

Master of wine

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SWISS REPRESENTATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Following several requests from our readers, we contacted the Swiss Embassy to get a list of all the Ambassadors, Chargé d'Affaires and Consuls that Switzerland had put into position in Wellington over the past 60 years. Here is the information kindly collated and supplied by Mr. Frank Schneider specially for the Helvetia.

Walter SCHMID	1937 - 1946	Consul
Ernst THEILER	1946 - 1949	Consul
Henri BLANCHARD	1949 - 1955	Consul
Pierre AUBARET	1955 - 1959	Consul
Oscar ROSSETTI	1959 - 1963	Consul General
Jean-Pierre WEBER	1963 - 1967	Consul General
	1968 vacant	
Max CORTI	1969 - 1974	Ambassador
Fritz ADAMS	1975 - 1979	Chargé d'Affaires
Walter SOLLBERGER	1979 - 1982	Chargé d'Affaires
Ivan ETIENNE	1982 - 1987	Chargé d'Affaires
Fridolin WYSS	1987 - 1989	Chargé d'Affaires
Michael VON SCHENCK	1989 - 1993	Ambassador
Ernst THURNHEER	1993 - 1996	Ambassador
Walter SIMMEN	1996 -	Chargé d'Affaires

In Auckland, Switzerland is represented by an Honorary Consul. This position was held in turn by Mr. MÄRZ (1966-1969), by Arthur MÜLLER (1969-1994) and since then by Peter DEÜTSCHLE

Switzerland has had a consulate in New Zealand since 1912. The first consulate was situated in Auckland, but in 1937 it was transferred to Wellington. The consulate was elevated to a Consulate General in 1959 and to a full Embassy in 1963.

MASTER OF WINE

In the world of wine making, the title of "Master of Wine" is the world's highest award you can give to a wine expert. In the whole world today, there are only 203 Masters of Wine.

The first Swiss to be allowed to use that title is 31 year old Philipp Schwander. Since he became interested in wine, Schwander has tasted well over 50,000 bottles of wine. As one of the top experts in wine, samples are being sent to him from all over the world for his appreciation, and he claims that, to be fair, he tastes them all without fail.

The exams to become Master of Wine are some of the toughest tests ever devised. To pass the written tests, it takes many months of studies going through every conceivable book written about wine making. For the practical test, Schwander had to identify correctly 36 different wines while being blind-folded. This is an extraordinary feat when you consider that there are not only thousands of different wines in the world, but that the tastes of these wines also change slightly with every vintage.

Schwander maintains that only by continuously comparing wines with one another can he be sure to identify them correctly. So wine tasting is a job he must

keep up all the time otherwise he could lose the unique gift his taste buds have given him.

Despite the fact that all his life moves around wine, Schwander is by no means an alcoholic. Contrary to the so called wine tasting parties thrown by your friends, where everybody soon seems to get drunk, professional wine tasters never swallow the wine, they spit it out again, otherwise they would never be able to get through their job. So like all other Masters of Wine, Schwander never gets drunk. He loves his wine too much to drink it in large quantities. In any case, he could not afford to do that since most of the bottles he tastes are in the \$150-\$800 bracket.

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Philipp Schwander, the first Swiss Master of Wine at his place of work: the Wine House of Martel in St Gallen where he works as chief buyer of some of the finest wines in the world.

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