



INTRODUCTORY SOMMELIER COURSE AND EXAM

COURSE GUIDE

What to Expect and How to Prepare for the Introductory Sommelier Course and Exam

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

To set expectations and provide preparation guidance for students taking the Introductory Sommelier Course and Examination. This document is split into three sections that will cover preparation for the course and exam, what to expect during the exam, and then assessment and results.

COURSE MISSION:

The Introductory Sommelier Course and Exam is an introduction to the Court of Master Sommeliers and the Sommelier profession. We endeavor to provide accessible and inclusive education and welcome all who want to learn about wine and the beverage industry.

PHILOSOPHY OF CURRICULUM:

All Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas education and examinations focus on our Philosophy of Curriculum and our four pillars of education and examination.

- Theory
- Tasting
- Hospitality and Service
- Business of the Sommelier

The Introductory Sommelier Course is an introduction to the Court of Master Sommeliers, the sommelier profession, and how these four pillars interrelate and inform each other for study.

With each wine region discussed, we will taste wines from that region to help connect knowledge of the place to how the grapes are grown and made. Additionally, we will learn how to provide knowledgeable descriptions of the aromas and flavors in the glass. We will then integrate that with wine service and food and wine pairing.

PART 1 – PREPARATION

TEXTS AND RESOURCES:

- **The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas Introductory Sommelier Course Workbook**
 - Students will receive a PDF Copy of the workbook upon registration or may purchase a physical copy through Amazon to be received before the course at the following link: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1733571906>.
 - Purchasing through Amazon is optional. The workbook purchase cost will not be deducted from your course fee.
 - The Introductory Sommelier Course workbook contains:
 - An outline of all subjects covered throughout the course:
 - Learning Objectives
 - Wine Regions of the World
 - Maps
 - Service Standards
 - Tasting Journal
 - End of section quizzes (please see PDF of updated quizzes and answers)
- **GuildSomm.com**
 - A one-month trial membership is included as an educational resource upon registration.
- **Other resources**
 - There are many excellent and comprehensive resources, however, the Introductory Sommelier Course and Exam Curriculum Guide in conjunction with the Introductory Sommelier Course Workbook focuses on the scope of this course and should be the primary resource in preparing for the examination.

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR CLASS:

- A copy of the Introductory Sommelier Workbook in printed or digital form on a device.
- If using the digital version, a student must print the **Tasting Journal** at the following [Link](#) to use in class to record notes on the wines being tasted.
- Notepad or notebook for note-taking
- Pen
- #2 pencil for taking the exam

PART 2 – COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CURRICULUM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

As a result of this course, a student should be able to:

- Have a general appreciation of the breadth of global beverage alcohol offerings.
- Identify historically and commercially important wine regions of the world and know their respective grape varieties and styles.
- Evaluate and describe 20 classic wines of the world.
- Understand the Deductive Tasting Method to build vocabulary and skills for objective evaluation and description of classic wines and major grape varieties.
- Recognize and explain climatic and winemaking effects on wine style.
- Receive an introduction to service and hospitality by observing the formal mechanical service of still and sparkling wine by the bottle.
- Learn the basic principles of food and beverage pairing and how to apply these principles to different styles of food and wine.
- Learn the fundamentals of beer, sake, spirits, and liqueurs.

IN-PERSON LEARNING

DAILY SCHEDULE:

Day 1:

- **7:45 AM:** Check-in.
 - Photo ID is required.
- **8:00 AM:** Course begins
- **12:30-1:30 PM:** Lunch Break (not provided by the CMS-A)
 - You will have one hour for lunch. You may pack lunch or do an online search to see if there are any preferable dining options available near the venue.
- **6:00 PM:** End of Day 1

Day 2:

- **7:45 AM:** Check-in.
 - Check-in is required on both days of the course.
- **8:00 AM:** Day 2 Begins
- **12:30-1:30 PM:** Lunch Break (not provided by the CMS-A)
 - You will have one hour for lunch. You may pack lunch or do an online search to see if there are any preferable dining options available near the venue.
- **4:00 PM:** Introductory Sommelier Examination
- **5:30 PM:** Results Reception

COURSE TOPICS AND CURRICULUM

This chart outlines the subjects covered in the Introductory Sommelier Course. While this list is comprehensive in its scope of content, further study is necessary to fully understand each topic.

| INTRODUCTORY SOMMELIER COURSE OUTLINE | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| EACH SECTION HAS SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES OUTLINED IN THE CURRICULUM GUIDE, ASSOCIATED CHAPTERS IN THE WORKBOOK, SELF-QUIZZES, AND A FULL PRACTICE EXAM. | | | |
| Section | Topics Covered | Subtopics | NOTES |
| Section 1 | Grape Growing <i>Viticulture</i> | | ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | Winemaking <i>Vinification</i> | | |
| Section 2 | CMS Wine Evaluation Technique | | ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| Section 3 | Understanding Wine Law | | ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| Section 4 | France | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champagne • Burgundy • Bordeaux • Loire Valley • Alsace • Rhône Valley | ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapters in Workbook ✓ Section Quizzes |
| Section 5 | Italy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piedmont • Lombardy • Trentino-Alto Adige • Veneto • Friuli-Venezia-Giulia • Tuscany • Marche • Campania • Sicily | ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| Section 6 | Germany | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mosel • Rheingau • Rheinhessen • Pfalz | ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | Austria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niederösterreich • Kremstal • Kamptal • Wachau | ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |

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| Section | Topics Covered | Subtopics | Resources |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Section 7 | Spain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rias Baixas • Rioja • Ribera de Duero • Toro • Rueda • Cava • Priorat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | Portugal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vinho Verde • Douro | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| Section 8 | North America | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ California ○ Oregon ○ Washington ○ New York State | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| Section 9 | South America Argentina | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salta • Mendoza • Patagonia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | South America Chile | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aconcagua Valley • Valle Central | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | Australia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeastern Australia • New South Wales • Victoria • South Australia • Western Australia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | New Zealand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Island • South Island | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | South Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cape Town • Stellenbosch • Paarl • Elgin • Walker Bay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |

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| Section | Topics Covered | Subtopics | Resources |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Section 10 | Other Methods of Making Wine | | |
| | Sparkling Wine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of methods • Champagne | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | Fortified Wine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of methods • Sherry • Port • Madeira • Vins Doux Naturels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | Sweet Wines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Methods • Review of previous sweet wines discussed • Tokaji Aszú - Hungary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| Section 11 | Important World Beverages | | |
| | Beer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beer ingredients • Ale and lager differences • Examples of ales and lagers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | Sake | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sake ingredients • Sake production basics • Sake quality grades | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | Spirits and Liqueurs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basics of distillation • Base ingredient of common spirits • Basics of common spirits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |

INTRODUCTORY SOMMELIER COURSE OUTLINE

EACH SECTION HAS SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES, ASSOCIATED CHAPTERS IN THE WORKBOOK,
AND SELF QUIZZES

| Section | Topics Covered | Subtopics | Resources |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| Section 12 | Sommelier Skills | | |
| | | Introduction to the Deductive Tasting Method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Not tested at this level |
| | | Food and Beverage Pairing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Section Quiz |
| | | Introduction to the Business of the Sommelier | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Curriculum Guide ✓ Chapter in Workbook ✓ Not tested at this level |
| | | Hospitality and Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Service Standards in Workbook |

PART 3 - ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION

ABOUT THE EXAM:

The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas Introductory Sommelier Exam is a closed book exam consisting of 70 multiple-choice questions, with four answer options per question. A student must complete the exam in 45 minutes. Students will be given a Scantron answer sheet and instructions on properly filling it out.

Examination questions are based on the published learning objectives, The Introductory Sommelier Course Guide, and the study resources such as the Introductory Sommelier Course Workbook. These materials contain the information required to answer all questions.

Every course venue differs; therefore, each in-person exam room will be slightly different.

PASSING GRADE:

- A student must achieve 60% to pass the exam or answer 42 out of the 70 questions correctly.
- Each correct answer is worth one point.
- Students who pass the Introductory Sommelier Course Exam will receive a certificate, and a lapel pin, and are eligible to take the Certified Sommelier Exam.

SCORES AND FEEDBACK:

- In-person students will receive their results after the exam at the end of course reception.
- Within one week of the exam date, students will receive their numerical score with feedback on the categories of questions that need improvement.
- Online Introductory Sommelier Course students receive their scores and feedback immediately after completing the online exam.

RETAKE POLICY:

- Students who score less than 60% are eligible to retake the Introductory Sommelier Examination online for a fee of \$125. Students must wait at least 14 days from their last attempt before retaking. To register to retake the exam, please contact info@mastersommeliers.org
- The CMS-A no longer requires that students take the Certified Sommelier Examination within three years of the Introductory Sommelier Examination. We encourage students to move to the next level when best prepared.

PART 3 - ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION

EXAM CONTENT

- Questions on the exam will focus on the following areas and are based on the subjects covered in class.
 - **Wine law of important regions**
 - Connecting grape varieties with specific places or appellations.
 - Connecting appellations with the style or styles of wines produced.
 - **Wine production methods**
 - Still
 - Sparkling Wine
 - Fortified Wine
 - Sweet Wine
 - **Important historical figures in wine**
 - Those mentioned in the book and/or lectures.
 - Examples:
 - Agoston Haraszthy
 - Robert Mondavi
 - André Tchelistcheff
 - David Lett
 - Dr. Konstantine Frank
 - **Wine and food pairing**
 - Principles and interactions
 - Classic pairings
 - **Map identification**
 - Recognition of important world wine regions
 - **Reading a wine label**
 - Looking at a wine label and determining grape variety, color, and style of the wine.
 - **Example:** See questions 3 and 62 in the practice exam below.
 - **Beverage service-related questions**
 - Basics of wine service
 - **Example:** See question 15 in the practice exam below.
 - *Note: No need to memorize service temperatures at this time*
 - **How wines and grape varieties look, smell, and taste**
 - Focusing on wines tasted in class
 - **Example:** See question number 58 and 64 in the practice exam below.
 - **Producer recognition in major wine regions**
 - Examples:
 - Bordeaux:
 - First Growth producers of the 1855 Classification of the Médoc
 - Saint-Émilion top producers: Château Cheval Blanc
 - Pomerol: Château Pétrus

- **Soil types**
 - Major regions only and only those with importance to the regions and the grape varieties grown there.
 - Examples:
 - Champagne
 - Chablis
 - Châteauneuf-du-Pape
 - Bordeaux Right and Left Bank
 - Mosel, Germany
 - Coonawarra, Australia
- **Beer Basics**
 - The main ingredients and what they contribute to beer
 - Examples of common styles
- **Sake Basics**
 - Sake ingredients
 - Quality scale and definitions
- **Spirits Basics**
 - Base ingredients of common styles
 - Examples of common styles

A student will NOT be tested on the following:

- Wine tasting
- Performance of service elements
- Vintage memorization

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE IN-PERSON COURSE AND EXAM:

Preparation and study ahead of time are essential to feel comfortable in class and for success on the exam.

In the *in-person* course, there is a lot of information discussed at a quick pace. A base knowledge of the subjects covered in the workbook will assist you during the session. The *in-person* session is a review of the materials from the workbook and reading materials and is not a comprehensive class.

Using the provided resource texts such as the curriculum guide, syllabus, the Introductory workbook, end-of-section quizzes, and the provided practice exam are the resources needed and an excellent guide for any student.

Additionally, resources are always available via email at info@mastersommelier.org. You may also speak to a Master Sommelier before you take your exam if you have any questions or concerns.