

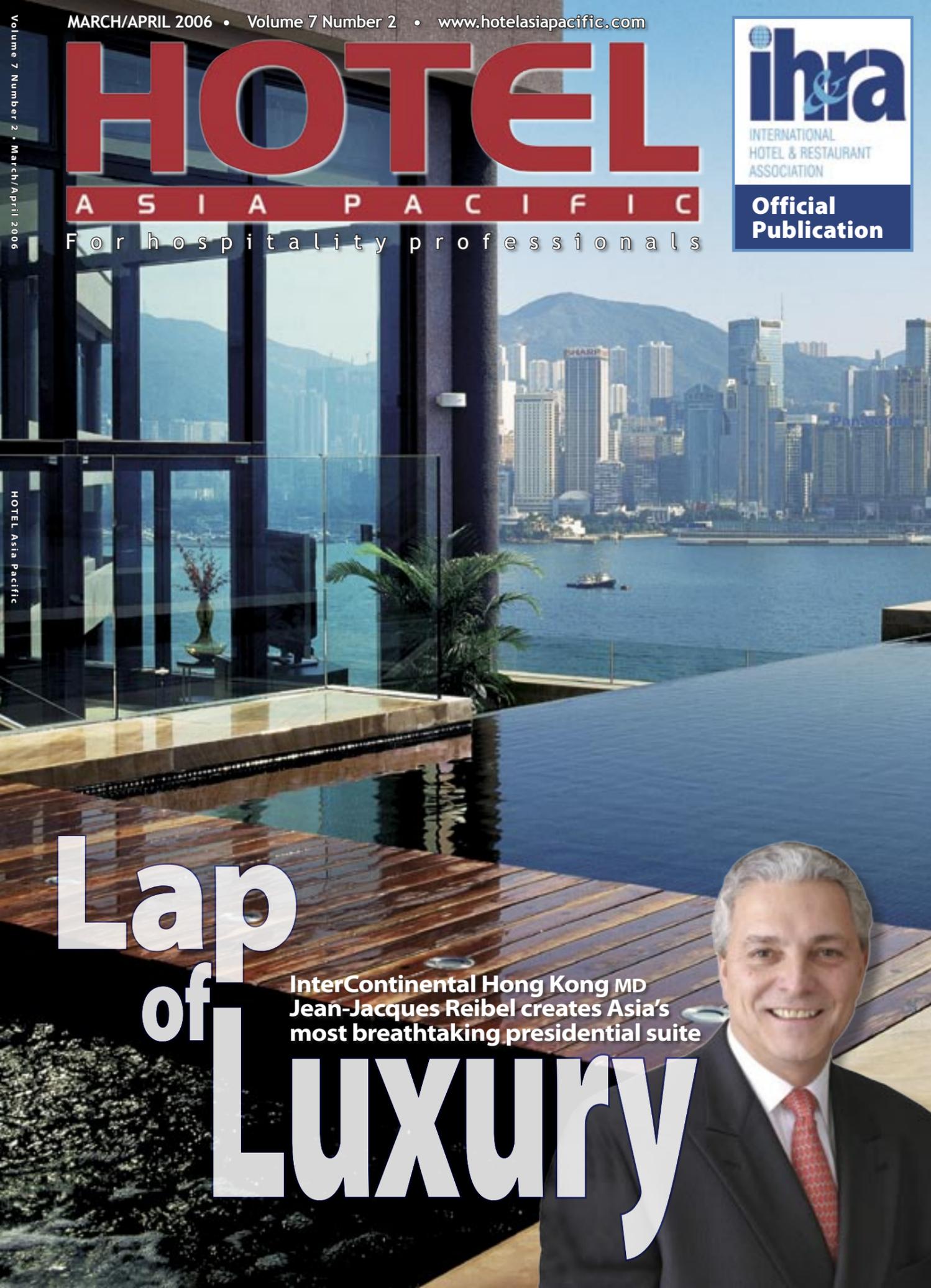
HOTEL

ASIA PACIFIC

For hospitality professionals



HOTEL Asia Pacific



Lap of Luxury

InterContinental Hong Kong MD
Jean-Jacques Reibel creates Asia's
most breathtaking presidential suite



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Chilean CHAMPS

Douglas Murray, director of Montes Winery in Chile, is responsible for export and domestic sales for the company, with a focus on Asia Pacific

By **Fred Tibbitts**

Which are your favourite wines and why?

Chile's potential, which is sky-high, is what keeps me focused on that country and being part – with my partner, Aurelio Montes – in the creation of Chile's first truly ultra-premium wines such as *Montes Alpha M* (the "M" is for Murray), *Montes Folly* (a super Syrah that has become a cult wine) and *Purple Angel* (the first predominantly Carmenere wine to reach world class). Plus, the Montes Alpha range that made our winery famous, is a matter of great pride.

To me, wine and creator are one and the same. It is hard to understand a superb wine if you do not know who gave it life. My overall favourite is *Petrus* – and Christian Moueix, who gives it life, is a great inspiration and (next to Hugh Johnson) my favourite wine person, inspired and inspiring, always.

Next would be Penfold's Grange: the incredible history of it – with creator Mex Schubert and its winemaker, John Duval – is close to my heart and benchmark for our *Montes Folly*. John Duval generously helped us with his comments and suggestions, and is also a dear member of my Hall of Fame of wine persons.

Third would have to be Vega-Sicilia's *Unico*, from Ribera del Duero, in homage to my 10 years in Spain. This is truly Spain's flagship wine. To pick a white, *Chateau D'Yquen* would be my favourite.

So there you have it – two from France, one from Australia, one from Spain and all of Chile's potential form the outer limits of my super favourite wines.

How did you get in to the wine business?

By chance, but it was my karma that I would change, 35 years ago, from working in a copper company in Chile to a Spanish wine group. By the way, I much prefer to refer to the wine trade rather than wine business. The word

"trade" better describes the spirit of the incredible personalities you meet. Wine is really a way of life, a one-way street. Once you enter, you seldom look back, and its magnetism keeps you enthusiastic and focused.

How does Montes contribute to the world of wine, and what is your contribution to Montes?

Montes, as a concept of producing only premium Chilean wines, was born when Aurelio and I applied ourselves with passion to a quality programme at San Pedro winery, where we both worked at the time.

It was weird, but in Chile no one other than us believed Chile had a place in world wine. Everyone seemed satisfied to be supermarket wines.

Our key contribution, then, was to create our own winery and *Montes Alpha*, the first really premium wine from Chile, which opened the door to restaurants, hotels and airlines to our wines and, inevitably, to other quality Chilean wines that followed.

Montes was the revolution in quality that inspired both the giant, long-standing wineries that, until then, dared not

take the step. From 14 exporting wineries to the present day, 18 years later, we feel we have been responsible for the increase to over 200 exporting wineries.

Over the next 10 years, which world appellations do you feel will be responsible for the greatest increase in premium wine consumption?

Chile is the 11th largest wine producer in the world, but its 5th largest wine exporter. It also exports more of its wine production, 65%, than any other country. With more vineyard development going on and the very dynamic way Chile is growing, the future looks bright.

Accompanying Chile will be Australia and Argentina. I



foresee these three countries becoming the New World wine leaders. California, with Napa as its spearhead, will be king of the US market and a close contender in growth, internationally, but I see the first three as offering more "universally" oriented wines.

Which individuals do you see as having been the most influential in globalisation of premium wines over the past 20 years?

Many should be mentioned and I apologise for those omitted but, to me, Professor Alejandro Hernandez, who was also the first "non-European" president of the powerful Paris-based OIV.

If you could imagine two, three or four countries dominating the premium wine business by 2025, which are they – and why?

France will continue to hold on to its super wines, deservedly so, but I don't see them gaining. Other Europeans

WITH OVER 10 YEARS in the wine business in Europe and 20 years in Chile, **Douglas Murray** has given his life to fine wines. Selected by *Vinotheque*, the oldest wine magazine in Japan, as one of the six world wine personalities who have had the most influence in Japan in the past 20 years, his love of wine is equalled by his love of Asia

will hold on to their star brands, and perhaps a few others will also become established, hard as that is nowadays. But the New World will reign supreme in 2025.

Australia, California, Chile and Argentina will have earned the loyalty of consumers worldwide because of reasonably priced premium wines.

The New World should also be able to place a good number of new successful premium wines, many more than the Old World.

Montes has heavily contributed by being the first to go to mountain-slope plantations. Montes "discovered" Apalta Valley, today considered the best in Chile for quality reds. Montes also discovered Marchigüe, also in Colchagua, and was the pioneer in premium and ultra-premium wines.

Casa Lapostolle arrived in the early nineties and was much-welcomed because Alexandra Manier-Lapostolle was bent on superior quality and made the investments necessary to produce premium wines.

She joined Montes in Apalta, underlining the superiority of Apalta qualities. She believed in Chile and has praised its virtues worldwide, together with her husband Cyril de Bournet.

The world-class reputation earned by both Montes and Casa Lapostolle positioned both at the forefront of Chile's quality, and have provided great examples of how good Chilean wine can be if offered by serious houses like these two.

Casa Lapostolle made positive news by hiring French consultant Michel Rolland, a worldwide wine personality, to produce their wines.

Both have been an example of what Chilean wine can be and, although they are strong competitors, we are friends and greatly respect each other. □



Fred Tibbitts is a global wine consultant to some of the world's leading chain hotels and restaurants. Email: fredbev@fredtibbitts.com