

Press Release
For Immediate Release

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Vinality International Academy goes live in new Agile format

On Monday June 8, 2020, Vinality International Academy (VIA) launched the first module of the Italian Wine Ambassador certification course in its new Agile format. Adjusting to current circumstances, Vinality International redesigned the program, making it accessible to wine professionals wanting to invest in online education during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Italian wine does not stop and the same goes for Italian wine education: an agile format was designed for the 2020 edition of the Vinality International Academy certification course in Verona, it's annual flagship edition. Being the Academy's birthplace, Verona has always been the preferred location for students, and Vinality International wanted this edition to feel as special as previous ones. With a new updated format that combines live lectures and prerecorded warm-up sessions with onsite practical tastings, 60 international students participated in the best possible version of the Italian Wine Ambassador certification course.



The VIA Team during one of the online interactive sessions

At the beginning of 2020, due to the global health situation, Vinality International was faced with a new challenge: deliver the gold standard of Italian wine education, *online*. The VIA team quickly accepted the new

landscape and — with support from the VIA Advisory Board and Chief Scientist Attilio Scienza — came up with an agile solution for wine students, splitting the Ambassador course into two modules.

The first module wrapped up on June 12, 2020, where theoretical lectures were delivered online. Access to e-sessions were made available to candidates all over the world at any given time. Faculty members Sarah Heller MW and Henry Davar IWE led the interactive sessions, giving students real time support and guidance. In addition, students were able to pre-watch a series of warm-up sessions to focus their studies. On the new approach, VIA Faculty Member Henry Davar observed: “This month we made a pivot with our flagship Italian Wine Ambassador Certification Program. We premiered the agile edition of the course... what’s changed? Well, we continue our mission to offer the broadest, most in depth and most up to date Italian wine curriculum. We also made good in our commitment to expand our offerings, notable additions this month include new Masterclass sessions. When we premiered the course back in 2018 we started with 3 Masterclasses, today we’ve expanded to 7! These Masterclass sessions have been prerecorded so students have the flexibility to study on their own time and to review the materials as often as they wish. This has left us to expand our live-virtual sessions to dig deeper into the wine regions of Italy and their native grapes. Moreover, because Sarah and I alternate lectures it frees one of us up to address any questions that our students might have during the lesson without disturbing the flow of the lecture. This has made the course much more interactive as well.”

The second part of the course will take place in Verona, Italy on November 19th to the 24th, 2020. In the new Agile format, tasting and recognizing the key grape varieties and wines will continue to be fundamental components in the VIA assessment. Therefore, the practical module will encompass two different types of activities: the intensive tasting section that will run on November 19th and 20th, and the participation portion, from November 21st to the 24th which will include field trips and events such as OperaWine and the wine2wine wine business forum.

Students benefit from the Agile version because of the more flexible schedule, there is more time to prepare for the final exam and there are extended warm up sessions. Fiona Chin, Business Manager at De Majestic Vines Singapore and VIA student, commented on the format saying: “Vinitaly Academy Agile edition has made the impossible possible: making us feel part of the VIA Community during this difficult time. I was able to feel surrounded by fellow classmates, share my passion for Italian wine and feel close to the heart of Italy through my screen! I was completely blown away by the enthusiasm and knowledge shared by excellent Italian wine expert Henry Davar and Sarah Heller MW!”. Roddy Ropner, Japan based wine journalist, remarked: “The extra detail around soils and history is very helpful. And the ‘tag team’ format - especially answering questions without interrupting the flow of the lecture is great!”

Italian wine profits from the Agile format too: the Verona flagship edition of the Italian Wine Ambassador Course keeps the conversation about Italian wine culture alive and happening, even during these challenging times. Vinitaly International Academy is proud to have been able to adapt; to find a solution for those students who hoped to continue in this field. This has also been beneficial for the evolution of the course itself, VIA has managed to build on an already great course, this edition as well as those to come will provide the best possible Italian wine education for wine lovers all over the world.

About: Vinitaly 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 Vinitaly 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 215 certified Italian Wine Ambassadors and 15 Italian Wine Experts. Since its foundation in 2014, over 615 candidates from all over the world have taken VIA's courses.