

Press release by the University of Applied Sciences Wädenswil on 22 March 2007

Eleven Golden Olive awards for “Extra Virgin” Olive Oils

On 22 March 2007 the “6th International Olive Congress – Zurich 2007” took place at the University of Applied Sciences Wädenswil (HSW). The highlight of the event was the presentation of the “International Olive Award – Zurich 2007”. Producers, importers and retailers from eleven different countries had submitted a total of 166 “extra virgin” olive oils for consideration. The “Swiss Olive Oil Panel”, an expert panel of the HSW tasted the products and performed objective sensory evaluation. Seven olive oils were awarded the coveted “Golden Olive” and eleven received the “Silver Olive”. Another eleven olive oils “extra vergin” received an “Award” for their outstanding sensory quality.

The evaluation of the olive oils was based on ten criteria defined by the IOOC (International Olive Oil Council). The first step was to ensure that the oil was free from negative characteristics, which is a requirement for its inclusion in the “Extra Virgin” category. In addition, the fruitiness, bitterness and piquancy of the oils were assessed, all of these being positive attributes of olive oil. These three attributes together form the basis for a general impression of the harmoniousness of the oil and, together with how long it lingers in the nose and the palate, are the deciding factors for the awards.

Of the 157 oils submitted, 50 qualified for the final round. Seven oils were awarded the “Golden Olive”, and another seven the “Silver Olive”. The winners received a certificate and the right to print the “Golden Olive” or “Silver Olive” logo on their labels. The 157 olive oils came from eleven different countries: approx. 38% were from Italy, 27% from Greece, 23% from Spain and 6% from Turkey. The remainder originated from Australia and Portugal (each approx. 2%) and from Switzerland, Cyprus, France, Jordania and Syria (each approx. 0.5%).

Transparency in the olive oil market

At a consumer tasting at the fair “Gourmesse Zürich” in the Kongresshaus Zurich, 5 to 8 October 2007, the oils were blind tasted by end consumers and ranked by preference. The 15 favourite oils are able to use the “OLIO 2007 mark on their labels. The objectives of the Olive Oil Award are transparency in the olive oil market and sustainable quality enhancement. The results serve as a scientific basis for producers, importers and retailers to assist in their achieving medium- and long-term improvements in the quality of “native” olive oils. At the same time, the event provides a representative overview of the quality of olive oils on the national and international market.

Requirement and reality

The awards took place during the “6th International Olive Congress – Zurich 2007”. The conference programme stated “Requirements and Reality of Olive Oils” as a main focus. In panel discussion participants from different perspectives as production, import, consumer and marketing sight and sensory science talked about the thesis “Lots of differences but no more

transparency". After the congress and prize-giving, the oils were available for tasting. This provided an ideal opportunity, particularly for consumers, to meet both producers and purveyors.

An electronic version can be found at www.hsw.ch/medien or www.oliveoilaward.ch

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