



**Final of the European Champagne Ambassadors Award**

**DUTCHMAN CROWNED CHAMPAGNE AMBASSADOR 2013**

The winner of the Ninth Edition of the European Champagne Ambassador Awards is Amsterdam-based Niek Beute, a freelance sommelier and instructor who struck out on his own last August after working for the finest restaurants in France and the Netherlands.

On hearing the announcement, 2013's newly crowned Champagne Ambassador commented: 'Champagne is so much more than the product of terroir or heritage – it is what happens when nature rubs up against the science of winemaking. The energy that comes from that meeting is what makes Champagne so unique.'

The daylong event saw finalists tested by a panel of wine professionals from each of the eight countries represented. Highlights included a tasting and a lesson in Champagne theory, with Niek emerging as the winner on the basis of what the judges described as his 'love of Champagne and ability to express his passion and knowledge with such consummate ease'.

**UK finalist Tim HALL**, director of Scala Wine, was named Runner-Up in this year's event, and the Special Prize was awarded to Austrian finalist **Christine MAYR**, who teaches at the Austrian Academy of Wine.

The event concluded with an award-giving gala on the evening of Friday 25 October, held in the cellars of Château de Pékin, Epernay, in the presence of CIVC presidents, Mr Pascal Férat and Mr Jean-Marie Barillère.

On arrival in Champagne on 21 October, the eight finalists selected to represent their home countries embarked on the first of an action-packed five-day stay – a privileged opportunity to discover the Champagne vineyards in all their glory. Special features included tastings of base wines, special cuvees and old vintages, vineyard tours and food-and-wine pairings staged in selected venues.

Candidates were unanimous in their appreciation of the unique insights they gained in their final week, particularly the chance to talk to Champagne professionals and swap notes on training with fellow contestants.

Epernay, 28 October 2013