



Mastery of beverage service requires a combination of theoretical knowledge, a trained palate, universal vocabulary, gracious carriage, respectful salesmanship, and sound service mechanics. The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas has established the following Service Standards as a basis to measure candidates against in CMS-A examinations. The mechanics listed within should be the foundation upon which to provide world-class hospitality in a restaurant situation. Reading the table's needs, understanding guest expectations, and utilizing sound sales strategies to provide a memorable dining experience remains the ultimate goal.

The CMS-A recognizes that its Service Standards are formal and not appropriate for many restaurants. While they should be able to perform all levels of service, candidates must display mastery of highly demanding and exacting formal dining room skills to succeed in CMS-A examinations.

### **Appearance:**

- Pressed and cleaned attire including comfortable, safe shoes
- Personal hygiene and grooming: hair combed, fingernails clean, no excessive perfumes or odors

### **Required Sommelier Tools**

- 2 wine bottle openers
- 2 pens
- 1 pad of paper
- 2 odorless lighters or matches

### **Mise-En-Place - Pre-Service Set Up**

- Wine lists are clean, correct, current, and easy to read
- Glassware is clean, spotless, and free of odor
- Glasses are polished with clean linen using a source of steam
- Serviettes or side towels are made of cotton or similar material that do not repel water
- Serviettes are folded and prepared before service
- Underliners are to be cleaned and polished before service
- Other service items such as service trays, ice buckets, stands, and decanters should be clean, polished, and ready for service
- Glass stemware is the only thing to touch the tablecloth – bottles, decanters, and corks are to be placed on an underliner
- Glassware and other service items should be brought to the table on a tray lined with a napkin
- Wine opening tools are organized before service
- Wines are stored in an organized fashion
- Wines are stored and served at the correct temperature. Various methods of ensuring proper service temperature exist including ice buckets and decanters



## Standard Service – These standards apply to all types of wine

- Beverage service is always performed on the right side of the guest
- The wine list is presented and assistance is offered
- The Sommelier is prepared to offer active and appropriate recommendations - sales skills are an essential element of proper service
- The sommelier is prepared to answer questions on vintages, style, character of wine, food compatibility, and quality
- The order is taken from the host's right and is repeated by the sommelier to confirm the order.
- For the purposes of these service standards the host is defined as the person who orders the wine



- The glassware is to be placed from the right of the guest on to the table in a consistent manner
- Placement starts with either the host or the person to the host's left and continues clockwise regardless of gender
- Space permitting, underliners for the bottle, cork and any decanters are placed to the right and/or in front of the host
- The sommelier presents the bottle and repeats the name and vintage to re-confirm the order
- The bottle is presented underlined by a serviette held in the sommelier's hand or on the forearm
- Serviettes are either held in hand or placed on the forearm during all service
- Serviettes are NEVER placed in pockets or on the shoulder
- The foil is cut at the second or lower lip to prevent the wine from dripping behind the foil and contaminating future pours

- The foil is placed in the sommelier's pocket and the top of the cork is wiped with a clean serviette
- The sommelier inserts a corkscrew or similar tool to remove the cork
- The cork is removed with minimal bottle movement and as quietly as possible
- The top of the bottle is wiped with a clean serviette and the cork is presented to the right of the host on an underliner
- The sommelier holds the bottle with the right hand, label facing the host and pours the host a 1 - 1.5 ounce taste
- The sommelier steps back and waits for the host's approval
- After approval, the sommelier serves the wine moving to the left (clockwise) of the host. If there is a guest of honor, serve that person first and then pour everyone in a clockwise pattern regardless of gender
- The bottle is wiped with a clean serviette after each pour to prevent drips
- The bottle is placed on an underliner or in an ice bucket within reach of the host - if an ice bucket is used, it should be placed so as not to hinder movement around the table
- The sommelier asks to remove the cork

### Glassware Placement

- Glassware choice is the appropriate size and shape for each wine
- Glassware is placed to the right of the guest and is keyed off the knife in a consistent manner
- Multiple glasses can be placed in a line, diagonal, diamond or cluster depending on the table space
- It is important that glass placement is consistent among all guests
- If a second bottle is ordered of the same wine, bring the host a fresh glass for the taste
  - o *The sommelier should be prepared to replace all the glasses if requested*
  - o *The tasting glass should be placed to the right of the first glass and then cleared after service of the new bottle*
- When possible, glasses for additional new wine orders are placed to the right of any previous glasses so that the sommelier is always pouring the glass to the right and not over the existing stemware

## Sparkling Wine Service

**1st Method** – Present the bottle in the air and open in the air

**2nd Method** – Present the bottle in the air and open in a bucket and stand

**3rd Method** – Present the bottle in the air and open in the air at a gueridon or side station

- Prepare glassware, ice bucket, stand, and two serviettes. Make sure the bottle is properly chilled
  - o *Fill bucket with water and ice so bottle can easily move in and out without overflowing the bucket*
  - o *Position bucket to the right and within reach of the host but also so as to not interfere with service or guest movement*
- Place appropriate glassware (tulips or flutes) properly for each guest from a lined tray
- Position the cork and bottle underliners to the host's right
- Place the ice bucket with stand to the host's right with a clean serviette on top (or in the bucket's handle if appropriate)
- Present the bottle to the host and re-confirm the order
- Cut the foil cleanly at the bottom of the cage with the blade of a corkscrew – using the tab is allowed but not preferred
- Remove the foil and place in the sommelier's pocket
- Place a clean serviette held firmly by either thumb or hand over the cage and cork
- Maintain control at all times – always point the bottle away from the guests
- Untwist the wire cage and loosen. **DO NOT** remove the cage - always keep the hand or thumb over the cage **and** cork
- Firm up your grip on the **cage and cork** and twist the bottle (not the cork) while holding at a 45-degree angle – this is done in the air or against the inside of the bucket but never against the body
- Keeping the bottle at the 45-degree angle, release the cork as quietly as possible until the initial rush of CO<sub>2</sub> dissipates
- Remove the cage from the cork and place in the sommelier's pocket
- Place the cork on the underliner to the host's right
- Wipe the lip of the bottle thoroughly before serving
- Hold the bottle with the right hand or by the bottom of the bottle (not the punt) as in still wine service
- Two fingers under the neck for support is acceptable
- Face the label toward the host and pour a 1-1.5 ounce taste, use serviette to prevent drips
- Wait for the host's approval
- Once the host approves the wine, pour for the guests in standard order (see *Standard Service* above)
- Fill glasses evenly (up to 3/4 full), one glass at a time with a maximum of two pours per glass
- After serving the host, place the bottle either in the ice bucket or on the table according to the host's preference
  - o *1st Method – place the bottle in the ice bucket to the host's right within their reach*
  - o *2nd Method – place the bottle on an underliner on the table within reach of the host*
- Ask the host for permission to remove the cork and bottle underliner if it is not utilized



## White Wine Service

**1st Method** – Open the bottle in hand and return to an ice bucket to the host's right or an underliner on the table to the host's right

**2nd Method** – Open the bottle in a bucket to the host's right and return to the bucket after serving

**3rd Method** – Open the bottle on an underliner on the guest's table or a side station, then place the bottle in the ice bucket or on an underliner on the table to the host's right

**4th Method** – Open the bottle on a gueridon next to or close by the table preferably to the host's right. After serving, place the wine in an ice bucket with stand next to the table to the host's right

- *Glasses are to be filled up to 1/2 full depending on the size of the stemware*

## Young Red Wine Service

1st Method – Open the bottle in hand, then place on an underliner on the table to the host's right

2nd Method – Open the bottle on an underliner on the guest's table or at a side station, then place the bottle on an underliner on the table to the host's right

3rd Method – Open the bottle on a gueridon next to or close by the table preferably to the host's right, then place the bottle on an underliner on the table to the host's right

- Glasses are to be filled up to 1/2 full depending on the size of the stemware

## Old Red Wine Service

- A gueridon or room service cart is used for decanting. All materials are to be placed on it before moving to the table side.  
Items needed are:

Clean decanter  
Matches or odorless lighter  
Three serviettes  
Three underliners for the cork, bottle, and decanter  
Candle (or small flashlight)  
Cork removal tools  
Decanting basket

- Place appropriate glassware for each guest from a lined tray
- Underliners for the cork, bottle, and decanter may be placed from the lined tray at this time or later from the gueridon
- Line the decanting basket with a clean serviette and bring it to the cellar
- Place the bottle in the decanting basket carefully so as not to disturb the sediment
- Carry the bottle carefully to the gueridon (before or after the gueridon is table-side depending on the situation)
- If bottle has not been stored label up, place it in the decanting basket as is
- Light the candle away from the table whenever possible
- Roll the gueridon to the table, preferably to the host's right
- Gently bring the bottle in the decanting basket from the gueridon and present to the host
  - o *If the bottle was not stored label up, present the bottle as is with explanation, decant and then present the label*
- Return the bottle to the gueridon and position it for decanting
- If the angle of the decanting basket is too low, prop it up with an underliner or serviette
- Remove the foil as cleanly possible at the second lip
  - o *Removal of the whole foil is acceptable but not preferred*
  - o *If the entire foil is to be removed, the guest should be informed*
- Carefully remove the cork with whatever tool is necessary to complete the task
- Wipe the lip of the bottle with a clean serviette a second time
- Carefully remove the bottle from the decanting basket and slowly pour into the decanter in one smooth movement
  - o *Hold the bottle a safe distance above the flame*
  - o *Use the light of the candle or flashlight to look for sediment at the shoulder of the bottle*
  - o *Never look away from the bottle while decanting*
  - o *Stop pouring once either fine or gross sediment reaches the shoulder of the bottle*
  - o *Avoid touching the bottle to the decanter*
- Wipe any drips on the bottle with a clean serviette
- Place the bottle and cork on underliners with the label of the bottle facing the host
- Pour the host a 1-1.5 ounce taste from the decanter - wait for approval and inquire if the wine can be served
- Serve guests in the standard manner (see *Standard Service* above)
- Wipe the decanter with a serviette after each pour to avoid drips
- After finishing, place the decanter on an underliner within reach of the host
- Ask the host if they would like the cork removed
- Ask the host if they would like the bottle removed or left on the table
- Remove any unused underliners



## Screwcap Closures

- Present the bottle in the standard manner (see *Standard Service* above)
- Remove the screw cap as quietly as possible and place in the sommelier's pocket
- The screw cap is not presented
- Wipe the lip of the bottle with a clean serviette
- Pour a taste for the host and continue with standard service

## Synthetic Corks

- Synthetic corks are to be treated in the same manner as natural corks in all service procedures

## Cordial, Port, and Brandy Service

- A gueridon or tray is used for the sales and service of after dinner drinks
- All materials are to be placed on it before moving to tableside

### Items needed are:

Measuring jiggers  
Lined service tray  
Beverage selections  
Appropriate selection of glassware  
Three serviettes

- Offer assistance in selection
- Make recommendations and answer questions on beverage styles, types, countries of origins, specific pairings with desserts, and cheeses as necessary

1st Method – On the gueridon, measure the proper amount with a jigger and pour into the appropriate glass

○ *Place the beverage on a lined tray and present to the guest from the right*

2nd Method – On a lined tray, bring the appropriate glassware, the bottle and clean serviette to the table

○ *Position the glassware to the right of the guest and then serve the proper amount of the beverage*

## Storage

- Wines must be stored correctly if they are to show their best
- All wines should be cellared at a constant temperature
- A range of 50-60°F / 10-15°C is ideal for long-term storage
- Store wines in an organized and accessible manner
- Store wines away from unpleasant odors
- Store wines away from insect and rodent pests that can damage labels, corks, and boxes
- Store cork finished table wines on their side
- Store spirits and fortified wines standing up
- Avoid storing wine: in a direct source of light, near source of vibration, overly damp conditions or upright for over a few weeks
- Avoid excessive heat or extreme temperature fluctuation

## Purchasing Older Wines

- Inquire as to the provenance-or history of ownership-of the wine
- Inquire as to how the bottles were stored
- Inquire when the bottle was shipped from the winery's cellar
- Inquire as to how many times the bottle has been sold or shipped
- Inspect the bottles for label damage, leakage, and ullage

## Suggested Serving Temperatures

These are guidelines. Wine styles and consumer preference will ultimately dictate actual service temperatures. For exam standards we have defined the following:

Mineral Water: 42°- 50°F // 5.5°- 10°C

Sweet White Wine: 42°- 50°F // 5.5°- 10°C

Dry Sherry and Dry Madeira: 48°- 55°F // 9°- 13°C

Champagne and Sparkling Wine: 42°- 50°F // 5.5°- 10°C

Light-Bodied White Wine: 42°- 50° F // 5.5°- 10°C

Dry Rose: 45°- 55°F // 7°- 13°C

Full-bodied White Wine: 50-59°F // 10°- 15°C

Light-Bodied Red Wine: 50-59°F // 10°- 15°C

Medium-Bodied Red Wine: 55°- 62°F // 13°- 17°C

Full-Bodied Red Wine: 58°- 65°F // 14.5°- 18°C

Tawny Port and Sweet Sherry: 55°- 62°F // 13°- 17°C

Sweet Madeira and Vintage Port: 55°- 62°F // 13°- 17°C

Draught and Bottled Domestic and Specialty Lager: 40°- 45°F // 4.5°- 7 °C (Lagers, Pilsner etc.)

Specialty Ale: 45°- 50°F // 7°- 10°C (Belgian Pale Ale, Wheat, APA, IPA, Cream, Abbey etc.)

English Style Ale: 50°- 55° F// 10°- 13°C

Cask-Conditioned Ales: Cellar Temp 50°-55°F // 10°- 13°C

Porter and Stout: 50°-55°F // 10°- 13°C

Belgian Dubbel: 50°- 55°F // 10°- 13°C

Lambic Ale: 45°-50°F // 7°- 10°C