

Friday 7 July 2023

## **Vitaly International Academy returns to Hong Kong for the 6<sup>th</sup> time**

**Vitaly International Academy (VIA) announces the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of its rigorous Italian Wine Ambassador Certification Course, taking place in Hong Kong from 27-29 November 2023. VIA launched its first Hong Kong course in 2017.**



A shot from the first VIA course in Hong Kong, on 9-11 November 2017.

The Vitaly International Academy Italian Wine Ambassador Certification course will be back in Hong Kong from 27 to 29 November 2023. The course will be taught live and in person by VIA Faculty member Sarah Heller MW and applications opened this week for highly sought after seats. Students will use the VIA online learning platform to study at home, before attending 3 days of face-to-face instruction, tasting 38 Italian wines and taking a difficult 2.5-hour exam. Successful candidates will be certified as Italian Wine Ambassadors and join the ranks of the 340 VIA Ambassadors around the world.

Recent student Fiona Chin summed up her experience, saying *“Italian wine is complicated but the VIA community is so supportive. In my study group, we were all Asians, but we came from different parts of Asia. At VIA we discovered that we share a common Italian wine language and we wanted to come together to showcase Italian wine in Asia.”*



## Why Hong Kong?

VIA has been a leader in Italian wine education in Hong Kong since launching its first course there in 2017. The Italian wine market in Hong Kong continues to grow steadily and VIA is committed to bringing its unique brand of in-depth, science based, native grape focused education to Italian wine professionals and enthusiasts in the region. VIA Hong Kong 2023 represents the 6<sup>th</sup> course held in the city where 36 students have achieved the title Italian Wine Ambassador to date.

Alice Wong IWA, who will support the organization of the VIA Hong Kong course in November, reacted enthusiastically to the news of the new course: *“I am telling all my students to apply early, study hard, and make the most of this fantastic opportunity to study Italian wine in Hong Kong.”*

## Why be part of the VIA Community?

The VIA community comprises over 1200 candidates, of whom 340 have now achieved the title Italian Wine Ambassador and 16 of those are qualified as Italian Wine Experts. The VIA Community, composed of all students who have ever studied the program since its inception, welcomes wine professionals and wine enthusiasts from all over the world, forming a supportive and professional network that extends far beyond the limits of the classroom and includes lasting friendships, an open forum for sharing wine information, and career opportunities.

Members continue to participate throughout the year in events such as Academic Field Trips across Italy (the so-called “Gite scolastiche”), gathering in Verona to judge at 5StarWines and Wine Without Walls, attending OperaWine and wine2wine Business Forum, and continually increasing their knowledge and growing their connections across the wine sector.

Students who take the VIA course come from every aspect of the wine sector, including educators, journalists, importers, hospitality, retailers, and beyond. Faculty member Sarah Heller MW reflected on the impact of VIA: *“We invite students to join a profound and up to the minute conversation about Italian wines and what makes them so unique in the world, giving them new tools to communicate these wines and the solid foundation to become true Ambassadors, promoting Italian wines around the world.”*

Applications for the VIA Hong Kong – Italian Wine Ambassador Certification course are now open. To apply: <https://registration.justdothework.it/>. For further information, please send an e-mail at [via@justdothework.it](mailto:via@justdothework.it).

---

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 and organized manner. VIA’s main objective is to foster a global network of highly qualified professionals of Italian Wine Ambassadors and Italian Wine Experts who will support and promote Italian wine throughout the world. VIA was founded by Stevie Kim, Managing Director of Vinitaly International. The new VIA ecosystem is guided by the 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. To date, there are 340 Certified Italian Wine Ambassadors of whom 16 are also Italian Wine Experts.