

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I am very glad to welcome you to the Consulate tonight. This evening, The *Commanderie du Bontemps de Médoc, des Graves, du Sauternes et de Barsac* will be holding its American part of the Left Bank Bordeaux Cup.

As you may know, I am a wine amateur myself, which makes it an even greater pleasure to host such events. Every year, as we come back from our summer vacation in September, we meet with the *Commanderie de Bordeaux* for a dinner celebration. I am glad we also begin the New Year with a tasting of such exceptional wines.

The Consulate has been hosting this American part of the competition for the past three of the 11 years of its existence, which selects the American teams for the finals. Founded in 2002, it has become the first international Wine competition among prestigious universities and *Grandes Ecoles*. However, opening the contest to North-American, European and Asian teams in 2011 resulted in them being highly ranked – a testimony, I believe, to the keen interest young foreign generations hold for what is one of the most essential elements of France's heritage.

Tonight, nine teams from prestigious American universities will share the difficult task of identifying and classifying various wines, and I am sure they will once again prove their impressive knowledge in Bordeaux wine. For this is not a mere wine tasting contest. It is a very tricky challenge, for which I wish you all the best of luck. The two finalists will be sent to participate in the last stage of the competition, at the marvelous cellars of Chateau Lafitte Rothschild

in Pauillac, and enjoy the possibility of exploring one of the most renowned regions of French wine.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like finish by thanking Emmanuel Cruze for making the Consulate part of this New York phase of the contest. For over 60 year now, The *Commanderie* has been the guardian of century-old traditions. Beyond promoting Left-Bank Gironde wines, I see it as an Ambassador of France, of her savoir-faire and her savoir-vivre, as well as of her culture and heritage.

With no further delay, I hand the floor over to Emmanuel Cruze, and wish you all an excellent evening.