



Italian Wine Academy

www.italianwineacademy.org

info@italianwineacademy.org



Press Release
For immediate release

Tuesday, September 22th, 2020

Italian Wine Academy expands to offer English-speaking blind tasting sessions.

As part of the Italian Wine Academy (IWA) mission to bring students the best value wine education possible, the school has now begun offering English speaking blind tasting events. These classes guide students through a tasting of three different wines, blind, using the Wine and Spirit Education Trust's (WSET) Systematic Approach to Tasting® (SAT). The idea behind the initiative is not only to give participants additional practice tasting wine before their exams, but also to help them gain English language skills that will enhance their confidence and employability.

In June 2020 the Italian Wine Academy decided that to supplement their courses they would offer blind tasting sessions for students, always in English. These evenings present the students with an extra opportunity to practice not only their tasting skills, but also their language skills. At the heart of WSET courses, there is the notion of building a common vocabulary designed to aid students in communicating about wine in an international context; IWA are using the English speaking blind tasting to take this a step further. Lead by native speaker and faculty member Dr Rebecca Lawrence, students are encouraged to use the session to learn new vocabulary and express their views on the wine, its characteristics, and qualities, using clear, confident, and most importantly, correct, English.



As Stevie Kim, founder of IWA comments, “we’re privileged to have a native speaker from the UK leading these courses. The stereotypes are true, Rebecca is very strict and inflexible, but this is exactly what you need when using the SAT, and when learning to communicate at a higher level.” She goes on to say, “I saw an opportunity to give our students and WSET community in Verona that extra added value that is so often missing: more time with wines, more language practice, and transferable skill-building for their futures.”



The sessions of 30 minutes involve tasting three wines blind, often with a carefully chosen theme. This means that students cannot form assumptions about the wine ahead of time, and forces them to think on the spot when describing wines, this enhances quick reactions in a second language (the majority of attendees are Italian native speakers or have English as a second or third language), a skill that is fundamental to working and presenting wines; a sommelier or sales representative may know their wine, but not what a client will ask about it! Dr Lawrence then guides the students through her tasting note, inviting discussion. Due to the broad range of levels in the room, Lawrence first uses her note to explain how a student from Level 2 should accurately describe the wine, and then moves through, all the way to giving guidance to diploma students. This means that participants can get the support they need no matter what stage of the WSET journey they happen to be on. Feedback from the students has been resoundingly positive, in a recent anonymous survey responses said that the sessions were “very useful for both the terminology and technical tasting skills”, and many attendees commented that the tastings were not only a change to improve their language skills but to meet others and expand their English speaking network in Verona.

Details about the English Speaking Blind Tasting are released on the Italian Wine Academy social media channels and for more information please email: info@italianwineacademy.org.

About: the Italian Wine Academy is a wine school based in Verona, and it is an Approved Programme Provider qualified to teach WSET wine courses. WSET - Wine & Spirit Education Trust is the world’s largest provider of education on wine and spirits. WSET qualifications are globally recognized as the international standard in wine and spirit knowledge for wine professionals and enthusiasts. Vinitaly International Academy hosts WSET at wine2digital, next to the headquarters of Veronafiere.