

Klein Constantia's Adam Mason brings a piece of South African wine history to the US

Klein Constantia Cellar Master Adam Mason recently spent two weeks spreading the gospel of the legendary *Vin de Constance* during a whirlwind tour of several major US markets. Through a series of tastings and events featuring the current release alongside library vintages, Mason demonstrated to old fans and new converts alike the remarkable ageability and versatility of the fabled late harvest bottling.

Organized by US importer Cape Classics, Adam's trip kicked off in New York City with a visit to *Wine Spectator* to meet with Senior Editor James Molesworth. Then it was on to an intense schedule of account visits and trade and consumer events.

An intimate trade-only vertical tasting and seminar at Bouley Test Kitchen drew top NY sommeliers Paul Grieco of Terroir/Hearth and Troy Weissmann of South Gate at the Jumeirah Essex House, among other key NY retail and restaurant accounts. Celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson stopped by for a preview of the afternoon event, which showcased the current 2004 VdC release as well as 2001 and 1999 library reserves – direct from the winery's cellar – paired with a selection of small plates, both sweet and savory. Grieco's Terroir wine bar served as the setting for a late night tasting geared towards sommeliers, where additional 1996 and 2000 vintages of *Vin de Constance* were also featured.

Mason's travels then took him to the Southeast, for market work in South Carolina and Florida. A luncheon for top Charleston restaurant accounts, held at Orient Express's Charleston Place hotel, featured 1999, 2001 and 2004 vintages of *Vin de Constance*. Highlights of Adam's Florida stay included visits to top accounts Tim's Wine Market, The Wine Warehouse, Seasons 52 and renowned chef Emeril Legasse's Tchoup Chop, as well as a staff training at Jiko at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge.

Boston was the next destination on Mason's tour. In between a bottle signing at major US retailer Costco and a consumer vertical tasting and seminar at Gordon's Fine Wine & Culinary Center, the Klein Constantia cellar master paid visits to key retailers such as Federal Wine, Cambridge Wines and Curtis Liquors. He also made stops at upscale steakhouse Bokx 109 and Henrietta's Table in Cambridge, and conducted a staff training and dinner at the city's hip Tremont 647.

The final stop on Mason's *Vin de Constance* tour was Chicago, a city celebrated for its vibrant, cutting edge restaurant scene. A trade tasting featuring 1999, 2001 and 2004 vintages of *Vin de Constance*, held at Mado restaurant, attracted the likes of Rootstock chef Remy Ayesh – recently ranked among Chicago's "Most Important Chefs" by *Time Out Chicago* – as well as wine writer/educator Patrick Fegan, and Epic pastry chef Christine McCabe, formerly of Charlie Trotter's. Top Chicago retailer Red & White hosted a sold-out consumer vertical tasting, which received coverage in *Time Out Chicago*. Mason also conducted staff trainings at legendary restaurant Alinea – longtime *Vin de Constance* supporter and *Gourmet* magazine's "#1 restaurant in America" 2006 – and at Publican, the hip new restaurant from the team behind the critically acclaimed hotspots Blackbird and Avec.

