



WHAT TO EXPECT at the ADVANCED SOMMELIER EXAM

TASTING EXAMINATION

Tasting Examination: Arrival

- Candidates will gather in a designated area with other candidates sitting at the same time.
- Check-in at this designated gathering area 15 minutes prior to your scheduled time.
- You will be reminded not to speak about the examination as to allow everyone the space to focus in their own way.
- Your name will be called by a CMS-A representative and you will be taken to your exam room.
- You will be greeted by a group of 3 to 4 Master Sommelier adjudicators. We will introduce ourselves!
- You will be directed to your seat across the table from the examiners. Make yourself comfortable.
- A Master Sommelier will give you specific exam related instructions.

Tasting Examination: Set-Up

- Each candidate will have the following items at their Tasting Exam place setting.
 - Tasting Mat
 - Six wines
 - Water
 - Spit cup
 - Napkin

Tasting Examination: Helpful Hints

- There are no physical rules on how to use your tasting time as long as your examiners can hear you. Standing up, sitting down, facing a certain way, non-communicating ear plugs – all are completely acceptable.
- Time reminders are there for your benefit – they are not intended as critique.
- Remember: six different wines, six individual examinations, six opportunities. Take each on their own regardless of what you have done with previous wines – or, how you feel about it.

Tasting Exam: During the Examination

- Once you are settled at the tasting exam table, the following will be read by your Master Sommelier Panel Chair:
 - Welcome to the tasting portion of your examination. You will have 25 minutes to taste the flight of six wines in front of you.
 - We will keep time for you and let you know when you are halfway through at twelve-and-a-half minutes, have five minutes left, and one minute left if we think you require it. If you wish, you may use your own clock as long as it cannot record or transmit communication.
 - We will start the clock when you touch the first glass and/or start smelling the wines.
 - You may take the wines in any order you'd like but be sure we know which wine you are speaking about.
 - Describe the wines as completely as you can as we can only grade to what you say to us.
 - With structural elements including sweetness, acidity, alcohol, and tannin please give us one answer and not a range.
 - If you do give us more than one answer, we will remind you to give us just one answer once.
- Likewise, if you detect chemical compounds, don't provide just their name - please describe their aroma/flavor.
 - "I smell green pepper..." or "I smell green pepper from pyrazines..." is appropriate.
 - "I smell pyrazines..." only is not.
 - If you do provide only a chemical term with no description, we will remind you to provide a descriptor once.
- Do you have any questions? If not, we wish you the very best of luck and hope you enjoy the wines.

Tasting Examination: Upon Completion of Tasting Examination

- Congratulations - you are finished with your Advanced Sommelier Tasting Examination!
- You will be given reminders of meeting places for Results and the Ruinart Reception the following day.
- You will be escorted to the Sequester Room until the end of the day (usually between 4:30 and 6 PM), at which point you will be released.
- You will be reminded to not speak about the content of the examination until you are released from the sequester room to respect other candidates.
- You may bring personal items into the sequester room – as long as they are not electronic communication devices and/or wine study related.

Tasting Examination Preparation:

- **Resources:**
 - The wines Advanced Sommelier Exam candidates will be tested on are located in PDF form on the CMS-A website resources page in a document titled “Advanced Sommelier- Level Wines”
- **Back to the Basics:**
 - Break down the grid, box by box. Ask *why* the topics are considered.
 - Fill out a complete grid for as many wines as possible and compare them to similar wines
 - If there are wines or grape varieties that are easy for you, fill out the entire grid for it every time – with full descriptors and where they come from to link to theory and force yourself to flesh out your sensory evaluation.
- Taste less obvious wines - both blind and knowing what they are.
- Include Theory, Hospitality & Service, and Business of the Sommelier in your tasting exercises.
 - **Theory:**
 - If tasting blind, force yourself to give any possible reason(s) for a specific sensory evaluation then, when revealed, confirm that you considered everything and whether or not you were correct.
 - Taste the beverages you are studying as you are studying. Make the sensory link to the cause and effect of the theory knowledge of the wine and the region.

Tasting Examination Preparation: continued.....

- Service:
 - Ask yourself how you would serve this wine (stemware, temperatures, decant or no), what you would pair with it (classic dishes or no), list five classic/established producers, etc.

- Business of the Sommelier:
 - Upon conclusion and/or reveal, determine how much a wine list with a certain COGS goal might charge for this wine per bottle.

 - How you would train your staff to describe this wine in one sentence.

 - Taste aged wines, sweet wines, sparkling wines, beer, spirits, sake in Deductive Tasting Method. Don't get mired in "6 in 25".