



Left: at the Oxford Wine Company customers were quick to understand the meaning of IGP

as he has taken a specific interest in the classification, he believed the on-trade and general retailers had little or no knowledge.

Hal Wilson, managing director of Cambridge Wine Merchants, thought there was little awareness across the board, particularly consumer awareness, which he thought “minimal”. He also said the category lacked “relevance” to the consumer.

Bee Taylor, who organised the tasting at Corks & Cases, said she had a limited amount of knowledge of the classification changes pre-promotion, and has now made herself more aware of what IGP means. “I felt quite energised once I knew more about it myself and was happy to explain it to the consumers, who also took it on board. They were more interested when explaining it alongside tasting the wines, which they all enjoyed.”

Consumer response

O’Keeffe said the customers that attended his organised tasting were “highly motivated to attend and very professional with their tasting and comments”.

He added: “General interest in regional French wines was encouraged by our activity.” The sales of IGP wines were up around 6%, according to O’Keeffe, although he added: “I cannot quantify how much of this was specifically due to our IGP activity.”

O’Keeffe said he was impressed with the quality of the wines, but also feels reassured that the IGPs it stocks are as equally well chosen.

The level of turnout was “excellent”, he said. “Customers were interested in tasting and understanding the wines and the classification.”

Over the four-week period,

he estimated that “something in the region of 300 customers” had tasted the wines.

Isaacs said French wine was already its biggest-selling area, so he did not see a huge increase in sales. But he added: “Within that the wines of regional France did increase by 10%-15%. The campaign helped to raise awareness of the less famous areas and hence we saw the uplift.”

Thirty people attended the tasting at Hangingditch. Hosty said

“

This area needs more attention and is overlooked in terms of quality and value for money

there wasn’t a noticeable uplift in sales but he added that some of the different varieties went down well, especially Viognier.

At Corks & Cases there was an unquantifiable but definite uplift in sales. Taylor said: “We noticed a definite upsurge in the purchase of Viognier after the tasting with people who hadn’t tasted the grape wanting to experiment more.

“The full-bodied whites went down really well – the Marsanne and Roussanne varieties were enjoyed very much. It’s made us think we definitely need to buy more French wines.”

Yates at Corks Out said it was difficult to know how many people took part because the wines were tasted from the Enomatic machine.

As far as the trophy winners were concerned, Yates said: “Some were interested in trophy wines, some said they didn’t care and it was about wine quality rather than whether it had won a trophy or not.

“They also see so many awards on inferior wines now that they are unsure whether to believe it and most said that it wouldn’t make them choose the wine, it was down to our team’s recommendation that made them choose.”

However, the tasting made Yates think more French wines are currently needed on Corks Out’s list. “We are amending our range as we speak, because I think this area needs more attention and is overlooked by the customer in terms of quality and value for money.”