

Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## **Vitaly International Academy celebrates the success of its online format with five new Italian Wine Ambassadors.**

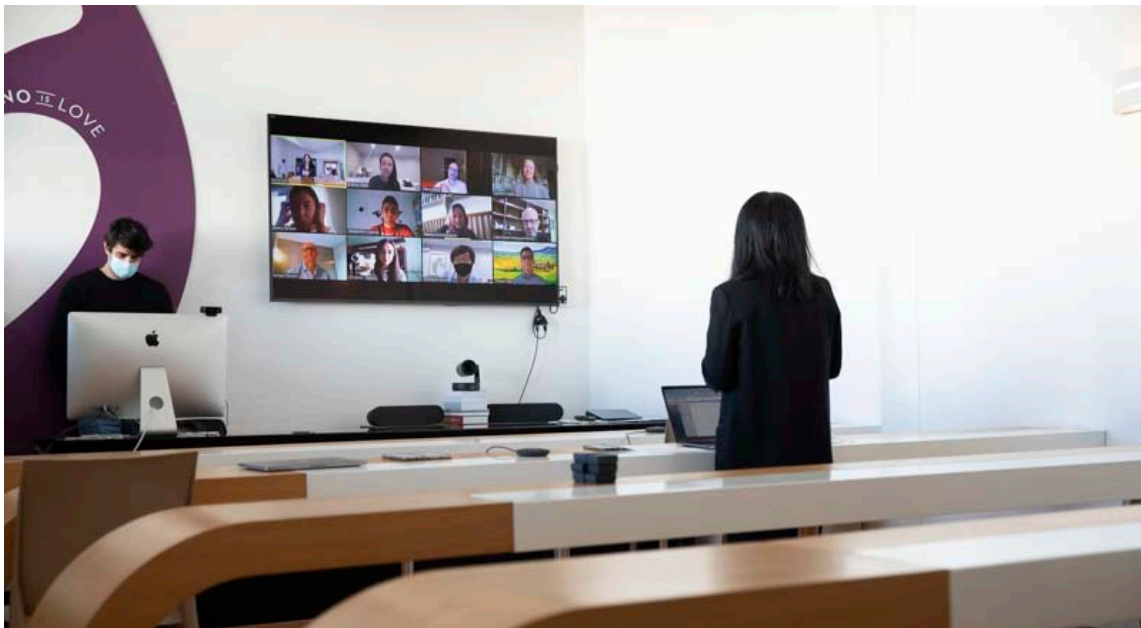
**In light of the Covid-19 pandemic Vitaly International Academy (VIA) were forced to quickly adapt their courses to a more agile format in order to continue delivering it's gold standard Italian wine education. Theory sessions were moved online to be followed live or on demand, and tasting sessions using 50ml samples allowed the faculty to continue their focus on the specially developed VIA Tasting Grid for assessing Italian wine. The culmination was a fully invigilated online exam, including the use of two blind wine samples.**

On March 10th of 2021 VIA students connected online with the team in Verona to finish their Italian Wine Ambassador certification with a remotely invigilated online exam consisting of a blind tasting of 2 wines, 2 short answer questions and 100 multiple choice questions. This exam represented the culmination of the course from 2020 that was reformatted to facilitate online theory and tasting sessions connecting students with VIA Faculty in real time, and also allowing them to review sessions on a newly developed online platform.

One of the great advantages of including tastings in this agile format, was that it opened up the sessions to existing Ambassadors and Italian Wine Educators. This allowed the opportunity for a refresher course for these participants to re-calibrate with the Faculty. Students and Faculty explored together 36 wines from all regions of Italy, and the tastings combined a mixture of guidance from the Faculty and opportunities for blind tasting practice with real-time feedback in order to properly prepare students for the upcoming exam.



12 students chose to take the online exam, which took place on March 10<sup>th</sup> at 9.00 CET. In the tasting packs that were sent to participants two blind samples were included which were tasted during the exam not only by the students, but by the Faculty, to ensure the samples were tasted at the same time in their development. The process was invigilated by the VIA team in Verona. An advantage of this approach was that each student had the direct support of their own exams officer meaning individual help with set up, correct positioning of cameras and login credentials. Five Italian Wine Ambassadors were certified in this round. They are: Alan Yik Lun Kwok, Valeria Tenison, Alessandro Pesarini, Marzia Gallo, Francesco Giardino.



The next course will be the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the VIA Italian Wine Ambassador course, which will be marked by a return to Verona for another flagship edition. This new flagship course will be the first to utilise an agile format with the online theory classes continuing, but students coming together in Verona to be led by Faculty members through guided tastings and Q&A sessions ahead of the exam. Recruitment for this edition has begun and more details can be found by emailing: [via@justdothework.it](mailto:via@justdothework.it) or visiting the VIA website: <https://vinalityinternational.com/wordpress/>.

**About: Vinality International Academy (VIA)** aims to be the gold standard of Italian wine education. It offers a complete educational path with standardized courses that will teach professionals and educators to master the diversity of Italian wine in a rigorous, organized manner. VIA's main objective is to foster a global network of highly qualified professionals such as Italian Wine Ambassadors and Italian Wine Experts: in turn, they will support and promote Italian wine throughout the world. VIA was founded by Stevie Kim, Managing Director of Vinality International. The new VIA ecosystem avails of the guidance of Italian trade associations Federdoc, Federvini, Vignaioli Indipendenti FIVI, and Unione Italiana Vini as members of the Institutional Advisory Board. Italian vine genetics scholar, Prof. Attilio Scienza, oversees VIA's scientific and educational direction as the Chief Scientist. VIA Faculty Sarah Heller MW and Henry Davar teach the flagship Italian Wine Ambassador course. The following trade associations in the Italian wine industry have also joined as VIA Supporters: Italia del Vino; Italian Signature Wines Academy; Le Famiglie del Vino, Wi-Fi Wine from Irpinia, Consorzio di Tutela Vini del Trentino; Consorzio di Tutela Sicilia DOC; Franciacorta; Consorzio di Tutela Vini d'Abruzzo. To date the VIA community comprises 220 certified Italian Wine Ambassadors and 15 Italian Wine Experts. Since its foundation in 2014, over 600 candidates from all over the world have taken VIA's courses.