



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 SKILLS 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 sales and ability to articulate said pairings.
 - Cocktail, beer, aperitif, digestif, and fortified wine knowledge.
 - Benchmark producer and vintage basics for iconic wine regions.
- Deductive Tasting Method ability for core classic red and white grape varieties.
- Basic financials and wine program management.

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

- **Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas provided resources:**
 - **Certified Sommelier Exam Syllabus**
 - **Certified Sommelier Exam Guide- What to Expect and How to Prepare for the Certified Sommelier Exam** (*this document*)
 - **Certified Sommelier Tasting Exam Practice Grids**
 - **White Wine:**
https://www.mastersommeliers.org/sites/default/files/Certified_Examination_Tasting_Grid_White_Wine-Jan2017_0.pdf
 - **Red Wine:**
https://www.mastersommeliers.org/sites/default/files/Certified_Examination_Tasting_Grid_Red_Wine-Jan2017_0.pdf
 - **Examinable Grape Varieties and Wines for the Certified Sommelier Tasting Exam**
 - See below in Tasting Exam section and on CMS-A website under resources
 - **Court of Master Sommeliers Service Standards**
 - https://www.mastersommeliers.org/sites/default/files/CMS%20Service%20Standards_0.pdf
 - **The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas Introductory Sommelier Course Workbook**
 - **The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas Service and Hospitality Videos**

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAM - RESOURCES FOR STUDY

▪ 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 2nd Edition** By: Karen McNeil
 - ISBN 0761180834 [Amazon.com link](#)
 - A comprehensive source for in-depth wine fundamentals, plus, history, food, and producer information
- **The World Atlas of Wine 8th Edition** By: Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson
 - ISBN: 1784726184 [Amazon.com link](#)
 - A reference for understanding the location, geography, and topography of the world's major wine regions.
- **The Oxford Companion to Wine** By: Jancis Robinson
 - ISBN 9780198705383 [Amazon.com link](#)
 - 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 [Amazon.com link](#)
 - A reference detailing regions, sub-regions, and approved grape varieties of the major wine-producing countries of the world

○ Beer:

- **Tasting Beer: An Insider's Guide to the World's Greatest Beverage**
By: Randy Mosher
 - ISBN 1612127770 [Amazon.com link](#)
 - Insight into the world of brewing beer and learning the major styles in easy-to-understand language.

○ Sake:

- **Sake World** 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 [Amazon.com link](#)
 - 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

What to Expect Upon Arrival to the Certified Sommelier Exam

PART 2: What to Expect Upon Arrival to the Certified Sommelier Exam

- **What to expect when you arrive to the exam:**

- Check-in begins at approximately 7:45 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 schedule for the day.

- **Supplies needed for the exam:**

- Pen or pencil
- Notepad to take notes for the Hospitality and Service Exam (you are not allowed to use electronic devices).
- Corkscrew
- Calculator: Calculations should be able to be done by hand. A candidate can bring their own calculator as long as 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 3

What to Expect at the Tasting Examination

PART 3: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE TASTING EXAMINATION

- **Entering the Exam:**

- Candidates will be provided four (4) wines: two (2) whites and two (2) reds to identify in 30 minutes.
- Candidates will be provided a blank Certified Sommelier Exam Tasting Grid for each wine.
- Please remember to put your name on all four (4) sheets.
- You will be asked not to touch the wine glasses in front of you until you are given permission to do so.

COUNTRY OF
MASTER
SOMMELIERS of America

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION
DEDUCTIVE TASTING
WHITE WINE ONE

Certified Sommelier Examination Deducative Tasting - White Wine One
Candidate name: _____


Instructions: Fill in each blank completely. The exam will contain 100% alcohol and 100% Pinot Grigio. Do not discuss answers when seated. **WINE COLOR:** "W" if the quality is likely to appear in the wine and/or in the blank. **WINE TASTE:** "W" if the quality is almost certain to be in your candidate's W. "NW" has been left blank.

COLOR	SWINE	Yellow	Gold	Gold	
FRUIT					
Apple/pear	Yes	W	W	W	W
Cherry	Yes	W	W	W	W
Citrus	Yes	W	W	W	W
Stone fruit	Yes	W	W	W	W
Truffle	Yes	W	W	W	W
Prul Condition - Taste	Yes	W	W	W	W
Prul Condition - Taste	Yes	W	W	W	W
NON FRUIT					
Floral	Yes	W	W	W	W
Herbal	Yes	W	W	W	W
Vegetal	Yes	W	W	W	W
Banana/Grapes, honeydew, honey	Yes	W	W	W	W
Almond, nutty	Yes	W	W	W	W
Leaf, doughy, bread-baked, yeast	Yes	W	W	W	W
Buttery, cream	Yes	W	W	W	W
Earth, wet leaves, mushrooms	Yes	W	W	W	W
Mineral, Stone, Rock, Sulfur	Yes	W	W	W	W
Other: Yes, Verbs, Strong tasting, spicy	Yes	W	W	W	W
STRUCTURE					
Body, Presence	Yes	W	W	W	W
Sweetness	Yes	W	W	W	W
Acid	Yes	W	W	W	W
Alcohol	Yes	W	W	W	W
CONDITION					
Primary Stress	Yes	W	W	W	W
Wine of Origin	Yes	W	W	W	W
Type of Climate	Yes	W	W	W	W
Ageing of Climate	Yes	W	W	W	W
SALES PRICES					
1 - 1 Year	1 - 1 Year	1 - 1 Year	1 - 1 Year	1 - 1 Year	1 - 1 Year

Fill this area to your guest's or your representative's use:

TOTAL POINTS

100



MASTER
SOMMELIERS

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION
DEDUCTIVE TESTING - RED WINE ONLY

Identified Sommelier Examinations Deductive Testing - Red Wine Only

Goal: Pass the exam.

Instructions: All correct answers are available. The exam is approximately 1000 questions. The PLT/PLT/PLT (Pass) will be a correct answer unless there is a question that is not correct. The exam is a multiple choice exam. The PLT/PLT/PLT (Pass) will be a correct answer unless there is a question that is not correct. The exam is a multiple choice exam. The PLT/PLT/PLT (Pass) will be a correct answer unless there is a question that is not correct.

Passing Score: 70% (70 out of 100)

Time Limit: 1 hour

Exam Format: Multiple choice

Exam Questions: 1000

Exam Topics: Wine, Food, Service, Sommelier

Exam Results: Pass, Fail, Retake

Exam Retake: 1 year

Exam Fee: \$100

Exam Location: Various locations

Exam Date: Various dates

Exam Time: Various times

Exam Language: English

Exam Difficulty: Moderate

Exam Length: 1000 questions

Exam Score: 70% (70 out of 100)

Exam Status: Pass

Exam Comments: None

Exam Notes: None

Exam Signature: None

Exam Date: None

Exam Time: None

Exam Location: None

Exam Language: None

Exam Difficulty: None

Exam Length: None

Exam Score: None

Exam Status: None

Exam Comments: None

Exam Notes: None

Exam Signature: None

Exam Date: None

Exam Time: None

Exam Location: None

Exam Language: None

Exam Difficulty: None

Exam Length: None

Exam Score: None

Exam Status: None

Exam Comments: None

Exam Notes: None

Exam Signature: None

Exam Date: None

Exam Time: None

Exam Location: None

Exam Language: None

Exam Difficulty: None

Exam Length: None

Exam Score: None

Exam Status: None

Exam Comments: None

Exam Notes: None

Exam Signature: None

Exam Date: None

Exam Time: None

Exam Location: None

Exam Language: None

Exam Difficulty: None

Exam Length: None

Exam Score: None

Exam Status: None

Exam Comments: None

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Exam Time: None

Exam Location: None

Exam Language: None

- **During the exam:**

- The Master Sommeliers administering the exam will keep you aware of timing: You will be given a “half-time” mark with 15 minutes remaining and a two-minute remaining warning.
- 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, please raise your hand and a proctor will assist you.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TASTING EXAMINATION

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

CMS-A CERTIFIED SOMMELIER TASTING EXAM GRAPE VARIETIES AND GROWING REGIONS		
WHITE WINES		
Grape Variety	Country and Region	
ALBARIÑO	Spain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rías Baixas <i>* Unoaked</i> 	
CHARDONNAY	France - Burgundy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chablis Côte d' Or Mâconnais <i>* Village or Premier Cru</i> 	United States - California <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Napa Valley Sonoma County Central Coast
CHENIN BLANC	France - Loire Valley: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vouvray <i>*Demi-Sec - Off-Dry</i> 	
GEWURZTRAMINER	France: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alsace 	
PINOT GRIGIO	Italy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friuli Trentino - Alto Adige 	
RIESLING	Germany: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mosel Rhein <i>*Kabinett or Spätlese – Off-Dry</i> 	
SAUVIGNON BLANC	France - Loire Valley: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sancerre Pouilly-Fumé 	New Zealand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marlborough
TORRONTÉS	Argentina: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salta Mendoza 	

MS-A CERTIFIED SOMMELIER TASTING EXAM GRAPE VARIETIES AND GROWING REGIONS		
RED WINES		
Grape Variety	Country and Region	
CABERNET FRANC	France - Loire Valley: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinon Bourgueil 	
CABERNET SAUVIGNON	France - Bordeaux: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graves Haut-Médoc 	United States - California: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Napa Valley Sonoma County
GAMAY	France - Burgundy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beaujolais <i>*with carbonic maceration</i> 	
GRENACHE	France - Rhône Valley: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Châteauneuf-du-Pape Gigondas 	
MALBEC	Argentina: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mendoza 	
MERLOT	France - Bordeaux: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pomerol Saint-Émilion 	United States - California: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Napa Valley Sonoma County
NEBBIOLO	Italy - Piedmont: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barolo Barbaresco 	

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

RED WINES (Continued)

Grape Variety	Country and Region	
PINOT NOIR	France: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Côte d' Or * <i>Village or Premier Cru</i> 	United States - California: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Napa Valley (Carneros) Sonoma County Central Coast United States - Oregon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willamette Valley
SANGIOVESE	Italy - Tuscany: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brunello di Montalcino Chianti Classico 	
SYRAH	France - Rhône Valley: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Rhône Valley 	Australia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Australia Western Australia Victoria
TEMPRANILLO	Spain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rioja * <i>Reserva or Gran Reserva</i> 	
ZINFANDEL	United States - California: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Napa Valley Sonoma County 	

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TASTING EXAMINATION

▪ Resources:

- The links below are PDF copies of the same grids used in the examination.
- **White Wine Tasting Exam Grid:**
[https://www.mastersommeliers.org/sites/default/files/Certified Examination Tasting Grid White Wine-Jan2017 0.pdf](https://www.mastersommeliers.org/sites/default/files/Certified%20Examination%20Tasting%20Grid%20White%20Wine-Jan2017%200.pdf)
- **Red Wine Tasting Exam Grid:**
[https://www.mastersommeliers.org/sites/default/files/Certified Examination Tasting Grid Red Wine-Jan2017 0.pdf](https://www.mastersommeliers.org/sites/default/files/Certified%20Examination%20Tasting%20Grid%20Red%20Wine-Jan2017%200.pdf)

▪ 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 wine. 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 filling out the entire grid properly.
 - Look at all of 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. There will be six grape varieties listed for you to choose from the actual exam. This list will change depending on the exam.
 - Candidates are responsible for naming the country of origin.

▪ 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 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 Cote 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
 - Cabernet Sauvignon from Bordeaux and Cabernet Sauvignon from California
 - Shiraz from Australia, Malbec from Argentina, and Zinfandel from California
- **Test Yourself:**
 - Test yourself with blind wines using the grids.
- **Watch your timing:**
 - The 30 minutes allows for approximately 6 to 7 minutes per wine.
 - You should be done with the white wines by the halfway point.
 - Test yourself with timing using a clock or stopwatch for real-time exam pressure.
 - Leave yourself a few moments to check over your papers to make sure you filled out every box and every line.

▪ **Pitfalls:**

- Often candidates do not pass the exam even when they got the wines correct because they did not fill in all the boxes and lost 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 is worth something.
 - Only write descriptors or a reason where prompted. Keep it short or sweet.
 - 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 the “Fruit Condition,” where you may choose up to two.
 - **NAME A COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.** This box is often overlooked. It is an important one!
 - If you change an answer, make your change clear by putting an “X” through the answer you DO NOT want.
 - Write as clearly as possible and keep your answers concise.

▪ **Review and Trust Yourself!**

- **Take the time to review what you wrote before choosing your grape variety.**
- Does the wine you described match your conclusion and vice versa?
- Review your notes and make sure it adds up and makes sense.
- 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 big indicator of certain grape varieties.
 - **Use your theory knowledge about how grapes are grown and how wines are made in order to make informed choices.**

EXAMPLE OF A FILLED OUT TASTING GRID

Note this is a sample only. List of potential grape varieties may change depending on exam

		CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION DEDUCTIVE TASTING WHITE WINE ONE			
Certified Sommelier Examination Deductive Tasting - White Wine One Candidate Name: <u>MARGAUX SMITH</u>					
Instructions: Fill in correct boxes completely. This exam grid combines NOSE (Aroma) and PALATE (Flavor) descriptors except where noted. Where applicable, mark "YES" if this quality is clearly apparent in the wine and key to your conclusion. Mark "NO" if this quality is absent or not key to your conclusion. DO NOT leave any blank lines.					
COLOR		The color is: Straw <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yellow <input type="radio"/> Gold <input type="radio"/>			
FRUIT					
Apple / Pear	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	If "Yes" - Describe:		<u>Yellow Apple, Green Pear</u>	
Citrus	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	If "Yes" - Describe:		<u>Lemon</u>	
Stone Fruit	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>	If "Yes" - Describe:			
Tropical	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>	If "Yes" - Describe:			
Fruit Condition - Nose		Tart <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ripe <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Overripe Jammy Stewed <input type="radio"/>	Baked Bruised <input type="radio"/>	Up to TWO Fruit Condition Boxes may be filled in for Nose Up to TWO Fruit Condition Boxes may be filled in for Palate
Fruit Condition - Palate		Tart <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ripe <input type="radio"/>	Overripe Jammy Stewed <input type="radio"/>	Baked Bruised <input type="radio"/>	
NON-FRUIT					
Floral	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> Mark YES if quality is: "APPARENT" and "KEY TO YOUR CONCLUSION" </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Mark NO if quality is: "NOT APPARENT" and/or "NOT KEY TO YOUR CONCLUSION" </div>			
Herbal	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Vegetal	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Botrytis: Gingered, Honeyed, Waxy	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Oxidative, Nutty	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
Lees: Doughy, Baked Bread, Yeasty	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
Buttery, Creamy	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
Earth: Wet Leaves, Mushrooms	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
Mineral: Stone, Rock, Sulfur	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
New Oak: Vanilla, Brown Baking Spices, Smoke	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
STRUCTURE					
Bitter, Phenolic	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Sweetness	Dry <input checked="" type="radio"/> Off-Dry <input type="radio"/> Medium Sweet <input type="radio"/>				
Acid	Low to Mod. Minus <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Moderate Plus <input checked="" type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/>				
Alcohol	Low to Mod. Minus <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input checked="" type="radio"/> Moderate Plus <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/>				
CONCLUSION					
Primary Grape	Chenin Blanc <input type="radio"/> Pinot Gris/Grigio <input type="radio"/> New World <input type="radio"/> Cool <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Torrontés <input type="radio"/> Chardonnay <input checked="" type="radio"/> Old World <input checked="" type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/>	Riesling <input type="radio"/> Sauvignon Blanc <input type="radio"/> Warm <input type="radio"/>	Why: <u>Apple, Pear, Lees, Mineral, Creamy-Malolactic Fermentation</u>	
World of Origin	Why: <u>Minerality, tart fruit</u>				
Type of Climate	Why: <u>M+ acidity, tart fruit</u>				
Name the Country of Origin HERE:		<u>FRANCE</u>			
General Age		1 - 2 Years <input checked="" type="radio"/> 3 - 4 Years <input type="radio"/> 5+ Years <input type="radio"/>			
SALES PITCH					
Sell this wine to your guest in two sentences or less: <u>A delicious crisp and refreshing wine perfect with oysters, fresh seafood, and sushi!</u>					
					TOTAL POINTS

EXAMPLE OF A FILLED OUT TASTING GRID

Note this is a sample only. List of potential grape varieties may change depending on exam

		CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION DEDUCTIVE TASTING RED WINE ONE			
Certified Sommelier Examination Deductive Tasting - Red Wine One Candidate Name: <u>MARGAUX SMITH</u>					
<small>Instructions: Fill in correct boxes completely. This exam grid combines NOSE (Aroma) and PALATE (Flavor) descriptors except where noted. Where applicable, mark "YES" if this quality is clearly apparent in the wine and key to your conclusion. Mark "NO" if this quality is absent or not key to your conclusion. DO NOT leave any blank lines.</small>					
COLOR					
The color is:	Garnet <input type="radio"/>	Ruby <input type="radio"/>	Purple <input checked="" type="radio"/>		
FRUIT					
Red	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>	If "Yes" - Describe: <u>Blackberry, Black Cherry</u>			
Black	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	If "Yes" - Describe: <u>Blueberry</u>			
Blue	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	If "Yes" - Describe: _____			
FRUIT CONDITION - NOSE					
Tart <input type="radio"/> Ripe <input type="radio"/>	Overripe <input type="radio"/> Jammy <input checked="" type="radio"/> Stewed <input type="radio"/>	Baked <input checked="" type="radio"/> Dried <input checked="" type="radio"/> Oxidative <input type="radio"/>	Up to TWO Fruit Condition Boxes may be filled in for Nose		
FRUIT CONDITION - PALATE					
Tart <input type="radio"/> Ripe <input type="radio"/>	Overripe <input type="radio"/> Jammy <input checked="" type="radio"/> Stewed <input type="radio"/>	Baked <input type="radio"/> Dried <input type="radio"/> Oxidative <input type="radio"/>	Up to TWO Fruit Condition Boxes may be filled in for Palate		
NON-FRUIT					
Floral	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>	Mark YES if quality is: ~APPARENT and ~KEY TO YOUR CONCLUSION Mark NO if quality is: ~ NOT APPARENT and/or ~ NOT KEY TO YOUR CONCLUSION			
Vegetal, Green Pepper	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Savory Dried Herbs, Tomato Leaf	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Mint, Eucalyptus	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
Peppercorn	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
Coffee, Cocoa, Mocha	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Game, Blood, Cured Meat, Leather	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
Balsamic, Tar	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Earth: Forest Floor, Wet Leaves, Mushrooms	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Mineral: Stone, Rock, Sulfur	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
New Oak: Vanilla, Smoke, Toast, Coconut	Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>				
STRUCTURE					
Tannin	Low to Mod. Minus <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input checked="" type="radio"/> Moderate Plus <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/>				
Acid	Low to Mod. Minus <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Moderate Plus <input checked="" type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/>				
Alcohol	Low to Mod. Minus <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Moderate Plus <input type="radio"/> High <input checked="" type="radio"/>				
CONCLUSION					
Primary Grape	Cabernet Sauvignon <input type="radio"/> Syrah/Shiraz <input checked="" type="radio"/> Pinot Noir <input type="radio"/> Tempranillo <input type="radio"/> Nebbiolo <input type="radio"/> Zinfandel <input type="radio"/>			Why: <u>Black fruit, black pepper, eucalyptus</u>	
World of Origin	New World <input checked="" type="radio"/> Old World <input type="radio"/>			Why: <u>Intense ripe fruit, lack of earth or minerality</u>	
Type of Climate	Cool <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Warm <input checked="" type="radio"/>			Why: <u>High alcohol, overly ripe fruit</u>	
Name the Country of Origin HERE: <u>AUSTRALIA</u>					
General Age: 1 - 3 Years <input checked="" type="radio"/> 4 - 6 Years <input type="radio"/> 7+ Years <input type="radio"/>					
SALES PITCH					
Sell this wine to your guest in two sentences or less: <u>This is a delicious, plush, rich, fruit-intense wine with flavors of black cherry and black pepper.</u> <u>This wine is an excellent pairing with grilled beef or rack of lamb.</u>					
TOTAL POINTS					



PART 4

What to Expect for the Theory Examination

PART 4: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE THEORY EXAMINATION

▪ General

- 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 will not be writing or deciding exam questions on exam day.
- The theory examination tests candidates' knowledge and understanding of the world of wine, beverage, and the sommelier trade.
- Candidates must complete the 45-question examination within 35 minutes.
- 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 hand in your paper to a Master Sommelier. You will then be given your Hospitality and Service Practical Exam time, usually between 1pm and 4pm. You will have free time until the assigned time.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE THEORY EXAMINATION

▪ Resources

- See resources listed earlier in this document for book and website recommendations.
- Review the General Theory Topics to focus your studies.
- Download Theory Exam Standards from the CMS-A website and review the templates for Germany, New Zealand, and Beer to see the depth of knowledge required for each level of examination. These can be used as a guide of how to approach all topics of study.
- 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

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION			
GENERAL THEORY TOPICS			
	Topics Covered	Subtopics	
	Grape Growing <i>Viticulture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vine cycle • Factors of production • Cause and effect: what happens in the vineyard and how that translates to what we see in the final wine 	
	Winemaking <i>Vinification</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques • Cause and effect: what happens in the winery and how that translates to what we see in the final wine 	
	Understanding Wine Law		
	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champagne • Burgundy • Bordeaux • Loire Valley • Alsace • Rhône Valley • Dordogne and Southwest France • Provence • Languedoc • Roussillon 	
	Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piedmont • Lombardy • Trentino-Alto Adige • Veneto • Friuli-Venezia-Giulia • Emilia-Romagna • Tuscany • Marche • Abruzzo • Campania • Puglia • Sicily • Sardinia 	

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION			
GENERAL THEORY TOPICS (Continued)			
	Topics Covered	Subtopics	
	Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosel • Rheingau • Rheinhessen • Pfalz • Nahe • Franken • Baden • Mittelrhein 	
	Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niederösterreich Kremstal Kamptal Wachau • Burgenland Mittelburgenland 	
	Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samos • Santorini • Naoussa • Nemea 	
	Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tokaji 	
	Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rías Baixas • Rioja • Ribera del Duero • Toro • Rueda • Cava • Priorat 	
	Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vinho Verde • Douro • Alentejo • Bairrada • Dão • Porto 	

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION			
GENERAL THEORY TOPICS (Continued)			
	Topics Covered	Subtopics	
	North America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States • California • Oregon • Washington • New York State 	
	Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario • Okanagan Valley 	
	Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valle de Guadalupe 	
	South America Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salta • Mendoza • Patagonia 	
	South America Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aconcagua Valley • Valle Central • Sur 	
	Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeastern Australia • New South Wales • Victoria • South Australia • Western Australia 	
	New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Auckland ○ Gisborne ○ Hawke's Bay ○ Wairarapa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Martinborough • South Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marlborough ○ Nelson ○ Canterbury ○ Central Otago 	

CERTIFIED SOMMELIER EXAMINATION			
GENERAL THEORY TOPICS (Continued)			
	Topics Covered	Subtopics	
	South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cape South Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cape Agulhas ○ Elgin ○ Overberg ○ Walker Bay • Coastal Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cape Town ○ Franschhoek Valley ○ Paarl ○ Swartland ○ Stellenbosch 	
	Other Methods of Making Wine		
	Sparkling Wine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of production • Champagne 	
	Fortified Wine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sherry • Port • Madeira • Vins Doux Naturels 	
	Sweet Wines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of production • Important sweet wines of the world 	
	Beer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingredients • Production methods • Common styles (classic locations, type, style) 	
	Sake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ingredients • Styles • Sake classification system • Polishing minimums for premium production 	
	Spirits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basics of distillation • Base ingredients of common spirits • Aging requirements and laws • Aperitifs and digestifs 	

PART 4: Examples of Theory Questions as compared to Introductory Theory Questions

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

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

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

PART 4: 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 DOP	Aromatized, red

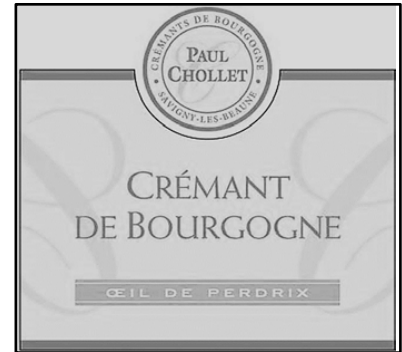
- 3. Match the following appellations with their country of origin: (Choose ONE matching country per appellation.)**

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

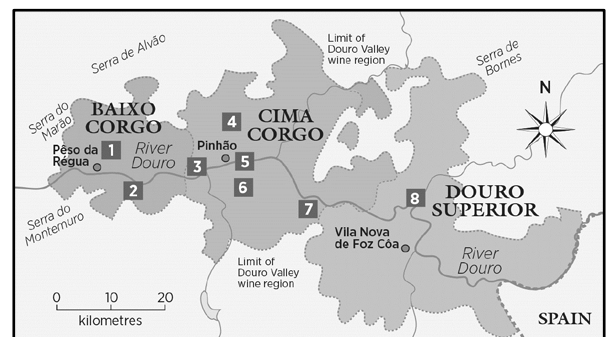
PART 4: Examples of Map and Label Questions

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

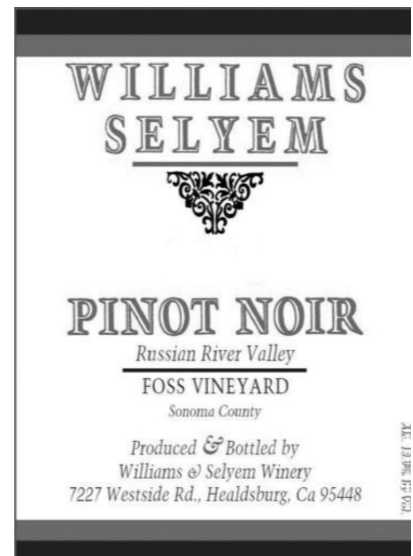
- a. Undergoes a secondary fermentation in bottle
- b. Grapes were infected by *Botrytis cinerea* in the vineyard
- c. Fermentation is arrested by the addition of neutral grape spirit
- d. Grapes are dried in the winery for at least 2 months prior to pressing



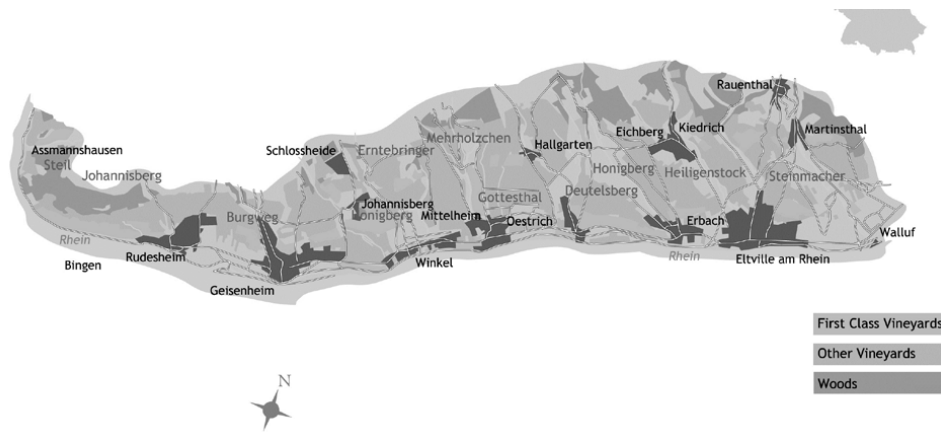
What fortified wine region is indicated in the map below? Ex: Madeira, Banyuls...



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



Which anbaugebiet does this map depict?



PART 4: What to expect - The Business of the Sommelier

- 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, 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 actually 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
- Calculators are not provided. With practice, using the examples below, calculations can be done by hand. ***A candidate can bring their own calculator as long as it has no communication capabilities.***
- 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 which 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 5

What to Expect at the Hospitality and Service Examination

PART 5: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

■ General:

- 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 that has several variations, but they will not be deciding questions on exam day.
- The Hospitality and Service Practical Examination approximates the restaurant environment. Candidates are expected to demonstrate salesmanship and knowledge while performing a variety of tableside tasks.
- After finishing the Hospitality and Service Practical Exam, candidates are free until the Results Reception 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 there to help 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 will begin. 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 12 minutes long.
- 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
<https://www.mastersommeliers.org/resources>
- Review CMS-A Service Videos
- Review theory exam resources

PART 5: 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 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 ok! 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 give great hospitality always. If things go wrong or you do not know an answer, that is okay. Keep the focus on providing excellent service.

PART 5: WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

- **Keys to Success:**
 - **Listen**
 - Listen carefully to instructions by 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 test your knowledge and skill, not try and stump you.
 - **Using and Applying Theory Knowledge**
 - All portions of the exam inform each other. It is essential to have a strong knowledge base to inform both your Tasting Exam and your Hospitality and Service Exam.
 - In the Service Practical, you will be asked to perform many sommelier-related tasks while answering many 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, there will be one Master Sommelier seated at the table, pretend 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 short 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
 - Old World and New World versions of the above
 - **When asked for a pairing, a candidate must mention the following for full marks.**
 - Producer, vintage, and full appellation