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Food & Wine Classic weekend: Reporter's notebook

Lauren Glendenning

WINES FOR IPO BILLIONAIRES

I was torn over which seminar to attend during the Saturday 10 a.m. slot, but I can say with 100 percent confidence that I chose wisely.

Wine expert Mark Oldman struts onto the stage in a purple velvet smoking jacket with a tobacco pipe hanging out of his mouth. He tells attendees (those who made it in — others were turned away when the tent reached capacity) that the wines we were about to drink totaled about \$2,000 if you were to buy the bottles retail. He said it was arguably one of the most expensive consumer wine tastings ever done.

He poured mind-blowers like the 2011 Sassicaia and the Penfolds Grange, which retails for roughly \$750 a bottle. We tried six big-time wines and Champagnes in all, and he brought attendees to the stage for a few Champagne sabers. I was lucky enough to sit near a gal who did the saber, brought the magnum back to her table and filled all of our glasses.

Oldman is a character and kept everyone under the tent laughing throughout. One of my favorite quotes from him about what we were drinking: “These are baller wines.”

He also told a tale about popping a 1964 Dom Perignon on the private jet he took to town with Jacques Pepin and Dana Cowin. And sure enough, upon review of his Instagram profile, there was a photo of the three of them doing exactly that. Not a bad way to travel, Mark.