

Press Release
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Contact:
Vinitaly International Media Dept.
+39 045 8101447
media@vitalytour.com
www.vitalyinternational.com
Twitter: @VitalyTour
Join Italian Wine Community on LinkedIn

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Vitaly International Academy to establish physical Tasting Centres

VIA US and VIA Hong Kong 2021 will give prospective students the chance to meet and taste wines in total safety with the new Tasting Centres. These newly renovated centers will serve as tasting and exam spaces for students, as well as a gathering point for old and new members of the VIA community.

News is coming for the Vitaly International Academy (VIA), the gold standard of Italian wine education for foreign professionals. Created in 2014, the organization trains Italian Wine Ambassadors and Italian Wine Experts by delivering courses all over the world. This year, VIA had to adapt its activities to the new international situation caused by the COVID-19 emergency. During 2020, the course was revamped twice: back in June, with the introduction of the Agile Edition, and now, with the establishment of Tasting Centres starting from the next scheduled courses.



Hong Kong, where one of the first VIA Tasting Centres will be established



The Italian Wine Ambassador Certification Course is made up of two modules, the first theoretical and the second practical. The first module has students explore each and every Italian region: the wines produced here, its viticulture, the wine making methods, the culture and the regional dishes related to each territory. This section, that has been delivered online since the last edition of VIA Verona, is now on-demand and accessible through an educational platform.

The second module is dedicated to the hands-on part of the course, the Guided Tastings. During this section and under the guidance of VIA Faculty Sarah Heller MW and Henry Davar IWE, students get the chance to taste a variety of wines coming from some of the best Italian wineries. During the Tastings, future ambassadors learn how to promote Italian wine by personally experiencing it, getting to look, sniff and taste the wines they had previously studied during the theoretical lectures. The second makeover of VIA will allow these sessions to place safely and socially distanced thanks to the addition of Tasting Centres.

Starting from the 2021 USA courses, VIA is planning on establishing physical centers in each of the countries where courses are usually held to facilitate the Guided Tastings. In these so called "Tasting Centres", future Ambassadors will have the chance to meet and taste wines in total safety. The VIA Community will play a fundamental role in the setting up of these physical centers. The running and the managing of both Tasting Centres and Guided Tastings around the world will be up to a number of VIA Italian Wine Ambassadors operating locally. With this manouvre, VIA will shorten both the geographical distance between the delivery of the course and the students, as well as the one between the old and new members of the VIA Community. Final exams will also be held in the new Tasting Centres.

Since its inception, VIA has been supported by ITA - The Italian Trade Agency, which shares the organization's objectives and contributes to the realization of its courses. Together with the Faculty, the Community, Supporters, Advisory Board and the Scientific Director, ITA makes up the VIA Ecosystem: a body that operates the Academy from start to finish. Scientific Director Attilio Scienza commented on the introduction of the Tasting Centres:

"We know that the theory behind these grapes and wines is fundamental, but it does not mean anything if you do not have the opportunity to taste them, to experience them. These Tasting Centres and the Ambassadors who will host them are an asset to the new formatted programme".

The introduction of Tasting Centres will help VIA in pursuing its mission: providing the world of Italian wine with qualified ambassadors capable of mastering and promoting the culture, history and variety of Italian wine around the world. To get more information on the certification, contact the VIA staff at via@vinalitytour.com.

Next VIA Courses include:

VIA USA



Module 1: December 2020-January 2021

Module 2: 1-3 February 2021 in San Francisco, Houston and Las Vegas; 29-31 March 2021 in New York, Boston, Memphis, Princeton and Florida

VIA HONG KONG

Module 1: December 2020-January 2021

Module 2: 8-10 March 2021

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.