



## **CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAM**

### **EXAM GUIDE**

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT & HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAM**

##### **PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and a road map for a candidate to understand what to expect and how to prepare for the Certified Sommelier Exam.

As this is a guide, success at the exam requires a combination of industry experience and a candidate creating their own study system to cover all necessary topics in depth.

##### **EXAM DESCRIPTION:**

The Certified Sommelier Examination is a one-day examination with three separate sections: Deductive Tasting, Theory/Business of the Sommelier, and a Hospitality and Service Practical.

##### **EXPECTED SKILL SET OF A CERTIFIED SOMMELIER:**

- Working theoretical knowledge of principal beverage alcohol
- Proficiency in tableside service, including:
  - Still and sparkling wine bottle and glass pour service
  - Food and wine pairing salesmanship
  - Cocktail, beer, apéritif, digestif, and fortified wine knowledge
  - Benchmark producer and vintage basics for iconic wine regions
- Deductive Tasting Method ability for core classic red and white varieties
- Basic financial program management
- Working theoretical knowledge of principal beverage alcohol

##### **POTENTIAL ROLES OF A CERTIFIED SOMMELIER:**

- Restaurant: Lead Server, Captain, Assistant Floor Sommelier, Bartender, Manager
- Other: Winery Tasting Room, Lead Retail Floor Salesperson, Distributor Representative, Hotel F&B Leadership



## PART 1

# STUDY RESOURCES

## PART 1: CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAM - RESOURCES FOR STUDY

The Resource Library of the CMS-A website has informational documents for each level of CMS-A education and examination.

It is recommended you download the following documents to help prepare for the Certified Sommelier Exam.

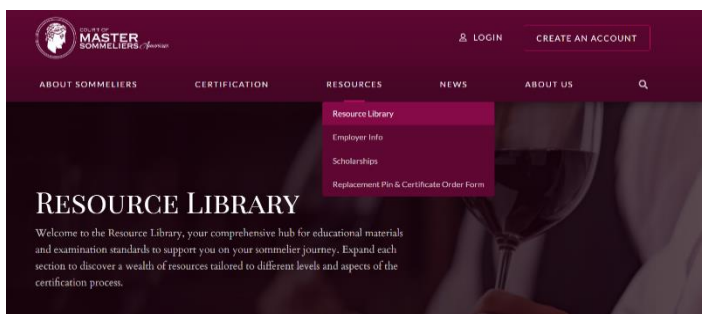
- **Certified Sommelier Exam Guide and What to Expect** (*this document*)
- **Certified Sommelier Exam Syllabus**
- **Certified Sommelier Exam Tasting Grid**
- **Certified Sommelier Level Examinable Wines**
- **Introductory Sommelier Course and Certified Sommelier Theory Exam Curriculum Guide**
- **CMS Hospitality and Service Standards**

### MS Office Hours

Thirty-minute virtual office hour sessions for mentoring with Master Sommeliers are available and open to any CMS-A student. Sign up via the Master Sommelier Mentoring Office Hours link in the Mentoring Resources section of the Resource Library on the CMS-A website.

### Certified Sommelier Exam Prep Sessions

Students can attend free Certified Sommelier Prep sessions offered virtually. Registration is through the Office Hours page. The program consists of five one-hour sessions spread over 10 weeks. These sessions provide a clear understanding of exam preparation and efficient study focus. Master Sommeliers and Advanced Sommeliers assist in small group breakout sessions as Course Aids. Large group sessions, which do not include breakouts, are recorded and available for on-demand viewing. Interactive breakout sessions require full student engagement. Sign up via the Master Sommelier Mentoring Office Hours link in the Mentoring Resources section of the Resource Library on the CMS-A website.



### Certified Level Mentor Prep Sessions



Specified Mondays at Noon CST

June 3 – Service Exam Prep (non mechanics)  
July 8 - What to expect, how to prepare  
July 29 - Blind Tasting  
Aug 5 - Service Mechanics  
Aug 19 - Business of the Somm  
Sept 9 - Service Exam Prep (non mechanics)

## CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAM - RESOURCES FOR STUDY

### ▪ Other CMS-A Resources

- The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas Introductory Sommelier Course Workbook
- The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas Service and Hospitality Videos

### ▪ Other recommended books and resources:

#### ○ GuildSomm.com

- A wealth of up-to-date information, videos, and podcasts. The website includes study guides and access to the greater sommelier community through forums and message boards to find like-minded study groups.

#### ○ Wine:

- **The Wine Bible, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition** By: Karen McNeil ISBN 1523510102
  - A comprehensive source for in-depth wine fundamentals, plus, history, food, and producer information.
- **The World Atlas of Wine, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition** By: Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson
  - ISBN: 1784726184
  - A reference for understanding the location, geography, and topography of the world's major wine regions.
- **The Oxford Companion to Wine** By: Julia Harding, Jancis Robinson, and Tara Q. Thomas ISBN 0198871317
  - A reference for all aspects of wine, from quick look-ups to diving into complete subjects one definition at a time.
- **Sotheby's Wine Encyclopedia** By: Tom Stevenson ISBN: 142622141X
  - A reference detailing region, sub-regions, and approved grape varieties of the major wine-producing countries of the world.

#### ○ Beer:

- **Tasting Beer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: An Insider's Guide to the World's Greatest Beverage** By: Randy Mosher ISBN 1612127770
  - Insight into the world of brewing beer and learning the major styles in easy-to-understand language.

#### ○ Sake:

- **Sake World** [www.sake-world.com](http://www.sake-world.com)
  - Website created by John Gauntner, one of the top sake experts in the world. Information on sake basics, downloadable guides, and a food pairing section.

#### ○ Hospitality and Service:

- **Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business** By: Danny Meyer ISBN 0060742763
  - From the famed New York City restaurateur, a behind-the-scenes look into the restaurant business and the understanding of hospitality from a leading authority.



## PART 2

# Digitization of the Certified Sommelier Exam

What you need to do before arriving to the Certified Sommelier Exam

## DIGITIZATION OF THE CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAM

The Theory and Deductive Tasting portions of the Certified Sommelier Examination will be taken on a digital application called **Exemplify**. The Hospitality & Service portion of the exam will remain a practical examination, mimicking a real restaurant environment.



This application will enable the CMS-A to digitally administer the Certified Examination while setting a path toward improvements in transparency and feedback at the Certified Sommelier level.

After candidates register for a Certified Sommelier Exam, they will receive detailed instructions on how to download Exemplify, create an account, and take mock (practice) exams.

### In order to participate in the Certified Sommelier Exam:

- Candidates are required to bring their own device for the Theory and Tasting portions. Windows-PC or Mac laptops and iPads are compatible with Exemplify; however, Chromebooks, Androids, iPhones, and Linux operating systems are **not**.
- A candidate's device must hold a minimum two-hour charge, as outlets may not be available in the exam room at the exam venue.
- CMS-A will provide a schedule approximately three weeks before the exam. This schedule will outline how to download the Exemplify application and the exam onto your compatible device. Candidates cannot access the CMS-A Exemplify materials prior to the communication.
- Candidates are responsible for downloading Exemplify and the exam within the outlined timeframe.
- Before the exam day, candidates must validate their device's compatibility with the Exemplify application. **Failure to set up an account will result in a candidate's inability to take the exam.**
- Please note that no refunds will be offered due to missed deadlines.

## MOCK EXAMS

Once registered, candidates will have the opportunity to take a mock (practice) exam for Tasting and Theory to become familiar with the Exemplify digital interface. Candidates can take the mock exams as many times as they like. Instructions for accessing the mock exams will be provided approximately three weeks before the actual exam date.



## **PART 3**

# **What to Expect Upon Arrival to the Certified Sommelier Exam**

## PART 3: What to Expect Upon Arrival to the Certified Sommelier Exam

### Sample Schedule

- **8:00 AM – 6:00 PM**
  - **7:45 AM:** Check-in
    - Photo ID is required.
    - Laptops or device will be checked for full charge and Exemplify is ready.
    - The venue Wi-Fi password will be given and device connection is checked.
  - **8:00 AM:**
    - Candidates will be let into the exam room after everyone has been checked in and the wines for the tasting exam have been poured.
    - A candidate may sit anywhere they would like in the room.
    - The Master Sommeliers proctoring the exam will introduce themselves and give basic instructions about the exam and the day's schedule.
  - **8:15-9:00 AM:**
    - Tasting Examination
  - **9:10-9:45 AM:**
    - Theory Examination
  - **10:30 AM-4:00 PM:**
    - Service Examination: times vary, candidates will receive specific times upon completion of the Theory portion
  - **12:00-1:00 PM:**
    - Lunch (not provided by the CMS-A)
  - **5:00-6:00 PM:**
    - Results Reception: time varies (examiners will announce on exam day)

### Supplies Needed For The Exam:

- **Fully charged device** for both the Theory and Tasting parts of the Exam
  - Device must hold a minimum two-hour charge as outlets may not be available in the exam room at the venue.
- **Pen or pencil**
- **Notepad** to take notes for the Hospitality and Service Exam. You cannot use electronic devices such as phones to take notes.
- **Corkscrew** (bring two in case one breaks).
- **Calculator:** A calculator is available on the Exemplify exam platform for your use. A candidate can bring their own calculator if there are no communication capabilities.
- **\*Any other supplies needed, such as underliners, serviettes, and other beverage service items for the Hospitality and Service Exam, will be provided.**



## **PART 4**

# **What to Expect at the Tasting Examination**

## PART 4: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE TASTING EXAMINATION

### ▪ Tasting Examination Details

- Candidates will be provided four (4) wines: two (2) whites and two (2) reds to identify in 45 minutes utilizing the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas Deductive Tasting Method.
- Candidates will be asked not to touch the wine glasses in front of them until they are given permission to do so.
- Candidates will be provided a blank, paper copy of the Certified Sommelier Exam Tasting Grid for each wine; however, the exam must be completed on Exemplify on the candidate's device.
- **There is a suggested system for tasting each wine:**
  - Enter on the paper sensory evaluation grid provided to you (color, fruit, non-fruit, and structure)
  - Transfer sensory evaluation from paper to Exemplify
  - Enter your Conclusion and Sales Pitch into Exemplify
- **Candidates are responsible for tracking their own time with the clock provided on Exemplify.**
  - There is a timer at the top of each exam screen on Exemplify.
    - An approximate "Half Time" and a "5 minutes" notification will be given. These time markers may not match EXACTLY with the clock on your screen. These are more of a time-check guide.
    - There is NO extra time to input. At 45 minutes, the exam will automatically be submitted.
    - Candidates must budget their time between recording the sensory evaluation on paper and inputting the information into Exemplify.
    - **The exam must be completed on Exemplify to receive credit for your answers.**
- The wine you have in your glass is what you have for the exam. There will be NO "topping up" of exam wine.
- If you have any questions or are having problems with your device, please raise your hand and a proctor will assist you.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TASTING EXAMINATION

The wines on which Certified Sommelier Exam candidates will be tested are listed below and are located in PDF form on the CMS-A website in the Resource Library.

CMS-A CERTIFIED SOMMELIER TASTING EXAM		
GRAPE VARIETIES AND GROWING REGIONS		
WHITE WINES		
Grape Variety	Country and Region	
ALBARIÑO	<b>Spain</b> Rías Baixas <i>*No Oak</i>	
CHARDONNAY	<b>France - Burgundy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chablis <i>*No Oak</i></li> <li>Côte de Beaune <i>*Oak</i></li> <li>Mâconnais</li> </ul> <i>* Village or Premier Cru Only</i>	<b>United States – California</b> Napa Valley / Sonoma County / Central Coast <i>*New Oak</i>
CHENIN BLANC	<b>France - Loire Valley</b> Vouvray <i>*Demi-Sec / Off-Dry Only</i>	
GEWURZTRAMINER	<b>France</b> Alsace	
PINOT GRIGIO	<b>Italy</b> Friuli / Trentino-Alto Adige	
RIESLING	<b>Germany</b> Mosel / Rheingau <i>*Kabinett or Spätlese / Off-Dry Only</i>	
SAUVIGNON BLANC	<b>France - Loire Valley</b> Sancerre / Pouilly-Fumé	<b>New Zealand</b> Marlborough
TORRONTÉS	<b>Argentina</b> Salta / Mendoza	

**CMS-A CERTIFIED SOMMELIER TASTING EXAM**  
**GRAPE VARIETIES AND GROWING REGIONS**

**RED WINES**

<b>Grape Variety</b>	<b>Country and Region</b>	
<b>CABERNET FRANC</b>	<b>France - Loire Valley</b> Chinon / Bourgueil	
<b>CABERNET SAUVIGNON</b>	<b>France - Bordeaux</b> Haut-Médoc / Graves	<b>United States - California</b> Napa Valley / Sonoma County / Paso Robles
<b>GAMAY</b>	<b>France - Burgundy</b> Beaujolais <i>*with carbonic maceration</i>	
<b>GRENACHE</b>	<b>France - Rhône Valley</b> Châteauneuf-du-Pape / Gigondas	
<b>MALBEC</b>	<b>Argentina</b> Mendoza	
<b>MERLOT</b>	<b>France - Bordeaux</b> Pomerol / Saint-Émilion	<b>United States - California</b> Napa Valley / Sonoma County
<b>NEBBIOLO</b>	<b>Italy - Piedmont</b> Barolo / Barbaresco	

CMS-A CERTIFIED SOMMELIER TASTING EXAM GRAPE VARIETIES AND GROWING REGIONS		
RED WINES (Continued)		
Grape Variety	Country and Region	
PINOT NOIR	<b>France</b> Côte d'Or <i>*Village or Premier Cru Only</i>	<b>United States - California</b> Napa Valley (Carneros) / Sonoma County / Central Coast  <b>United States - Oregon</b> Willamette Valley
SANGIOVESE	<b>Italy - Tuscany</b> Brunello di Montalcino / Chianti Classico	
SYRAH	<b>France – Northern Rhône Valley</b> Côte-Rôtie / Saint-Joseph / Crozes-Hermitage	<b>Australia</b> South Australia / Western Australia / Victoria
TEMPRANILLO	<b>Spain</b> Rioja <i>*Reserva or Gran Reserva</i>	
ZINFANDEL	<b>United States - California</b> Napa Valley / Sonoma County	

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TASTING EXAMINATION

- **Resources:**

- Please see the Resource Library at [www.mastersommeliers.org](http://www.mastersommeliers.org) under the Certified Sommelier Exam section for printable grids and practice theory questions.

[illegible][illegible]

- **General Preparation:**

- One of the most important things to do to prepare is to taste examples of all Certified Sommelier Examinable Grape Varieties and Regions and practice writing out grids for each. Practice tasting and writing exactly how you would describe the wine.
- An important aspect of taking any exam is knowing how to properly take the exam to maximize the points you earn for your success. Aside from practicing tasting wines, another important thing to do is to practice properly filling out the entire grid.
  - Look at all the lines on the grid and see where questions exist. There are lines to answer yes or no, lines to describe further, and lines to answer why.
  - There are no deductions on this exam, only points accumulated, and there are points for EVERY SINGLE line on the grid.
  - For the “yes” or “no” descriptors, you must check either “yes” or “no” to get points. We cannot assume you mean “no” when a descriptor is not apparent. You must check the “no” box.
  - The possible grape variety answers are blank on the practice grids under Conclusion and Primary Grape. Six grape varieties will be listed for you to choose from in the actual exam. This list will change depending on the exam.
  - Candidates are responsible for naming the country of origin.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TASTING EXAMINATION

### ▪ Practice!

- Practice writing descriptions for different sections of the grid such as:
  - **Why is it the grape variety you chose?**
    - As an example, if you think the wine is Riesling, what is it about the wine (how you described it in the grid above) that leads you to believe it is Riesling?
    - We are looking for specific fruit, non-fruit, and structure-related reasons.
  - **Why is it from a particular world of origin?**
    - Look at the fruit, fruit condition, earth, and mineral.
  - **Why is it from a particular climate?**
    - Look at the fruit condition and structure.

### ▪ Compare:

- **Compare wines to see how they are similar and how they are different:**
  - Pay particular attention to not only flavors and aromas but also the condition of fruit, and the wine's structure, such as sweetness, tannin, acidity, and alcohol.
    - Examples for comparison:
      - White Wines:
        - Vouvray and German Riesling
        - Chablis and Sancerre
        - California Chardonnay, Chablis, and Oaked Côte d' Or Chardonnay
        - Pinot Grigio and Chablis
        - Gewurztraminer and Torrontés
        - New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc and Sancerre
        - Albariño and Pinot Grigio
    - Examples for comparison
      - Red Wines:
        - Pinot Noir from Burgundy and Pinot Noir from the US
        - Pinot Noir from Burgundy and Nebbiolo
        - Sangiovese and Nebbiolo
        - Sangiovese and Rioja
        - French Grenache and Rioja
        - Cabernet Sauvignon from Bordeaux and Cabernet Sauvignon from California
        - Shiraz from Australia, Malbec from Argentina, and Zinfandel from California

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TASTING EXAMINATION

- **Test Yourself:**
  - Test yourself with blind wines using the grids.
  - Practice tests on Exemplify.
- **Watch your timing:**
  - The 45 minutes allows for approximately 11 minutes per wine.
  - You should be done with the white wines by the halfway point.
  - Test your timing using a clock or stopwatch for real-time exam pressure.
  - Leave yourself a few moments to review your answers to ensure you answered every question.
- **Pitfalls:**
  - Often, candidates do not pass the exam even when they get the wines correct because they do not fill in all the boxes and lose too many points.
    - See below for a sample of a complete grid.
      - REMEMBER! Fill out EVERY line, even if it is a “No.” Each line has a point allocated.
      - Only write descriptors or a reason where prompted. Keep answers short.
      - Answer “YES” only if **VERY** APPARENT and **KEY** to a wine’s identity; otherwise, answer NO.
        - An example would be a Gewurztraminer that may have some Apple/Pear, but Tropical is both VERY APPARENT and KEY. So, “NO” for “Apple/Pear” without any descriptors and “YES” for “Tropical” with descriptors such as “Pineapple, Mango, Banana.”
      - Choose one answer per line for every line but for the “Fruit Condition,” you may choose up to two.
      - **NAME A COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.**
      - Keep your answers clear and concise.
- **Review and Trust Yourself!**
  - **Take the time to review before choosing your grape variety.**
  - Does the wine you described match your conclusion and vice versa?
  - Review your notes and make sure they add up and make sense to your conclusion.
  - For instance, if you called the wine off-dry and chose Sauvignon Blanc, it might be worth looking back to where things went off-track.
    - Look at structure and trust structure; it’s a significant indicator of certain grape varieties.
    - **Use your theory knowledge about how grapes are grown and how wines are made to make informed choices.**

## EXAMPLE OF A FILLED-OUT TASTING GRID


**\*\*Note this is a sample only. The list of potential grape varieties may change depending on exam.\*\***

<b>CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION</b> <b>Deductive Tasting: White Wine ONE</b>									
<b>CANDIDATE NAME</b> <span style="color: red;">MARGAUX SMITH</span>									
<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Every line on this test paper has a question that must be answered. In each section, select or fill the blank with the best answer. <b>DO NOT leave any blank lines.</b>									
<b>COLOR</b>									<b>PTS</b>
<b>The primary color is:</b> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Straw <input checked="" type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Yellow <input checked="" type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Gold <input type="radio"/></span>									
<b>FRUIT</b>									
<b>Apple / Pear</b> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> <i>If "yes" describe</i> <span style="color: red;">Yellow Apple, Green Pear</span>									
<b>Citrus</b> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> <i>If "yes" describe</i> <span style="color: red;">Lemon</span>									
<b>Stone Fruit</b> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> <i>If "yes" describe</i>									
<b>Tropical</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> <i>If "yes" describe</i>									
<b>Fruit Condition: Nose</b> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Tar <input checked="" type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Ripe <input checked="" type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Overripe <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Baked <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Dried <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Jammy <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Candied <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Bruised <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Select up to two fruit condition descriptors for the Nose</span>									
<b>Fruit Condition: Palate</b> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Tar <input checked="" type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Ripe <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Overripe <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Baked <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Dried <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Jammy <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Candied <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Bruised <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Select up to two fruit condition descriptors for the Palate</span>									
<b>NON-FRUIT</b>									
<b>Flowers</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									<b>Non-fruit descriptors combine NOSE and PALATE.</b>  <b>Select "YES" only if it is an important character of the wine.</b>  <b>Select "NO" if it is NOT an important character of the wine.</b>  <b>Select ONE answer for each line.</b>  <b>Do not leave any lines blank.</b>
<b>Fresh Herbs, Hay</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									
<b>Green Bell Pepper, Grass, Jalapeño, Asparagus</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									
<b>Grape Variety Spice: Allspice, Pepper, Cardamom</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									
<b>Noble Rot/Botrytis: Ginger, Honey, Saffron, Wax</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									
<b>Oxidation: Nuts, Dried Fruit</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									
<b>Lees: Dough, Baked Bread, Yeast, Beer, Cheese Rind</b> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>									
<b>Malolactic Fermentation: Butter, Cream, Yogurt</b> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>									
<b>Petrol, Gasoline, Rubber</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									
<b>Earth: Wet Leaves, Mushroom, Compost</b> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>									
<b>Mineral: Mineral, Wet Rock, Sulfur</b> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>									
<b>New Oak: Vanilla, Toast, Smoke, Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Clove</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									
<b>STRUCTURE</b>									
<b>Phenolic Bitterness</b> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>									
<b>Sweetness</b> Dry <input checked="" type="radio"/> Off-Dry <input type="radio"/>									
<b>Acidity</b> Low to Medium - <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Medium <input checked="" type="radio"/> Medium + <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/>									
<b>Alcohol</b> Low to Medium - <input type="radio"/> Medium <input checked="" type="radio"/> Medium + <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/>									
<b>CONCLUSION</b>									
<b>Primary Grape Variety</b> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Grape Variety 1 <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Grape Variety 2 <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Grape Variety 3 <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Grape Variety 4 <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Grape Variety 5 <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Grape Variety 6 <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Explain</span> <span style="color: red;">Apple, pear, lees,</span>									
<b>Select from Examable Grape Varieties</b>									
<b>Climate</b> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Cool <input checked="" type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Moderate <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Warm <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Why</span> <span style="color: red;">mineral, creamy-</span>									
<b>Country of Origin</b> <span style="color: red;">FRANCE</span>									
<b>Age Range</b> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">1-2 Year <input checked="" type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">3-4 Years <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">5+ Years <input type="radio"/></span> <span style="margin-left: 20px;">Explain</span> <span style="color: red;">M+ acidity, tart fruit</span>									
<b>Sell this wine to a guest in two sentences or less.</b> <span style="color: red;">A delicious crisp and refreshing wine perfect with oysters, fresh seafood, and sushi!</span>									
									<b>Total Points:</b>

CMS-A-12/04  
Formatted for letter size (8.5 in x 11 in) paper

## EXAMPLE OF A FILLED-OUT TASTING GRID

\*\*\*Note this is a sample only. The list of potential grape varieties may change depending on exam.\*\*\*

 <b>COURT OF MASTER SOMMELIERS Americas</b>		<b>CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION</b> <b>Deductive Tasting: Red Wine ONE</b>		
<b>CANDIDATE NAME:</b> <span style="color: red;">MARGAUX SMITH</span>				
<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Every line on this test paper has a question that must be answered. In each section, select or fill the blank with the best answer. <b>DO NOT</b> leave any blank lines.				
<b>COLOR</b>			<b>PTS</b>	
The primary color is:	Purple <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ruby <input type="checkbox"/>	Garnet <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>FRUIT</b>				
Red	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If "Yes" describe:	
Black	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	If "Yes" describe: <span style="color: red;">Blackberry, Black Cherry</span>	
Blue	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	If "Yes" describe: <span style="color: red;">Blueberry</span>	
Fruit Condition: Nose	Tart <input type="checkbox"/>	Ripe <input type="checkbox"/>	Overripe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jammy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Baked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dried <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bruised <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Fruit Condition: Palate	Tart <input type="checkbox"/>	Ripe <input type="checkbox"/>	Overripe <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jammy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Baked <input type="checkbox"/> Dried <input type="checkbox"/> Bruised <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>NON-FRUIT</b>				
Flowers	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-fruit descriptors combine NOSE and PALATE.  Select "YES" only if it is an important character of the wine.  Select "NO" if it is NOT an important character of the wine.  Select ONE answer for each line.  Do not leave any lines blank.	
Fresh Herbs, Tomato Leaf	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Dried Herbs	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Green Bell Pepper, Grass, Jalapeño, Asparagus	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mint, Eucalyptus	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Black Pepper/corn	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Coffee, Cocoa, Mocha	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Meat, Blood, Leather	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Balsamic, Tar	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Carbonic Maceration	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Earth: Forest Floor, Wet Leaves, Mushrooms, Compost	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Mineral: Minerals, Wet Rock, Sulfur	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
New Oak: Vanilla, Smoke, Toast, Coconut, Dill	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>STRUCTURE</b>				
Tannin	Low to Medium - <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Medium + <input type="checkbox"/>	High <input type="checkbox"/>
Acidity	Low to Medium - <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium + <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	High <input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol	Low to Medium - <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium + <input type="checkbox"/>	High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>				
Primary Grape Variety	Grape Variety 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Grape Variety 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Grape Variety 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Explain Why: <span style="color: red;">Black fruit, black pepper eucalyptus</span>
Select from Examable Grape Varieties	Grape Variety 4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Grape Variety 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Grape Variety 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Climate	Cool <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate <input type="checkbox"/>	Warm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Country of Origin	<span style="color: red;">AUSTRALIA</span>			Explain Why:
Age Range	1-3 Years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4-6 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 7+ Years <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>Sell this wine to a guest in two sentences or less.</b> <span style="color: red;">This is a delicious, plush, rich, fruit-intense wine with flavors of black cherry and black pepper.</span> <span style="color: red;">This wine is an excellent pairing with grilled beef or rack of lamb.</span>				
			<b>Total Points:</b>	

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## PART 5

### What to Expect for the Theory Examination

## PART 5: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE THEORY EXAMINATION

### ▪ General

- Theory Examination: The theory examination tests a candidate's knowledge and understanding of the world of wine, world beverage, and the sommelier trade.
- The 45-question test consists of multiple-choice, short-answer, simple math, and matching questions taken entirely on **Exemplify**.
- Candidates must complete the 45-question Theory examination within **38** minutes.
- Candidates are responsible for tracking their own time using the clock provided on Exemplify. We highly recommend candidates practice the mock (practice) Theory exam until they feel comfortable.
- All exams are written ahead of time by the Examination Director and the Exam Committee. They are then distributed to adjudicating Master Sommeliers coordinating exams in specific cities. These Master Sommeliers will not write or decide exam questions on exam day.
- There are no deductions. Points are garnered from correct answers only. Do not leave any questions blank even if you are unsure of the answer. Think about what you do know about the subject and how it might apply to the question. You might be right!
- After completing the Theory Examination, you will be given your Hospitality and Service Practical Exam time.

## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE THEORY EXAMINATION

### ▪ Resources

- Utilize the Introductory Sommelier Course and Exam and Certified Sommelier Exam Curriculum Guide to understand the information you need to know for each topic and how the two levels compare.
- See resources listed earlier in this document for book and website recommendations.
- Review the practice questions below.
- Find study groups and utilize resources such as quizzes and games on **GuildSomm.com**.

### ▪ Types of questions to expect:

- See examples of question types below
  - Multiple-choice
  - Short-answer
  - Simple business of the sommelier math questions
  - Matching
  - Map identification
  - Label recognition
  - Style recognition
  - Wine list mistake correction

## PART 5: Examples of Theory Questions as compared to Introductory Theory Questions

Introductory Sommelier Exam Question Example	Certified Sommelier Theory Question Example
<b>TOPIC: CHAMPAGNE</b>	
<p><b>Liqueur de Tirage is used in the production of which beverage?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Champagne</li> <li>b. Bordeaux</li> <li>c. Vin Doux Naturel</li> <li>d. Vermouth</li> </ul>	<p><b>What ingredients are found in the Liqueur de Tirage?</b></p>

Introductory Sommelier Exam Question Example	Certified Sommelier Theory Question Example
<b>TOPIC: ITALY</b>	
<p><b>The Chianti Classico DOCG is located in ____.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Veneto</li> <li>b. Piedmont</li> <li>c. Tuscany</li> <li>d. Sicily</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rùfina, Colli Senesi, and Fiorenti are all subzones of _____ DOCG.</b></p>

Introductory Sommelier Exam Question Example	Certified Sommelier Theory Question Example
<b>TOPIC SPIRITS</b>	
<p><b>Which of the following spirits must be aged for at least 2 years in French oak barrels?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Rye</li> <li>b. Bourbon</li> <li>c. Dark Rum</li> <li>d. Cognac</li> </ul>	<p><b>Organize the following styles of Cognac from <i>least</i> to <i>most</i> amount of barrel aging utilized for production:</b></p> <p><b><i>XO, Three Star, VSOP.</i></b>  <i>(Least Amount of Barrel Aging)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p><i>(Most Amount of Barrel Aging)</i></p>

## PART 5: Examples of Matching Questions:

1. Match the following regions with their most prominent grape variety: (Choose ONE matching grape variety per region.)

Valpolicella	Grüner Veltliner
	Furmint
Bandol	Fiano
	Grenache
Tokaj	Corvina
	Mourvèdre
Gigondas	Blafränkisch

2. Match the following wines with their predominant wine styles: (Choose ONE matching style per wine.)

Barsac	Still, dry, white
	Still, dry, red
Ribera del Duero	Still, off-dry, white
	Sparkling, dry, white
Malmsey Madeira	Sparkling, dry, rosé
	Botrytis affected, sweet, white
Vermouth di Torino Rosso IGT	Fortified, sweet, white
	Aromatized, white
Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco D.O.C.G.	Aromatized, red

3. Match the following appellations with their country of origin: (Choose ONE matching country per appellation.)

Walker Bay	Austria
	Germany
Santorini	Spain
	Greece
McLaren Vale	Argentina
	Italy
Rheinhessen	United States
	Australia
Salta	New Zealand
	South Africa
Ribbon Ridge	Portugal

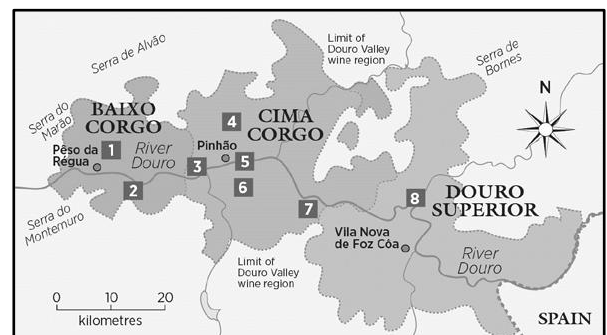
#### PART 4: Examples of Map and Label Questions

Which of the following factors most influences the style of this wine?

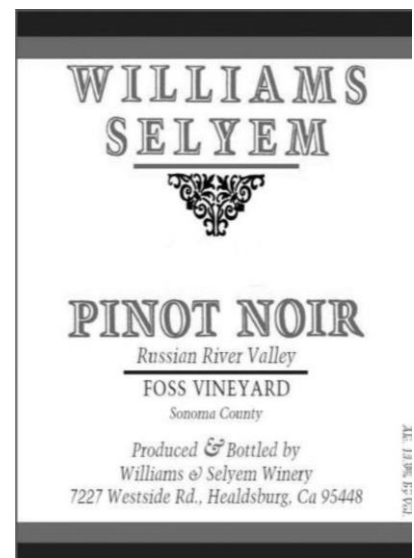
- a. Undergoes a secondary fermentation in bottle
- b. Grapes were infected by *Botrytis cinerea* in the vineyard
- c. Fermentation is arrested by the addition of neutral grape spirit
- d. Grapes are dried in the winery for at least 2 months before pressing



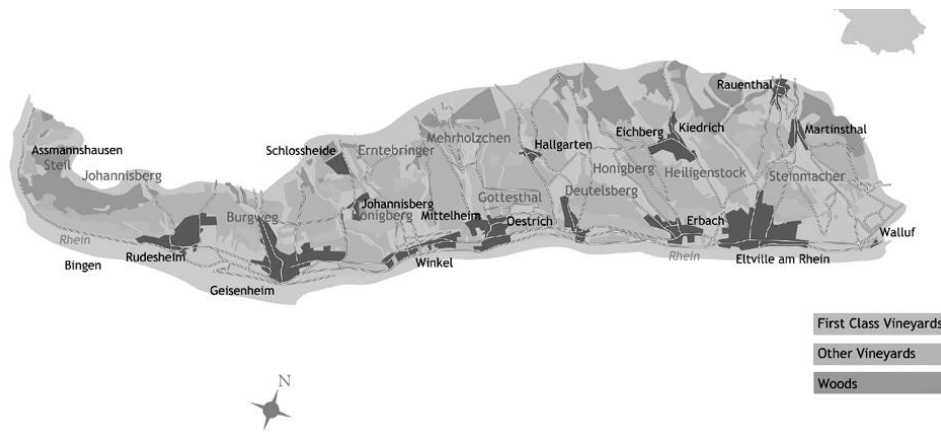
What fortified wine region is indicated in the map below? Ex: Madeira, Banyuls...



What percentage of the grapes used to make this wine must come from Foss Vineyard?



Which anbaubetriebe does this map depict?



## PART 5: What to Expect - Business of the Sommelier Questions on the Theory Exam

- Knowing how to run a profitable wine program is an integral part of being a successful Sommelier. The Business of the Sommelier is one of the key pillars of CMS-A education and examination. At the Certified Sommelier Exam, the Business of the Sommelier is tested as part of the Theory Examination.
- A Certified Sommelier is expected to know basic financial wine program management and costing competencies. This includes a working knowledge of the following:
  - **Costing situations and analysis**
    - Understanding cost in general.
      - If your wine cost percentage is 30%, what does this mean? It means that for every \$100 the business earns in revenue, it costs \$30 in product.
    - Learn common bottle or container sizes in ounces/liters/milliliters.
      - Examples:
        - Half bottle: 12.7 ounces / 375 milliliters
        - Standard bottle: 25.4 ounces / 750 milliliters
        - Magnum: 50.7 ounces / 1500 milliliters / 1.5 liter
    - Understand how pour size in ounces or milliliters relates to the number of servings per bottle or per container.
  - **COGS (Cost of Goods Sold) and Cost Percentage**
    - Cost of Goods Sold Equation:  $(BI + P) - EI$ 
      - **BI** = Beginning Inventory *or* last month's inventory *in dollars or local currency*
      - **P** = Purchases *in dollars or local currency*
      - **EI** = Ending Inventory *or* this month's inventory *in dollars or local currency*
    - Cost Percentage:
      - $(BI + P) - EI \div \text{wine sales}$  *in dollars or local currency*
  - **Inventory, purchasing, sales, and margin analysis, systems, and situations.**
  - **Menu Corrections:** awareness of inconsistencies or mistakes on a beverage list including, but not limited to:
    - Misspellings on a beverage list, such as producer names or regions
    - Miscategorized or mismatched beverages on a list
    - Incorrect pricing
- **Calculator:** A calculator is available on the Exemplify exam platform for your use. If there are no communication capabilities, a candidate can bring their own calculator
- Practice using the questions below and be sure to read each question carefully.

## Examples of Business of the Sommelier Questions at the Certified Sommelier Examination

### Example 1: Costing

The cost of a bottle of wine to your restaurant is \$30. You get 5 pours per bottle and have a 33% pour cost. How much do you have to charge for a glass of that wine? Round to the nearest dollar.

### Example 2: COGS, Margins, and Inventory Situations

Which of the following scenarios appears to lower a wine program's COGS?

- a. Your receiving department mistakenly entered one invoice into your inventory system twice.
- b. The point-of-sale system sale price charged \$500 less than the cost of a bottle of wine.
- c. During inventory, you found three cases of wine that haven't been counted for 2 years.
- d. A server charged a private party for 12 bottles when 22 were poured.

Which of the following scenarios would cause your beverage program margin to decrease?

- a. Your comptroller didn't enter three invoices into your inventory system.
- b. You sold a bottle of wine which was missing three zeroes in your point-of-sale system's price.
- c. During inventory, you found three cases of wine which haven't been counted for 2 years.
- d. The Musigny poured for a private party was invoiced by your distributor as Bourgogne AOC.

### Example 3: Sales, Purchasing & Costing Scenarios

Your restaurant is featuring a Pinot Grigio by the keg. The keg holds the equivalent of 26 750 ml bottles. 750 ml bottles hold 25 ounces.

- ~ There are 500 covers
- ~ 3 out of every 5 customers order one glass
- ~ Glass pour size is 4 ounces or 118 milliliters
- ~ There is 1 ounce or 29.5 milliliters of "over-pour/spillage" factored in per 12 glasses
  - a. How many guests order a glass of this wine?
  - b. How many total ounces will you need to pour throughout the evening?
  - c. How many kegs must you purchase to meet demand for the evening?



## **PART 6**

# **What to Expect at the Hospitality and Service Examination**

## **PART 6: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION**

### **General:**

- The practical service examination approximates a real restaurant environment. Candidates are expected to demonstrate salesmanship and knowledge while performing various tableside tasks. Candidates may be asked to open still or sparkling wines, recommend cocktails, spirits, or beer, discuss food and wine pairing options, and generally show ability as a restaurant sommelier.
- All exams are written ahead of time by the Examination Director and the Exam Committee. The exams are distributed to adjudicating Master Sommeliers coordinating exams in specific cities. These Master Sommeliers follow a script with several variations, but they will not decide questions on exam day.
- The Hospitality and Service Practical Examination approximates the restaurant environment. Candidates are expected to demonstrate salesmanship and knowledge while performing various tableside tasks.
- After finishing the Hospitality and Service Practical Exam, candidates are free until the Results Reception, which will be held at approximately 5:30 pm.

## **HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION**

### **How the Exam Works**

- Please arrive at your Hospitality and Service Practical exam 10 to 15 minutes before your assigned time.
- When you arrive, you will be greeted and checked in by a local Advanced Sommelier assisting with the exam. They will be performing the duties of a Maître d' for the Practical Exam.
- A group of candidates will be taking the exam at the same time.
- The Maître d' will check that you have the required exam tools, such as a wine opener, pen, and notepad. Note: you are not allowed to use electronic devices to take notes. All other tools needed will be provided.
- The Maître d' will escort you into the exam room and give instructions related to the exam scenario. Exam conditions are in effect as soon as the Maître d' begins speaking. Their instructions are part of the test. You are welcome to write them down on your notepad.
- The Maître d' will assign you to a table and Master Sommelier.
- They will let you know when to approach the table and when the exam begins. They are there to answer questions and help you with anything you may need for that portion of the exam. Remember, everything you need for the exam will be provided for you.
- The Service and Hospitality Exam is approximately 16 minutes long. Candidates are not asked to track their own time. Master Sommeliers will do this for you.
- Once the exam is finished, the Maître d' will gather all the candidates taking the exam at that time and escort you outside of the room.

### **Resources:**

- Download and review the CMS-A Service Standards Document
- Review CMS-A Service Videos
  - YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/@courtofmastersommeliers>
- Review theory exam resources

## PART 6: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

- **Possible scenarios:**
  - Candidates may be asked to:
    - Properly open a bottle of sparkling wine and serve guests.
    - Open and pour wines by the glass for guests.
    - Serve a wine flight.
    - Discuss food and wine pairing options and why they work.
    - Choose a proper pairing from multiple dish selections and why the pairing works.
    - Give a wine recommendation for a particular dish. The wine recommendation must include wine region, producer, and vintage.
    - Recognize producers of the world's top wine regions.
    - Recommend producers that are similar to a guest's preferences.
    - Describe ingredients, mixers, and garnishes of standard classic cocktails.
      - Examples: Mojito, Gimlet, Moscow Mule, Negroni, Rusty Nail, Manhattan, Side Car, Cosmopolitan, Caipirinha, Vesper, Greyhound, Margarita, Paloma, Mint Julep, Dark and Stormy, Kir Royal, White Russian, Old Fashioned, Tom Collins, etc.
    - Recommend example producers of major beer styles of the world, sake, aperitifs, spirits, and liqueurs.
      - Example: Name two producers of Stout Beer.
      - Example: Name two producers of Single Malt Scotch.
      - Example: Name two producers of French Vermouth.
      - Example: Name two producers of Coffee-Flavored Liqueur.
    - Recognize brand names of aperitifs, name the country of origin, and general flavor of the brand.
      - Examples: Aperol, Pastis, Dolin, Lillet, Manzanilla, etc.
- **Skills**
  - **Listening Skills & Communication to Guests**
    - You may not know every producer or wine asked. That is okay! Write it down, repeat, and confirm any orders given.
  - **Technical Beverage Service Skills**
    - See CMS-A Service Standards.
  - **Hospitality and Professionalism:**
    - Remember to remain professional and always show great hospitality. If things go wrong or you do not know an answer, that is okay. Keep the focus on providing excellent service.

## PART 6: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

- **Keys to Success:**
  - **Listen**
    - Listen carefully to instructions from the Maître d' and the Master Sommelier giving the exam.
    - All adjudicators are there to help you succeed and set you up for success. This portion of the examination is to evaluate your knowledge and skill, it is not to try and stump you.
  - **Using and Applying Theory Knowledge**
    - All portions of the exam inform each other. A strong knowledge base is essential to inform both your Tasting Exam and your Hospitality and Service Exam.
    - In the Service Practical, you will be asked to perform typical sommelier-related tasks while answering theory-related questions.
    - This could include:
      - **Producer Knowledge**
        - Top producers in major wine regions
        - Top cuvées of top Champagne producers
        - First and Second Growths of the 1855 Classification of Bordeaux
      - **Vintages**
        - Top vintages for the last 10 to 15 years of the major classic world wine regions.
        - Examples: Champagne, Barolo, Brunello di Montalcino, Left Bank Bordeaux
  - **Mock Restaurant Role Play:**
    - Generally, one Master Sommelier will be seated at the table, pretending it is a real restaurant with a guest at every seat.
    - Watch reaching over a guest's space.
      - **Wine Recommendations:**
        - When giving wine recommendations, mention why the pairing works in a guest-friendly manner.
        - Have a brief list of wines readily available in your mind to pair with various dishes.
          - **Examples might be:**
            - Light, crisp white wines
            - Full-bodied white wines
            - Off-dry white wines
            - Lighter, food-friendly red wines
            - Full-bodied red wines
        - **A candidate must mention the following for full marks when asked for a pairing:**
          - Producer, vintage, and full appellation