

Ministère de la culture et de la communication

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SESSION 2015

Épreuve orale d'admission n°2 : épreuve d'anglais

3 octobre 2016

La seconde épreuve d'admission consiste en une conversation dans une langue vivante étrangère à partir d'un texte.

La langue vivante étrangère faisant l'objet de cette épreuve est choisie par le candidat lors de l'inscription parmi les langues suivantes: allemand, anglais, arabe, chinois, espagnol, italien, japonais, russe, portugais, polonais.

(Préparation de l'épreuve : 30 minutes ; durée de l'épreuve : 30 minutes ; coefficient 1).

Avertissement :

- avant de commencer, vérifiez que le sujet qui vous a été remis comporte toutes les questions ; signalez aux surveillants tout de suite les anomalies éventuelles (page manquante, page illisible...).

Ce document comporte 2 pages au total.

SUJET n°6

Bagehot | The 2016 vintage

Forget the Olympics. Wine should guide Britain's approach to Brexit



ILOOKED at my dad. We couldn't believe it," says Simon Roberts. Mr Roberts and his father, the founder of the Ridgeview vineyard, were at the Royal Opera House for the Decanter World Wine Awards in 2010. They had assumed they had been seated too far from the stage to have won. Champagne makers had always nabbed the "top sparkling wine" award before. It was stated that the winning wine was a blanc-de-blancs (a sparkling wine made only from white grapes). The Roberts family were baffled: that described none of the French wines on the shortlist. It was only when the announcer remarked that the wine was English that the penny dropped. Ridgeview had become the first ever non-French wine to win the prize.

The result sent shocks through the wine world and vindicated the gamble taken by the Roberts family 16 years earlier, when they sold their computer business to buy a fledgling vineyard near the Sussex coast. Their rationale was simple: the mild days would nurture the sugar in the grapes, the cool nights would bring on the acid, the South Downs would shelter the vines and the result would be a sparkling wine that could take on Champagne.

Today Ridgeview wines sell in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, America and even—whisper it—Bordeaux. They are served in Downing Street and Buckingham Palace. Ridgeview is building a new cellar to cope with a rise in production from 250,000 to 600,000 bottles a year. Obsessiveness perfumes the place: in the spring staff hurry out at 2am to light giant candles under the vines to keep the frost from the buds. This perfectionism has won medals: at the Texsom International Wine Awards in Dallas in March, Ridgeview took bronze, silver or gold for all five of its entries.

These days Britain is preoccupied with gongs of a different sort. Politicians have tortured the country's storming performance at the Olympic games for lessons about Brexit. Lefties think public money and teamwork are the key. The right prefers tales of elite rewards for elite performances. Both sides have a point. But both should also look to their country's booze boomlet. It hints at a happy middle ground.

In the decade to 2014 the acreage of vineyards in England and Wales rose from 1,879 to over 4,500. Wine exports are expected to increase from £3.2m (\$4.9m) in 2015 to over £30m in 2020. Two French firms—Taittinger and Vranken Pommery Monopole—

have recently invested in southern England. On August 19th the first full container of English fizz departed for America. "New York sommeliers always want something new to talk about," observes Frazer Thompson of Chapel Down, a producer in Kent. He says the difference between English sparkling wine and Champagne is like that between Vivienne Westwood and Chanel: the former is a funky and fresh alternative to a traditional rival.

Winemakers are uncertain about Brexit. The wine industry is vulnerable to regulation. For example, American winemakers must relabel their bottles for export because they list alcohol content to one decimal point more than the EU deems permissible, bizarrely. Winemakers like the Roberts family buy bottles, barrels and machinery from France. It is a borderless business. "We can have breakfast in Sussex and lunch in Épernay," boasts Mr Roberts. Meanwhile they benefit from the EU's single farm payments, the harmonisation of standards across the union, its tariff-free market and its trade deals with other countries.

For such producers the priority is continuity. Winemakers would like a guarantee of the status quo. That means British substitutes for existing EU agricultural and rural funds; comprehensive free-trade agreements with the EU and other trading partners; and ongoing co-ordination of standards between Britain and the union. "There is a compelling case for reducing customs tariffs to zero," reckons Simon Stannard of the Wine and Spirit Trade Association. The government, he says, might also establish a planning regime guaranteeing all vineyards agricultural status and secure the status of local brands. "The EU has hundreds of protected wine names and we will want those names to continue to be respected once the UK leaves the EU," says Mr Stannard.

A little hiccup

It is easy to be blasé about all this. In the run-up to Britain's EU referendum campaigners for Brexit talked endlessly about German carmakers and French wine producers. Their point was that the continentals would not seek a strict trading regime with Britain, which buys so many of Europe's wares. Yet this overlooked that Britain also has plenty to sell, from cars and financial services to jet engines and bubbly. The notion that other EU governments would fall to their knees to maintain access to the British market was always a fantasy. Doubtless, Britain should use its consumption-heavy economy to its advantage while negotiating Brexit. But it should not forget that it is the supplicant.

Millions of its jobs depend on exports. The Article 50 process (which is likely to be invoked in 2017) allows a member state just two years to negotiate exit terms. So Britain faces a real risk of leaving the union before it has been able to make new trading arrangements. All of which militates for ongoing British membership of the single market, perhaps as a member of the European Economic Area, like Norway, for the period between its departure from the EU and the establishment of its new status.

Theresa May and her ministers must thus move fast to clarify certain basic details—about Britain's future trading relationships, its regulatory parameters, its domestic policies—to give firms like Ridgeview the confidence they need to continue investing. The Chardonnay grapes on its vines today will hit the shelves as sparkling wine in 2019 or 2020. Before they ripen it is up to Mrs May to light the proverbial candles, to head off the chilling effects of Brexit. If the negotiations go well and Brexit succeeds, Bagehot will raise a glass of the 2016 vintage to them. If they go badly he may drain the bottle. ■