resulting wines led to significant improvements in sales and profitability for the company.

Also during this period, Sam began studying for the prestigious Masters of Wine (MW) – a qualification currently held by just over 300 people worldwide. He passed both the tasting and theory sections on his first attempt in June 2002, and received a distinction for his dissertation. He was also presented with the Tim Derouet Award for outstanding performance – an accolade which, to date, has been presented to fewer than 30 students since its inception in 1976.

In 2002, Sam co-founded the biodynamic winery, Domaine Matassa in the Roussillon region of South-West France. He was an active partner until 2008, and sold his shares in 2016.

In August 2004 Sam left Marks & Spencer to launch his own consultancy business, and he rapidly found a broad, appreciative market for his unique range of skills. As well as being an accomplished winemaker, Sam has in-depth knowledge of the business of wine and knows what it takes for wines to succeed in the crowded global marketplace. He became a sought-after adviser to European wineries and distributors seeking to improve wine quality and promote their brands to export markets.

Sam held the esteemed position of Co-Chairman of the International Wine Challenge from 2006 to 2016. Sam was instrumental in setting up the Sake Category at the International Wine Challenge in 2007, and was awarded the great honour of becoming a 'Sake Samurai' for his

work on the project. He has also worked as an international judge in competitions in New Zealand, Australia, Spain, Italy and South Africa.

In March 2009, Sam and a team of three other industry consultants organised and hosted the first International Sparkling Wine Symposium at Denbies Wine Estate. In November 2010 he was a Co-Chairman of the inaugural Sparkling Wine Review, a unique benchmarking initiative for global Sparkling Wine styles.

Sam regularly appears in both the trade and consumer press in the UK and around the world as a key wine industry commentator, and in 2011, he co-authored the book 'Authentic Wine' with Jamie Goode, focusing on concepts of naturalness and sustainability in winemaking.

In 2012 the International Wine and Spirit Competition presented Sam with 'The Julian Brind Memorial Trophy for Outstanding Achievement in the Wine Industry'.

In December 2013 e Drinks Business, one of the key trade publications in the UK, selected Sam as the 10th most influential wine consultant in the world.

Today, Sam works with wineries in Spain (Bodegas Fontana), and Marlborough, New Zealand (Spring Creek). In addition, he consults to Sky City Auckland on beverage strategy, and Canadian wine yeast and bacteria producer Lallemand, on wine industry R&D and communication strategies.

Sam has his own wine label – Cedalion – which focuses on single vineyard Chardonnay and Syrah grown and produced on Waiheke Island.

He is also a co-owner of newly founded Peninsula Wines, a dynamic Madrid-based wine marketing business founded on authenticity, sustainability and competitiveness. Sam's unique blend of technical expertise, commercial insight and commitment to preserving wine diversity defines his holistic approach to the wine business

