



**French final of the European Champagne Ambassadors' Awards**

**CATALINA MELNICIUC CROWNED**

**FRANCE'S 2018 CHAMPAGNE AMBASSADOR**

Following the conclusion of the French final held on 11 September in Epernay, Catalina Melniciuc becomes the new 2018 Champagne Ambassador for France.

Born in the Republic of Moldavia, Catalina grew up in a region with strong local winegrowing traditions. Her international career took her first to Portugal and Hungary, before arriving in France. Catalina currently teaches œnology at the CFPPA (agricultural vocational training and promotion centre) in Avize. During the final, her degree in wine marketing and experience as an engineer and œnologist won over the jury faced with a particularly demanding topic: 'disgorgement and dosage in Champagne production'. Catalina, who is naturally calm and collected, executed the technique with great dexterity, explaining the process with clarity and detail.

The jury included Marie-Noëlle Rainon-Henriet (Henriet Bazin Champagne House), Hadrien Mouflard (managing director of the Ayala Champagne House), Joëlle Weiss-Boisson (œnologist and journalist for Terre de Vins magazine), Tony Verbicaro (journalist for Champagne Viticole magazine) and Thibaut Le Mailloux (communications director for the Champagne Committee). All the judges made a point of highlighting the qualities of the two other finalists, along with their enthusiastic portrayal of the diversity and complexity of Champagne: Benoît Melendez, manager of the 'L'Extra Brut' Champagne cellar in Paris (9<sup>th</sup> arrondissement) and Marc-Edouard de Zutter, President of the 'Oenosphères' wine tourism agency based in Premierfait, Aube department.

Catalina Melniciuc is now preparing to compete against the national winners from eight other European countries. All the winners will soon be gathered together in Champagne for an unforgettable week of tours and visits, ahead of the European final on 8 November.

Epernay, 12 September 2017

Attachment: photo of Catalina Melniciuc

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