



### **The Attitude of the Sommelier:**

- It is imperative for a sommelier to display a quietly confident but not arrogant attitude and to demonstrate superlative hospitality throughout beverage service.
- It is important for sommeliers to put themselves in the role of a server; no job or task on the floor is beneath the role of a sommelier; he or she does whatever needs to be done in the moment to take care of the guest.
- The intentions of overall hospitality must be first; i.e. making guests feel welcome and comfortable whether they are partaking of beverages or not.
- The sommelier is an integral part of a team providing the experience of superlative hospitality for the guest. The sommelier should be aware of all aspects of service that are transpiring in the dining room.

### **Vendors:**

- Always treat and communicate with vendors (i.e., parties such as distributors, importers, brokers and winemakers) respectfully and responsibly; no profanity and no abusive language or treatment should ever occur.
- The supplier is an essential part of the team that supports the experience of hospitality for the guest.
- Use the vendor's time in an efficient and professional manner by communicating your needs clearly, honoring appointments and answering or returning e-mails and phone calls.
- The hospitality world is ever-changing and today's colleague or vendor could potentially become tomorrow's employer or vice versa.

### **Colleagues**

- Integrate into the service team and provide help whenever and however needed. A good service team member does not let another team member fail.
- The sommelier is in a high visibility position and is a service leader who sets the tone of the overall service experience in a dining room.

### **Team Education**

- Share knowledge and service acumen with team members; educate with an inclusive spirit.
- Avoid intimidating or alienating guests and co-workers with esoteric wine information.
- Strive to simplify beverage knowledge without dumbing it down; hand it to others in an easily understandable way. Improving the overall competence of each team member will result in increased guest satisfaction and sales.

### **Tableside Demeanor**

- SMILE. Be friendly, respectful, engaging, and professional in a genuine and authentic manner.
- Attention should ALWAYS be on the guest and serving the guest, and never drawn to the sommelier.
- Respond to guest compliments with brief thanks and appreciation.
- Utilize your considerable knowledge as appropriate.

### **Establishing Guest Rapport**

- Approach guests with the intent of understanding their priorities, wants and needs; look for opportunities to fulfill and exceed their expectations.
- Pay close attention to guest response, speaking manner and body language; adjust your manner and behavior accordingly.
- Assess to what degree assistance is required and desired.

### **General points**

- Possess considerable depth of knowledge of your restaurant's overall beverage program, food menu, and operation policies.
- Be able to provide brief but accurate descriptors (aroma, flavor and structure) of all beverages without overwhelming the guest with unnecessary verbiage. Read the guest and supply the appropriate amount of information.

- **DO NOT MAKE THINGS UP:** If you do not know the answer to a guest question, offer to get the answer as soon as possible.

## **Communication**

- Maintain eye contact with guests as appropriate.
- Be an active listener. Clarify anything the guest has communicated, especially when confirming the order.
- Discreetly determine if the host has a budget in mind; if not, offer several selections at different price points.
- When in doubt, undersell: honor the guest's trust with regard to price point and perceived value.
- Learn and remember guest's preferences.
- Guest relationships are built over time.

## **Dealing with problems**

- Remember, "The guest is always right."
- Guest perception is your reality.
- The only "justice" is the resolution of the problem in the guest's mind; "fairness" does NOT matter.
- Make an honest and authentic effort to make the situation right.

## **Suggested Steps for Problem Resolution**

1. Recognize and acknowledge there is a problem.
2. Engage the guest, ask them to express themselves.
3. Listen actively, authentically and completely.
4. Ask the guest about their expectations of how the issue can be addressed, i.e.,  
"How can I make this right?" "What can I do?" "What's the best way to take care of this?"
5. Decide what can be done, based on your understanding of the guest's expectation, the business parameters and policies of your establishment.
6. Rely on other key staff members when appropriate.

## **Specific problems:**

### **I. Guest rejecting a glass or bottle of wine:**

- Immediately apologize and remove the glassware and bottle.
- Away from the table, discreetly determine the condition of the wine
  - If the wine is flawed, offer another bottle of the same wine
  - If the wine is sound, offer the wine list to make another selection.
- Above all, never put the guest in the position of being wrong.

### **II. Spilling wine on the guest or the table:**

- Apologize and take immediate action to mitigate any spillage and possible staining.
- Assure the guest that the restaurant will pay for any necessary dry cleaning.
- Immediately reseal guest at another table if possible.
- If another table is not available, temporarily move guests to the bar or another table and reset original table.

### **III. Wrong bottle or price on a check:**

- These are difficult scenarios that can be challenging to resolve. Bring in upper management to help resolve the issue.
- Apologize for any misunderstanding and politely suggest that the guest pay for the bottle they believed to have ordered.
- If the guest refuses to pay for the wine, bring in the maître d' or manager to help resolve the situation.
- Be as diplomatic as possible and realize the potential ill will the situation could create for the restaurant.

### **IV. Complaints on list or by the glass pricing:**

- Acknowledge the customer's opinions and tactfully state the restaurant's policies on pricing.