

April 7, 2021

To our community -

Thank you all for taking the time to join our latest Listening Session: Somm Moms last week. In case you were not able to join us, or if you would like to revisit the conversation from last week's Listening Session, we've outlined the primary topics covered below. Please note that other topics were discussed, but we wanted to give you all a synopsis of those we discussed the most.

We'd like to give a special thanks to our panelists for their preparation, participation, and conversation. Have a question for one of our panelists? Email your questions to [listening@mastersommeliers.org](mailto:listening@mastersommeliers.org).

- **Jennifer Huether**, MS and Head Sommelier, Director Alcohol Curation, Fresh City Farms
- **Rebecca Fineman**, MS, restaurant consultant, and Wine Director & Managing Partner of Ungrafted
- **Haley Moore**, Founder of Acquire
- **Shelley Lindgren**, sommelier and Co-Owner & Wine Director of A16 and SPQR

Stay tuned for details about the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas' next virtual session: ***CMS Community Town Hall on Ethics and Professional Responsibility, taking place virtually on Tuesday, April 20 at 9AM PT.*** You can register in advance for the Zoom meeting by using this [LINK](#).

Because the topics of maternity leave, family leave, and paid maternity leave in both the US and Canada were discussed throughout the session, we've provided some helpful resources below:

#### United States

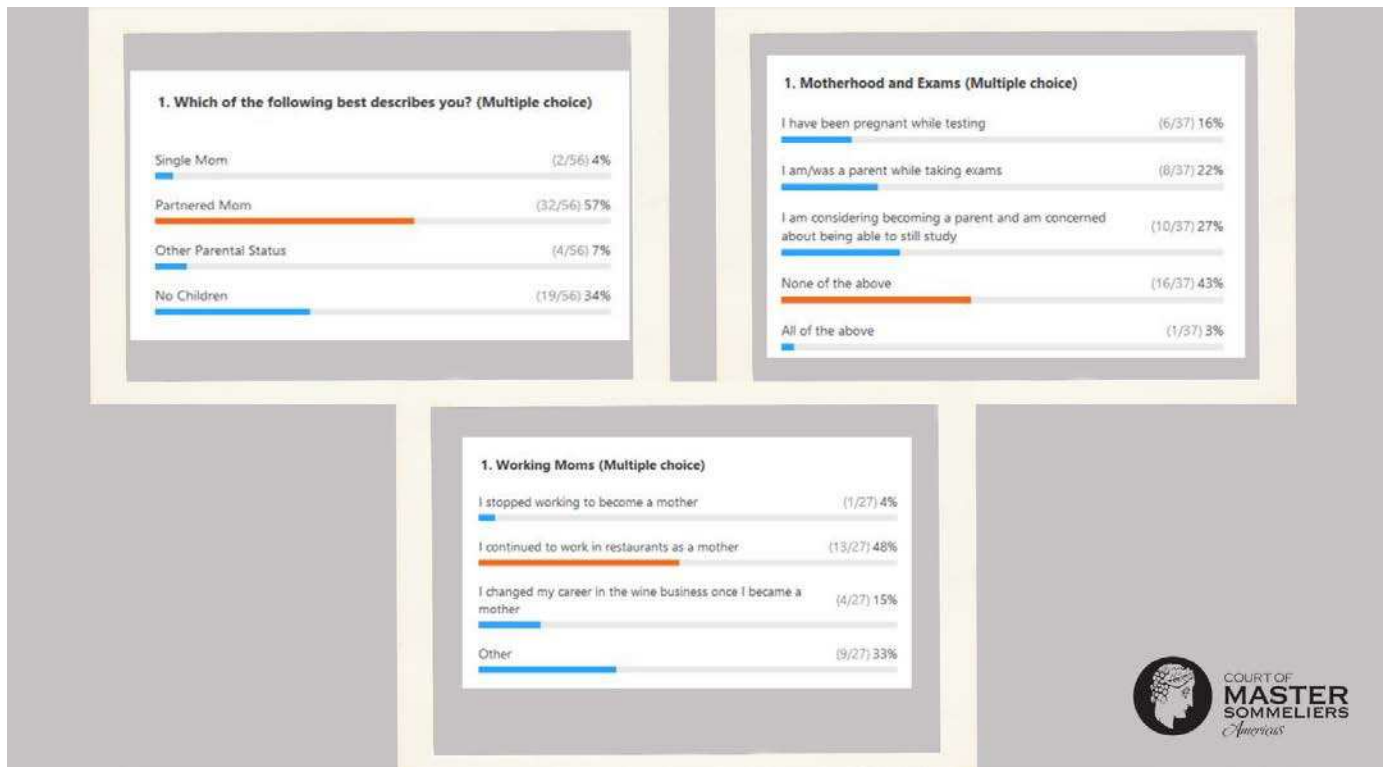
- [Paid Family and Sick Leave In The U.S.- Kaiser Family Foundation](#)
- [Among 41 countries, only U.S. lacks paid parental leave- Pew Research Center](#)
- [Family and Medical Leave Act- U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- [Guide to Maternity Leave In The US: Rider University](#)

#### Canada

- [Employment Insurance maternity and parental benefits- Government of Canada](#)
- [Study: Family matters: Parental leave in Canada- Government of Canada](#)
- [Maternity leave: Am I eligible for paid maternity leave?- The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada](#)

#### **In-Session Poll Results**

Many of our moms and soon-to-be-moms in the Listening Session come from different cities, companies, relationships, and work-life balances. Below are the results of our in-session polls taken to learn a bit more about our audience during the Somm Moms Listening Session.



## Listening Session: Somm Moms Topics Recap

**Purpose:** This session was specifically about making both room and a welcome space for sommeliers and industry professionals who also choose to be mothers.

It is already difficult being a woman in the wine industry, but when you're also pregnant or a mother and working with wine and within service, there is so much more pressure. You face not only guests, but also, peers commenting that you won't be working much longer, can't taste wine anymore, or won't have time for anything but your little ones. In a society where more responsibility is still put on women to raise children, we must help and encourage each other as we make the choices between work and family.

### 1. How does pregnancy and post-pregnancy change your palate? Does being pregnant mean you have to stop tasting?

Just about everything changes within your body during pregnancy. Some people experience loss of taste or smell; others experience enhanced taste or smell; some even don't see a change at all. Just like each individual body reacts differently to pregnancy, it's ultimately up to you as an individual to decide how you go about training and testing your palate. Rebecca Fineman, MS decided to only take two sips and then spit each wine she tasted while pregnant. She also had to reintroduce her palate to certain wine types post-pregnancy.

Ultimately, the decisions to try to keep your palate or not and taste wines or not while pregnant is up to you! Luckily, many of us have been in your shoes. Don't be afraid to reach out to one of our panelists for more on their experience or consult your doctor on what's best for you.

2. **Creating a balance between working the floor and pregnancy/maternity.**

***Transparency with your management, staff, and sometimes, customers is key.*** If you're pregnant, it has to be known that you need time in between services to rest along with time outside of service to go to your scheduled medical appointments. When it comes to maternity leave, have a set number of weeks or months in mind right at the start of your pregnancy. If your organization has its own maternity policy, ensure it meets your needs in order to decide whether or not you feel the need to negotiate. Immediately after returning to work, communicating set pumping times is absolutely necessary. Your comfort is your top priority, so make it known to your management that tip-top service will be just that only if you're able to pump.

3. **Creating a career-family balance:** A few of our panelists also struggled with making time for their children outside of work. From their experiences, this is your opportunity to work the schedule in your favor based on your preferences. If you want to spend time with your children after school, communicate that to adjust your work schedule accordingly. The same goes for if you want to see your children to bed or make it to a recital or parent-teach conference. There is no shame in communicating and adjusting. The majority of mothers in the service industry do not have secondary care or a stay-at-home partner. Speaking of partners: Working with your partner-if you have one- to divide and conquer home-child duties will prove even more important as children grow older and schedules grow busier.

Information to Remember, According to The Bureau of Labor Statistics: "More than 2.3 million women have dropped out of the labor force since February 2020. A Census Bureau and Federal reserve analysis found that 1 in 3 women not working in July cited childcare issues as the reason, and that mothers of children 12 and under were three times more likely than fathers to have lost work between February and August."

We will continue to hold Listening Sessions and welcome your ideas on topics for our candidates and the community. As always, please reach out to anyone of us if you have any comments, questions or want to discuss latest happenings.

Yours In Service,

Emily Wines, MS  
Chair, Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas

Kathryn Morgan, MS  
Vice Chair, Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas

Christopher Bates, MS	Joshua Nadel, MS
Robert Bigelow, MS	Sabato Sagaria, MS
Brahm Callahan, MS	Mia Van de Water, MS
Keith Goldston, MS	David Yoshida, MS
Michael Meagher, MS	