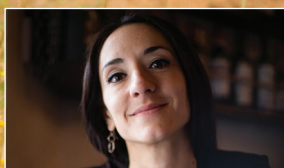


# ASI MAGAZINE

MARCH 2022  
ISSUE #1  
VOL 1



## New Faces of Sommellerie in the Americas



**VALERIA  
GAMPER:**  
A New Champion



**PAZ LEVINSON &  
ALEJANDRA RIED:**  
Sommellerie in the Americas



**GIUSEPPE VACCARINI:**  
ASI Introduces Globally  
Recognized Certifications





ENJOY RESPONSIBLY



BY APPOINTMENT TO HM THE QUEEN  
PURVEYORS OF GRAHAM'S PORT  
SYMINGTON FAMILY ESTATES  
PORTUGAL

W. & J.  
**GRAHAM'S**  
ESTABLISHED 1820  
PORT



THE PERFECT BALANCE

*Wm & J. Graham & Co*



# ASI MAGAZINE

MARCH 2022 | ISSUE #1 | VOL 1

## Published by:

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**Director Partnerships & Marketing:** Claire Berticat

**Content Manager:** Mark DeWolf

**Marketing Assistant:** Xeniya Volosnikova

**Administrative Assistant:** Juliette Jourdan

**Translation:** Michèle Aström Chantôme, Manuel Negrete

**Design / Layout:** Julia Webb Design

**Photography:** Frederico Garcia, Paddy Berry, Stephen Elphick, Alex Fradkin, Michael Hayter, iStock, Storyblocks, 123RF

**Cover Photo:** ©iStock / ampueroleonardo

**Contributors:** Ian Blessing, Martin Bruno, Kim Cyr, Mark DeWolf, Doug Frost MW, Francisca Herrera Crisan, Valeria Gamper, Hector Gascón, Paz Levinson, Alejandra Ried, Pierre Vila Palaja, Marshall Strika, Giuseppe Vaccarini, William Wouters

## ASI Executive Board

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**Vice-president for the Americas:** Marcos Flores Tlalpan

## Magazine inquiries:

Mark DeWolf, ASI Content Manager

markdewolf@asi.info

**General Inquiries:** www.asi.info info@asi.info

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## President's Welcome 4

ASI President William Wouters

## Partner News 5

Capstone California:

A Global Approach to Wine Education

## A Conversation With 6

Paz Levinson & Alejandra Ried:

Sommellerie in the Americas

## Happenings 8

Valeria Gamper is the Best Sommelier of the Americas

## Feature Article 11

Sommellerie in the Far Corners of the Americas

## Somm Selections 26

Americas' New Wine Frontiers

## Make Me a Match 33

Ceviche

## Our People 36

ASI introduces globally recognized certifications:

Q&A with Giuseppe Vaccarini

## Somm Perspectives 42

No Alcohol Wines?

## Partner News 48

S. Pellegrino Young Chef Academy Competition

## Partner News 49

Vinexposium: Wine Paris & Vinexpo Paris 2022

On the road to Paris

## News 52

Member and Industry News

Table of Contents

## ASI PARTNERS

ADVINI  
DES VIGNOBLES, DES HOMMES, L'ÉMOTION

C&S  
Chef & Sommelier  
FRANCE

FAMILIA  
TORRES  
Desde 1870

FAMILLE PERRIN

W. & J.  
GRAHAM'S  
ESTABLISHED 1828  
PORT

CALIFORNIA  
WINES

TRAPICHE  
ARGENTINA

VINEXPOSIUM.  
VINVENTIONS

SommelierS  
INTERNATIONAL

ACQUA PANNA  
THE FINE DINING WATERS  
S. PELLEGRINO

LIGNE | W  
&  
Château  
LAGUIOLE

wines of  
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# Welcome!

**Welcome to ASI MAG**

Over the past year and a half ASI has accomplished so much. Our administration has been tasked with building a stronger community and association that places more emphasis on education and communication. We launched exciting projects such as ASI Bootcamp, the new ASI Certifications and the ASI Guidelines. The guidelines provide the foundations of knowledge for sommeliers across the globe while the new Certifications provide a testing mechanism for those seeking to become an internationally recognized sommelier. Bootcamp and our soon to be launched ASI Tutorials provide opportunities for our sommeliers to learn from ASI's best. Each has taken an immense amount of work, but also the cooperation of our various committees.

The launch of ASI MAG represents the culmination of work done by our Marketing & Communications team. Over the last year and a half, they have worked tirelessly to create new communications strategies focused on building a community of sommeliers and partners. We tasked ourselves to place sommeliers on the same stage as the great winemakers, wine communicators and educators of the world. We have accomplished this and more through our newsletters, website content, panel discussions, social media efforts and now ASI MAG. Our online magazine will be full of stories of the faces of ASI, what's going on in our organization and about topics of interest to our community. Enjoy our first edition and expect more to come over the coming months.

Cheers  
*William Wouters, ASI President*



welcome

ASI President William Wouters



**A conversation**  
with Alejandra Ried and Paz Levison





# capstone

CALIFORNIA

## A Global Approach to Wine Education

**By Honore Comfort,**  
**Vice President of International Marketing,**  
**California Wines**



Starting in early 2021, California Wines introduced an online wine education program that seeks to transform the learning experience, making a wealth of information accessible and approachable to wine professionals around the globe. Built on a digital education platform, the original content encompasses a rigorous and structured curriculum that builds critical knowledge for wine professionals.

Led by Master Sommeliers Evan Goldstein and Tim Gaiser, Capstone California was developed with a team of experts from the international wine community that includes Master Sommeliers Wayne Belding and Madeline Triffon along with other leading wine educators across Europe, Canada, and Japan as well as the United States.

Offering four consecutive levels of study, the program's in-depth multi-media and multilingual program touches on all elements of California wine, ranging from history and theory to geography, wine law and the business of wine. The platform includes a collection of teaching tools developed exclusively for California wine that leverage technology and design including flyover maps of major regions, AVA maps based on GPS and Google Earth technology and variety acreage maps. Multi-media content including tasting videos and webinars will be rolled out in 2022.

To complete the highest levels of Capstone, Expert Level 4 and Ambassador Level 4, trade professionals become a Certified California Wine Expert (CCWE) or a Certified California Wine Ambassador (CCWA). This includes the opportunity to attend an immersive week-long seminar in California, after which participants are qualified to teach all levels of the Capstone California curriculum around the world.

More than 3,300 students from 68 countries have enrolled in Capstone California to date, with 45% having achieved Level 1 or Level 2 certification. The program is currently available in English, French, German, Japanese, Polish and Russian, with Simplified Chinese and Spanish versions in development.

A capstone is "the high point; a crowning achievement" and Capstone California is designed to help wine professionals reach new heights in their career. To begin your Capstone California learning experience visit [www.capstonecalifornia.com](http://www.capstonecalifornia.com).

Wine Institute's Export Program supports California Wines worldwide with a comprehensive calendar of education, marketing and promotion activities in 27 countries across the globe. The California Wines Export Program offers a robust calendar of seminars, market visits, tastings for trade, media and consumers and participation in international wine exhibitions. A team of 20 global representatives conduct marketing programs for more than 250 wine brands exported to over 140 countries.

Photos: @CaliforniaWines





# A Conversation With: Alejandra Ried & Paz Levinson

## Sommellerie in the Americas

A Conversation with

Paz Levinson & Alejandra Ried: Sommellerie in the Americas

With the ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas held last month in Santiago, Chile, we were inspired to create our inaugural issue of ASI MAG around the theme of sommeliers exploring new frontiers in the Americas. As we know sommeliers are trend setters, often embracing new places, new styles and new philosophies. We couldn't think of two better sommeliers than Alejandra Ried, the incumbent president of The Association of Sommeliers of Chile and Paz Levinson winner of the 2015 ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas contest and fourth place finisher at the ASI 2016 Best Sommelier of the World contest to be our guest editors. Paz makes her home in France, working as Executive Sommelier at Groupe Pic, and is a valued member of the ASI Sommelier Contests Committee.

### Association de la Sommellerie Internationale

**(ASI):** When you won the ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas in 2015, you became the first South American to take the title. Do you feel like you have inspired young sommeliers in Argentina and around South America?

**Paz Levinson (PL):** That's one of the reasons I was so excited to return to Chile. Winning was one of the moments of my life that was very special and important. Winning the contest was life changing as it gave me a green card to go work anywhere in world. At the time, I was living in France, and preparing (for the contest) while there. At the time I was inspired by Veronique (Rivest) and Elyse (Lambert), who had previously won the title. After winning the title for myself I think I have had the opportunity to inspire other sommeliers in Latin America. Winning the title was very important, as it helped put the Americas on the international sommelier map. It also speaks well to the great community of sommeliers we have in the Americas.

**ASI:** With your win in 2015 and the great success of Martin Bruno and Valeria Gamper at the Best Sommelier of the Americas in 2018, do you think we are seeing a rise in talent amongst South American sommeliers?

Yes. I think so. For Martin (Bruno) it was important for him to go to the Best Sommelier of the Americas in Chile in 2015. This gave him some invaluable experience. I think Argentina hosting the ASI Best Sommelier of the World contest 2016 was also very inspirational to the sommeliers in the region, such as Valeria. Hosting the world contest gave strength to an entire community of Latin American sommeliers. This along with the success of Valeria (Best Sommelier of the Americas 2022), Martin, and others, will inspire a new generation. I am already seeing some new faces emerge.

As the Executive Sommelier for Ann Sophie Pic, with our eight restaurants with eight Michelin stars, I've been privileged to have many sommeliers from South America come to France and work with me. I think of this opportunity as being like throwing a bag of seeds into some very good earth. I am excited to watch these talents grow. Those talented sommeliers are coming from all over the Americas, not just from Argentina. We are seeing them come from Uruguay, Chile and other countries. Some people, like Valeria, who now works in Spain, are gaining great international experience but I also see a strong community of sommeliers within Argentina, sharing wines from abroad and making it possible for each other to learn and develop. I am very positive about the future of sommellerie in Latin America.

**ASI:** The recently held ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas Contest was held in Chile. In addition to being a sommelier competition, it was also, in part, a celebration of the diversity of the Chilean terroir.





Alejandra Ried Photo: Contributed

Why was it important to incorporate some of the Chile's other regions?

**Alejandra Ried (AR):** It is important to make consumers and sommeliers around the world familiar with our small producers and instill a vision of Chile, that goes beyond Santiago, and its nearby wine regions. Our young sommeliers are really pushing this new image forward and are very much responsible for connecting small producers in Chile's outlying regions to consumers both in Chile, and abroad. I am seeing these interesting producers on wine lists here, but increasingly on the wine lists of top restaurants and wine bars around the world. In terms of specific regions, I am excited about, I'll point to the Malleco and Osorno Valleys in the southern part of Chile and the cool climate of Limari in the north. Across the border in Argentina, I am in love with Cabernet Franc, and I also think Uruguay is doing some great things with Tannat and making some very fresh Albariño.

**PL:** First of all, I love Chilean wine. In France, I now have possibility to buy new wines as well as wines from established wine producers from Chile. There is a strong connection between Chile and France. With this new raised image of Chilean wines sommeliers are now willing to pay more qualitative Chilean wine that showcases terroir. There is some great quality in Chile, and no longer seen simply as simple, everyday wines. The wines of Chile, such as Cabernet Sauvignon and fresh styles of Sauvignon are perfect for the palates of French consumers.

I think we been talking about País from Chile for years, but now we are seeing how it can produce a lot of different styles and we as a community are getting more comfortable showcasing this grape, which is so important to Chile. From Argentina,



Paz Levinson Photo: Contributed

there is more and more good wines being made from Criolla Chica, and much of the credit can be given to Chile for showing us its potential. Despite there only being a few hundred hectares of Criolla in Argentina, we are seeing some very fine and delicate versions from places such as San Juan. Its success has given a boost for other grapes that were always in our vineyards but never declared in the wines. These so called "no name" grape varieties such as Criolla and others are getting their own identity and due attention.

In Argentina, we are also getting much stronger with our white wine production. We are now producing white wines with our own identity such as some really great Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay from high elevation mountain vineyards in the Andes. We are also seeing some exciting wines made from Torrontés, vinified in unique and different ways. I am also encouraged about the number of wines from both Chile and Argentina being made via low intervention methods. Producers such as Miguel Torres and others are also leading the way in terms of sustainability and organic viticulture. This idea of sustainability is also being extended to the financial sustainability of the grape growers.

Further abroad, I have recently had some very good wines from Uruguay including some very well-made Albariño and Riesling. I have also had some very serious Riesling from Brazil, made in very natural ways. If we have a strong community of sommeliers, it helps winemakers created a strong community. Together we are making a sustainable wine community.

Enjoy the magazine!  
Alejandra & Paz



# MEET VALERIA GAMPER

Happenings



Photos: Contributed



## ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas 2022



Valeria Gamper was born and raised in Buenos Aires. After studying Hotel Management, she enrolled in at Centro Argentino de Vinos y Espirituosas (CAVE), one of the nation's best sommelier training institutions. Since graduating in 2009 as a sommelier from the institution, she subsequently passed level 1 and 2 of the Court of Master Sommeliers program, achieving the highest score at both levels, in addition to passing the WSET Level 3 Award in Wines & Spirits and more recently passing the WSET Diploma. After finishing second in the 2012 and 2017 Best Sommelier of Argentina competition, she narrowly missed the final of the Best Sommelier of the Americas 2018, in Montreal, where she finished fourth.

Last month in Santiago Valeria took another big step forward in her amazing career, winning the ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas 2022. In a competition highlighted by an amazingly over all level of sommellerie, Valeria was joined in the semi-finals by Dustin Chabert (USA), Hugo Duchesne

Valeria Gamper is the Best Sommelier of the Americas



(Canada), Tiago Roberto Locatelli (Brazil), Mark Guillaudeu (USA) and fellow Argentinean competitor Martin Bruno.

In the end Duchesne, Bruno and Gamper competed on stage in the finale. While all competed admirably, it was Gamper who came out on top and joins an elite list of ASI Best Sommelier of the Americas winners.

**What inspired you to become a sommelier?**

It was when I was working at the Four Seasons´ restaurant in Buenos Aires. At that time, the sommelier career in Argentina was very new, and very few places in the city had a sommelier in charge of wines. As a result, I wasn´t lucky enough to have a sommelier there to inspire me or someone to learn from. Not being able to answer customers´ wine questions accurately, or recommend wines, made me want to educate myself further, and become a sommelier.

**You´ve competed many times in the Best Sommelier of Argentina contest and the Americas contest in Montreal (2019). Did your victory in 2019 in Argentina give you the confidence to keep pushing on?**

Having won the Best Sommelier of Argentina contest in 2019 not only gave me confidence, but also gave me the opportunity to compete again in the Americas Contest, and with enough time to prepare myself.

In terms of development, and furthering my confidence, moving to Spain, where I work at a 2-Michelin Star restaurant (El Molino de Urdániz) in Pamplona, allowed me to have access to wines

from abroad, which unfortunately are not currently available in Argentina. It also allowed me to be close to key producers and regions of the world of wine.

**Earlier in the magazine, we interviewed Paz Levinson about sommellerie in the Americas. How much of an inspiration was she to you? Are there other sommeliers that have inspired you to get to this level?**

Paz is a key player in the development of the Argentine Sommellerie. The fact she came so far has enlightened and inspired many of us to follow paths that we did not know existed before. In addition to Paz, Flavia Rizzuto and María Barrutia were and still are, a very important key in my daily life. They are the founders of CAVE, (Centro Argentino de Vinos y Espirituosas) one of the best Sommellerie schools in Buenos Aires, where I trained more than 10 years ago and, in fact, continue to train. On the other hand, the Argentine Association of Sommeliers (AAS) made available special trainings for me which allowed me to arrive better prepared for high level contests like the Americas. This is a systematic effort that the AAS makes for each local champion.

Now that I have earned the title, I will be honoured to represent Argentina and South America at the world contest, but I know this honour also comes with great responsibility.

**Is there a special bottle you will be opening to celebrate this latest victory and why did you choose it?**

Maybe an aged white wine from Rioja. I am a big fan of white wines and some of them from Rioja age beautifully.



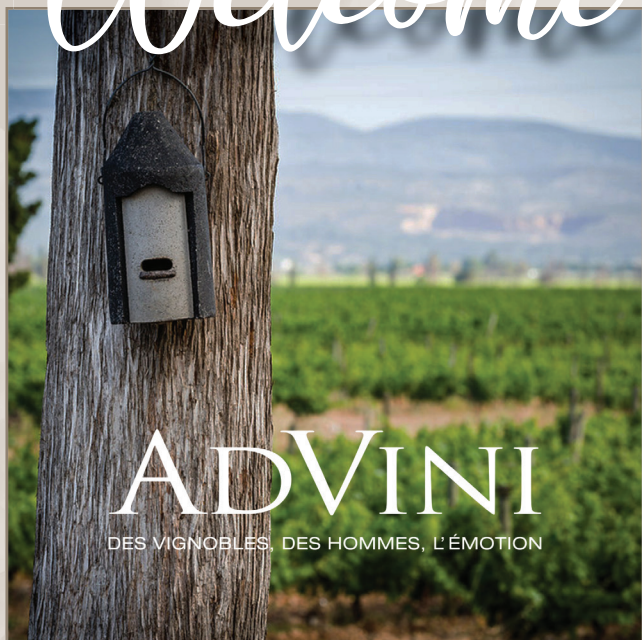
Best Sommelier of Americas candidates Photo: Contributed



Best Sommelier of Americas semi finalists Photo: Contributed



# Welcome



ADVINI is particularly committed to the sommelier profession — in France, in partnership with the Union de la Sommellerie Française, in Canada with the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec (ITHQ), and at its wineries with the organization of competitions for student sommeliers — and is more delighted than ever to accompany key ASI events for the third year in a row! Even better: in 2022, Advini is inviting members to experience its terroirs. Three words are essential: Feel at home!

Are you a young sommelier in training? A contestant preparing for the regional finals and 2023 ASI Best Sommelier of the World contest? A seasoned expert eager to return to the field? Advini and its wineries are opening their doors to offer tailored training and practice sessions adapted to the needs of each participant. In France, South Africa, or closer to home in one of their ten representative offices (Amsterdam, Brussels, Saarbrücken, London, Montreal, Paris, San Francisco, Shanghai, Stellenbosch or Stockholm), the men and women of Advini are pleased to share their expertise in viticulture, vinification, aging and their passion for their terroirs.

From Burgundy to Saint-Emilion, through the Rhone Valley, Provence, Languedoc-Roussillon, and of course Stellenbosch in South Africa, Advini brings together a diverse range of savoir-faire and winemaking traditions specific to each region.

# ADVINI

## DES VIGNOBLES, DES HOMMES, L'ÉMOTION

For more information, please contact: [chloe.perinet@advini.com](mailto:chloe.perinet@advini.com) / [alison.jagielski@advini.com](mailto:alison.jagielski@advini.com)  
Local logistics and transportation will be covered by Advini upon arrival in France or South Africa.



# SOMMELLERIE IN THE FAR CORNERS OF THE AMERICAS

**“I see a bright future  
for sommellerie in  
the Americas.”**

**Marcos Flores,  
ASI Vice-President  
Americas**

The luxury travel market, once the near exclusive domain of major urban centers, is experiencing a metamorphosis. Experienced travelers are now seeking not only the tried and tested destinations but adventures in the far corners of the globe, where experiences are rooted in immersions into the culture, people, food and drink of place. Building on the popularity of agritourism, luxury resorts are emerging in the least likely places where philanthropist entrepreneurs are creating destinations that embrace community and focus on the social and economic sustainability of their remote surroundings.

In these corners of the hospitality world, sommeliers are tasked with crafting beverage programs that embrace the gastronomic efforts of their chefs' culinary programs, which often exude a hyper-commitment to local and sustainable ingredients, whilst dealing with the logistic realities of their often largely inaccessible locations.

Feature Article

Sommellerie in the Far Corners of the Americas





Feature Article

*Sommellerie in the Far Corners of the Americas*





“Sommellerie is about embracing and learning from our community and sharing that knowledge with each other, and our customers.”

Marcos Flores,  
ASI Vice-President Americas

Feature Article

Fogo Island Scenery Photos: Alex Fradkin



Sommellerie in the Far Corners of the Americas





Fogo Island Dining Room Photo: Alex Fradkin





**Kim Cyr** is a sommelier, and Wine Steward and Maître D’ at Fogo Island Inn. Fogo Island is Cyr’s final destination on a cross country journey, working at some of Canada’s top restaurants, in Vancouver, Toronto, Nova Scotia and now at Fogo Island Inn. The inn is situated on an isolated island set off the northern coast of Canada’s sparsely populated province of Newfoundland, itself a large, sparsely populated island, adrift from Canada in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic. Launched in 2013, the 29-room hotel with sweeping views over the glacial waters of the North Atlantic, is operated by Shorefast, a charitable organization, founded by Zita, Alan and Anthony Cobb, with a mandate to nourish, and support its community.



Fogo at Night Photo: Michael Hayter



**Pablo Castro** is a young Chilean sommelier whose journey into the wine industry began as a teenager working in the vineyards around Santiago. After attending the Chilean School of Sommeliers in Santiago. He studied with both the Wine and Spirit Education Trust and Court of Master Sommeliers. In 2018 he started working at Awasi Patagonia, one of three Awasi lodges, set in the rugged beauty of some of South America’s most iconic destinations. Pablo began his career with Awasi at their Patagonia lodge, which is the southernmost Relais & Châteaux property in the world. After two seasons in Patagonia, Pablo decided to switch to Awasi Atacama, on the opposite side of the country. Located on the northern tip of Chile, in the world’s driest desert and at 2,500 above sea level, this Relais & Châteaux lodge comes with its own set of challenges. Their other property is Awasi Iguazu in Argentina, which is just 20 minutes drive from the world’s largest waterfalls and surrounded by the Atlantic Rainforest. The lodges run as Carbon Neutral, with the company protecting 340 hectares of natural woodland in Iguazu and Patagonia which absorb more than 10,000 tonnes of CO2 per year, in excess of the emissions generated by the lodges.

**Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI):** When crafting a beverage program for a destination hotel in a remote destination like yours what are the guiding principles that drive your decision making?

**Kim Cyr (KC):** Much like the food we pair it with, wine has stories to tell. Many factors, from taste to history guide us when choosing the wines we offer to our guests. Each one must be a storyteller for its origins and terroir.

We select wines that are grown with methods that are gentle on the earth and we encourage our farming partners to promote biodiversity and regenerative agriculture. We support small-scale producers based in communities like ours — communities with a deep sense of place. As in all we do, we first source from as close to home as possible, and we are proud to showcase a range of fine Canadian wines. We also carry a carefully curated selection from our traditional trading partners such as Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy. These countries have all made their mark on our province’s history, most importantly via our shared fishing cultures. We have a special interest in and affinity for Portuguese wines as they tend to have a strong tie to the past and their originating land sits similarly in the Atlantic to the way our island does





Fogo Island Scenery Photo: Paddy Berry

on the edge on a continent. Among other factors that guide our selection is equity and diversity: we look for opportunities to celebrate female wine-makers and support producers who adopt fair and proper labour practices and are committed to doing their part to address our climate crisis.

**Pablo Castro (PC):** The most popular and well-known wines in Chile are Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenere — these are always popular, and guests love to try them when they are in this part of the world. But Chilean wines are also greatly exported, mainly the bigger wineries, so some people are already familiar with the mainstream option. What we strive for at Awasi is giving our guests a different experience; we like to take them on a wine-tasting journey from the south to the north of the country, sampling a variety of distinct grapes as they go, trying to be playful in what we offer so it turns into an almost educational experience. Each has a unique style with differing

characteristics which we aim to match with the extraordinary dishes our chefs can put together. However, both in Patagonia and Atacama we have to keep in mind the challenging logistics, so while designing a season’s beverage program it’s important to keep flexible, be creative and plan ahead.

**ASI:** Both the Fogo Island Inn and Awasi lodges are known for their commitment to local culture and local ingredients. How do you as sommeliers infuse culture, sense of local into your beverage program?

**KC:** As mentioned previously, we do champion wines from our own country, including regions close to home in the Atlantic, like Nova Scotia. There are many other ways we connect our wines and our cocktails to the region, to Newfoundland and to Fogo Island. For example, instead of using the traditional aroma wheels for defining wines, we have incorporated into our descriptions, local wildflowers, botanicals, berries, and the agricultural



Fogo Island Scenery Photo: Contributed

**“Luckily, in the past decade or so, more and more local producers have started to defy the traditional and I decided to base our menu on those small vintners, who produce high-quality wines based on varieties that are atypical of what you would expect when you come to Chile or dare to experiment with original techniques.”**

**Pablo Castro, Sommelier,  
Awasi Patagonia Villas**

bounty from our immediate surroundings. For our cocktails, we create extracts, essences and juices from berries, herbs and plants found on the island.

Our Sherry Program offering on the back of the mid-day menu features a wide range of Sherries using only Fogo Island descriptors and we pair these with our very own ‘seaweed snacks’ made in our kitchen.

The response from guests has been very positive since so much of their time here is spent outdoor, discovering our nature. We reference aromas like juniper, seaweed, crisp saline air from heavy fog or winds, partridgeberries, blueberry leaves, north-eastern rose petals, Aronia berries, dog berries, sea heather, foraged mushrooms, snowberries, shuttle brush, etc. — many of the things they might have encountered on a hike on their own or with our resident Outdoor Adventure Guide Lorie Penton. We also get inspiration from a great little book called Wildflowers of Fogo Island and Change Island.



**“Among other factors that guide our selection is equity and diversity: we look for opportunities to celebrate female winemakers and support producers who adopt fair and proper labour practices and are committed to doing their part to address our climate crisis.”**

Kim Cyr, Sommelier, Fogo Island Inn

Awasi Patagonia Villa main lodge at night Photo: Contributed





Feature Article

*Sommellerie in the Far Corners of the Americas*



Awasi Patagonia Villas Photo: Contributed



**PC:** The philosophy of both Awasi and Relais & Châteaux is to showcase local and seasonal products, so we've made it our goal to have only Chilean wines on the menu. A great amount of Chilean vineyards are located in the central part of the country but we make a great effort to focus also on the regions located further north and south.

My first reaction when I came across this challenge was to be a little overwhelmed. How could I make a lasting impression on our guests knowing that most of them come from places where they have access wines from all over the world and have travelled extensively?

Luckily, in the past decade or so, more and more local producers have started to defy the traditional and I decided to base our menu on those small vintners, who produce high-quality wines based on

varieties that are atypical of what you would expect when you come to Chile or dare to experiment with original techniques.

It ends up being a very dynamic task to coordinate our approach together with the Chefs, as they also use a lot of local ingredients and adaptations. It's a journey of discovery even for us, when we try new flavours. For instance, in the Atacama Desert we get to experiment with local herbs and produce (rica-rica, chañar, an endless variety of colorful potatoes, just to name a few) while in Patagonia we get a lot of fresh fish from the Pacific, and get to experiment with recipes that are a mixture of native and those brought over by different migrant waves.

Now the menus at all the Awasi lodges, have the same concept, both with approximately 50 different styles of wines, without repeating between one





hotel and the other, and although it is not much, we aim to surprise our guests and making them step out of their comfort zone.

**ASI:** How do you manage your customer expectations, considering many of the people that visit both of your properties have some worldly dining experiences?

**KC:** Most of our guests come to Fogo Island Inn for its holistic experience, its deep connection to place, culture, nature. Our reputation has been established by successfully offering an elevated service experience while remaining true to who we are.

From the architecture of the Inn, the furnishings, the unique brand of hospitality and through the many expressions of our foodways, we strive to champion all that Fogo Island is and has to offer.



We try to do this while staying connected to the global so we do offer food and beverage experiences that would be associated with the luxury segment of our industry, including some of the classic wines and service standards one would expect of an award-winning, globally recognized establishment.

Ultimately, our mission as a social business under Shorefast, a Canadian registered charity, is to demonstrate how it's possible for local communities to thrive in a global economy. How to find a way of life for communities that is equitable, dignified, sustainable — and joyful.

Fogo Island Inn has been a pioneer of Regenerative Tourism, and today, more than ever, discerning travellers are seeking to have a positive impact on local communities when they travel. We tend to attract this type of guest.



		<p><b>PC:</b> Music may be the food of love, but here at Awasi it's a love of food (and beverages!) that is music to our ears. Many of our guests are regular customers of the best hotels and restaurants around the world, so we know we need to work hard to impress them. They tend to assume that we have a wine list from different countries, and that they will choose their wines the way it's usually done: the Sommelier suggests a specific bottle based on their food choice and that's that.</p> <p>However, the experience at Awasi differs in several ways. To start with, they will not be at Awasi for just one meal. We offer an all-inclusive program that includes alcoholic beverages, so our wine suggestions are covered. Then, our guests usually stay with us for around 4-5 days or more, which means we can really get to know their preferences, accompany them on their gastronomic journey and take time to show them both conservative or "safe" option or more adventurous suggestions.</p> <p>Lastly, we do offer the possibility to choose if they want to accompany their meals with just one specific wine of their choice or follow the pairing. Each meal is composed of at least three courses, and each time the Sommelier will suggest a specific wine option and explain the pairing. On some nights or for special occasions, we will serve tasting menus of between 6 to 8 options, so each night is different, with the possibility of not repeating any wine for at least 8 days.</p> <p>This makes for an experience that is both educational and playful, as they learn about the area and the country in an interactive way and get to try certain wines that they would otherwise overlook or simply not have access to.</p> <p><b>ASI:</b> How does your remoteness affect your logistics and costing?</p> <p><b>KC:</b> When it comes to wines, procurement is indeed the single biggest challenge for a remote place like ours. We manage through obstacles like transportation, access and pricing thanks to a combination of deep, long-standing relationships and careful, long-term planning.</p> <p>Wine is a living, breathing product and our remoteness means long journeys on planes, trucks and ferries. We use couriers, call in favours, and</p>	<p>collaborate with friends in the business to alleviate transportation pains. Private orders are a necessity of course.</p> <p>As for pricing, Fogo Island Inn applies a markup that is lower than in most traditional hotels. Some of the challenges we face include provincial tariffs and interprovincial taxation which, for example, make it prohibitive for smaller Canadian 'boutique' wineries to sell to Newfoundland, who has one of the highest mark ups in Canada.</p> <p><b>PC:</b> Costs are in fact an important factor due to the logistics of being located in remote locations. Another factor is that we only have 14 Villas in Patagonia and 12 Rooms in Atacama, so the amounts that we order from each winery to satisfy our guests' demand is significantly lower than a regular hotel or restaurant. It's important to mention that our hotel's restaurants are private for guests only. Added to the diversity that we aim to offer, that makes for an even smaller amount of bottles that we purchase per supplier. However, we have slowly made a name for ourselves and being a part of Relais &amp; Châteaux the industry knows that many guests choose us for the gastronomical aspect and choose to collaborate with us maintaining competitive prices.</p> <p>Both in Awasi Patagonia and in Atacama we must have time and private transportation to be able to get our wines to the hotel.</p> <p>The most important thing is to be aware of how long it will take for the products to arrive, whenever I have to make a request for wines, I must bear in mind that it will take at least 15 days from the moment I made the request, so the most important here, it is to manage the available and missing quantities well. A great part of this job is not only to know your product very well, but also being extremely organized, anticipatory and maintaining good relations with transparent providers.</p> <p><b>ASI:</b> Why did you take on the challenge of being a sommelier in an isolated place such as Fogo Island and Awasi?</p> <p><b>KC:</b> I have always been an admirer of Zita Cobb, Founder of Shorefast and Innkeeper at Fogo Island Inn. We became acquaintances in 2016. The opportunity to work with such a visionary</p>
Feature Article			
	Sommellerie in the Far Corners of the Americas		



and accomplished woman was a strong factor in me joining, as well as the experience of living and working on Fogo Island.

I've wanted to come to Fogo Island since I was child. I have lived in many regions and have always been attracted to remote areas. This was an opportunity of a lifetime.

A chance to collaborate with my mentor Peter Boyd is very much an honour and was also a deciding factor. And last but not least, working closely with Executive Chef Tim Charles has been so rewarding. My friends and peers, former colleagues of his all spoke so highly of him. And they were so right. He is brilliant and a great human being.

**PC:** After working on a cruise ship in Southeast Asia I was at a stage in my life where I was looking for something more exclusive and with more responsibilities in order to continue growing professionally, but still young to be eager to try different challenges.

Since I started my career as a sommelier I have had only one purpose, which is to become a Master Sommelier one day. I was initially drawn to Awasi because I was familiar with Relais & Châteaux and knew about the quality standards they represented. Right from the beginning I was met by a different training and work dynamic that I found appealing. One is accompanied by a great restaurant team but also has a lot of individual responsibilities as a sommelier. I was given the liberty to make changes, I was always supported try new things and trusted my instincts, they just left lead by my experience; I believe here at this point, is the key to professional growth, especially in our field.

**ASI:** Being in isolation can be challenging for one's own mental health. How do you keep your mind positive when working in isolation?

**KC:** As a team, we look for ways to bring inspiration and positivity into our daily lives through events and interactions with guest chefs, sommeliers, food purveyors and others. Personally, I can say there are seven seasons here and I've only experienced a few. There is still so much beauty to see. Having said that, key to living on any Island, especially with the demands of the hospitality industry, is to make time to leave the Island a few



Awasi Patagonia Villas outdoor tub Photo: Contributed

times a year. In our industry, it important to see what is outside on our patch. Right after our closure in late November, I headed to Montreal. I visited Vin Mon Lapin and Vin Papillon which was not only inspiring but reignited my passion and love for the wine industry. Tasting wines from lists I admire and from regions and producers less accessible to me, brought me much pleasure. It can be rejuvenating for wine stewards and restaurateurs to go to other establishments for inspiration, relaxation and as well as learning opportunities. Living here, having more time to think has also allowed me to write more and concentrate on other artistic aspirations.

**PC:** At the beginning it was a bit intense. Getting used to being away from everything and everyone you know, coping with the complexity of logistics (not only for purchases and suppliers) and the pressures that come with any new job. But slowly you start to get the hang of it, and you start to appreciate the little things. There is being able to really do what I like, creating pairings, doing wine tastings with the guests and seeing them enjoy, working together with interesting people on the different teams, creating new friendships, working in parallel with the Chef and creating and enhancing flavours ... In short, having the opportunity to improve and grow every day, even with the aforementioned difficulties, is a sufficient source of motivation to have a healthy and calm mind.



TASTES FROM

Americas

farthest regions

1

Go West, Way West  
Maui Winery (Hawaii, USA)

Maui Winery prides itself on its grape wines (it also makes pineapple wine) made from fruit grown on the volcanic soils of the Haleakal volcano. In addition to the soils, elevation is key in the warm climes of Hawaii. Vineyards are planted between 1700 and 1850 feet to Chenin Blanc, Gewürtztraminer, Grenache, Malbec, Syrah and Viognier.

2

Northern Wilderness  
Celista Winery (British Columbia, Canada)

While wineries exist in Alaska, none produce wines from locally grown grapes, leaving the title of North America’s northernmost vineyard to Celista Estate Winery in the newly recognized Shuswap GI (Geographical Indication) in British Columbia, Canada. The winery grows mostly Germanic varieties such as Ortega and Siegerrebe known for short growing seasons, along with French American hybrids such as Marechal Foch.

3

Central Sunbathers  
Ocoa Bay (Dominican Republic)

While Brazilian vineyards are situated closest to the equator, the Caribbean occupies a more central position relative to the southern tips of South America and the northern extremes of Canada. Surprisingly, grapes bath alongside sun worshippers in the warmth of the Dominican Republic sun. Ocoa Bay produces reds from Tempranillo and whites from Colombard, although experimental plantings of other varieties is underway to diversify the offering.

4

Eastern Breezes  
Eileean Breagha (Nova Scotia, Canada)

Whilst some experimental vineyards exist in Newfoundland - originally termed Vinland by early Norse explorers who witnessed wild grapes vines growing on the barren province - commercial grape wine production remains elusive. Eileean Breagha, located on a bucolic setting overlooking Cape Breton’s Bras D’Or Lake in Nova Scotia is the continent’s most easterly producer of grape wines.

5

Southern Extreme  
Otronia (Patagonia, Argentina)

Fittingly the winery and vineyards owned by oil tycoon Alejandro Bulgheroni is referred to on their website as Patagonia Extrema. At 45°33 South Latitude it might just be the southernmost in the world. The winery is producing from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Gewürtztraminer and Pinot Gris in what is surely South America’s cool climate frontier.

Feature Article

Sommellerie in the Far Corners of the Americas



# VINVENTIONS PRESENTS SOLUTIONS TO WINE SHELF-LIFE CHALLENGES



Vinventions was the first company to solve the problem of cork-taint by developing the TCA- free Nomaticorc closure. While this was Vinventions' first contribution to reducing spoilage in the industry, we were also the first company to solve reduction and oxidation faults through oxygen management. Today, thanks to our innovations, Vinventions offers the most advanced closure range in the industry providing controlled and consistent oxygen ingress to manage the wine evolution and the sensory experience winemakers intend.

**Want to know more?**  
**Watch our latest video**

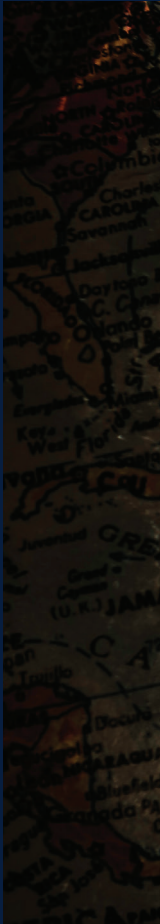


**VINVENTIONS**



Somm Selections

A



Americas' New Wine Frontiers

AMERICAS'  
NEW WINE  
FRONTIERS





Photo: Unsplash.com

**Sommeliers are  
helping push  
the industry to  
explore new  
lands and styles**

Only a few decades ago, the fine wine industry of the Americas was largely identified by sommeliers as a select few regions. The wines of California, even more specifically parts of Northern California, and Chile's Rapel and Maipo Valleys were just a few of the places that found a place on wine lists around the globe. Even then, Mendoza was just emerging as a power and sommeliers had just started to embrace the possibilities of fine wine production coming from the United States' Pacific Northwest, New York State, and the Niagara Peninsula of Ontario (Canada). Thirty years later, the likes of Oregon, Washington State, the Finger Lakes of New York, Niagara and the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia are established stars of North America. Argentina's Mendoza and Salta are world renowned, and Chile's viticultural landscape seen as so much more than just its classic Central Valley regions

As sommeliers seek out innovation, new fresher styles, the American wine frontier is once again expanding to include new places, new ideas and new styles. We asked sommeliers from across the Americas to identify wines from their country that are worth exploring.



**Nova Scotia's 'Fountain of Youth' Sparkling Wines** Mark DeWolf (Canada)

The Canadian wine landscape has historically been dominated by the wines of the Niagara Peninsula in Ontario and the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, but over the last couple of decades we've seen winemaking move to our country's coastal corners. One place that has emerged is the Annapolis Valley in my home province of Nova Scotia, located in the far eastern edge of mainland Canada. Grapes here benefit from a cool growing season, thanks to the moderating effects of the Atlantic Ocean and the tidal activity of the Minas Basin, part of the Bay of Fundy. Each day the equivalent volume of water of all the fresh waters lakes and rivers in the world move in and out of the basin. The results are a sparkling winemakers dream as the cool climate and extension of the growing season (picking for sparkling is often in October) produces grapes with low sugars and high natural acidity levels, the latter described by local winemaker Jean-Benoit Deslauriers (Benjamin Bridge), "like a fountain of youth." Most producers here allow for extended time on the lees, often releasing vintage dated wines five or more years after harvest, contributing to the complexity of the wines, which all possess Nova Scotia's signature laser-like acidity. Wines are made from a blend of Champenoise and local varietals such as L'Acadie Blanc. My favourites include the Lightfoot & Wolfville Blanc de Blancs, Benjamin Bridge NV Brut and Brut Reserve along with L'Acadie Vineyards Prestige Brut.

**Racy Michigan Riesling**  
Doug Frost, MS, MW (United States)

The wines of Michigan are unlikely to resonate with much of the world's wine buying public, but did you know they have been producing wine in this northern American state for more than 150 years? The earliest records of wine production in Michigan dates to 1780. Much of the early wine production was in the southern part of the state and was predominantly sweet wines based on native varietals such as Catawba, Concord and Niagara. A new potential era of fine wine from *Vitis vinifera*







Photo: Unsplash.com

grown in the northern part of the state, where the moderation of Lake Michigan provides an extended growing season, started in the 1970s.

According to Frost “Left Foot Charley Le Caban Riesling 2019 Old Mission Peninsula represent a remarkable confluence of site, climate and stubborn which allows Riesling (among other grapes) to survive and even prosper where the Old Mission Peninsula juts out into the Grand Traverse Bay and Lake Michigan. Winemaker Bryan Ulbrich has a delicate touch with all his white wines and, with some gentle sweetness to shroud the racy acidity, this bottle is pure pleasure.”

**Diurnal Delights: The Wines of Coahuila**

Manuel Negrete (Mexico)

In the Mexican wine landscape, we usually have on the radar the main producer: Baja California, and in the central part of the country we locate the state of Querétaro as the leader in sparkling wines, mostly produced using the traditional method. But in recent years, one of the most historic production centers not only in Mexico, but also in the Americas, has undergone a reconversion that today places it as one of the undoubted references of Mexican wine. I am talking about the state of Coahuila.

Coahuila, located in the extreme north-central part of the country (just south of Texas) is a desert state, with cold nights and generally hot days, sometimes this is more than 30 degrees Celsius separating day from night. Within this huge state there are several wine growing regions: Ramos Arizpe and Cuatrociénegas where production often veers to volume, Saltillo, where sandy soils produce wines with a lot of floral intensity and finally, two regions that stand out as star, the Arteaga and the Parras Valley.

Arteaga, which boasts a very small production, is in one of the coldest areas of the state, and produces some pleasantly surprisingly Pinot Noir, a varietal that is especially scarce in Mexico. Top producers

Somm Selections

Americas’ New Wine Frontiers



include Bodegas del Viento and Bodega Los Cedros. Parras Valley, the flagship area of Coahuila, is home to the oldest winery in America, Casa Madero, founded in 1597. In this same region, flanked by a multitude of walnut trees, we find different projects that have been making a name for themselves, such as Rivero González, Camino Corazón, Vinícola Parvada or the already very famous Viñedos Don Leo, which has attracted the attention of locals and foreigners alike for its Cabernet Sauvignon Gran Reserva, produced from old vines.

In general, all of Coahuila is known for its red wines, with Syrah and Malbec standing out for their quality and aging potential. In the case of whites, Chenin Blanc clearly raises its hand as the protagonist of quality, although Chardonnay is the most planted. The most fun and different thing is that we also find rosés with personality and orange wine has started to become popular.

**País: the Matrix of American Viticulture**  
Francisca Herrera Crisan (Chile)

País is the matrix of American viticulture and has now become part of some of the most ancient vineyards you can find on the planet, mostly concentrated here in Chile. It is therefore a very powerful symbol of metissage, our main distinctive cultural foundation as American societies. It is also a symbol of our fascinating identity here in Chile and by far one of the most authentic expressions of our terroir. Old País vines can be as much as 200 years old, or more, and much of the viticulture used in these ancient vineyards is organic. Through the wines of País from Chile, you connect with fascinating people, old traditions of winemaking and breathtaking landscapes of infinite horizons of small and very old bush vines.

Wines from the País are some of the most sincere and humble wines you can taste, combining what could be considered as opposite characteristics: rusticity with wisdom and elegance, bright red fruits like strawberry with a touch of earthiness and spices like black pepper, lightness and depth.







Map: PictureBoxBlue.com

Of course, there is a wide range of styles depending on each producer, from easy drinking commercial styles to more complex wines. To help the reader who does not know anything about País, I like to compare it with Gamay and the different levels of quality and style you can find in France's Beaujolais region.

My recommendation is to explore the Pais grape variety in all its versatility in terms of styles, traditions and geography. My picks range from fresh to full-bodied include Miguel Torres, Estelado, País, Brut, Traditional Method (Maule Valley), Leonardo Erazo 'La Resistencia' País (Itata Valley), Casa del Alto 'Pipeño' (BioBio), Massoc Frères 'El Macanudo' (Itata Valley) and for sweet styles try Cardenas Family, Asoleado, Montura Vieja (Maule Valley) and Pajarete Glaciares del Alto (Huasco Valley, Atacama).

### Torrontés Riojano: Salta's Exotic Wines

Valeria Gamper (Argentina)

If I had to choose just one region to recommend, it would be Salta. I am a huge fan of the area, not just because of the beauty of its stunning and dramatic views, which are really important in terms of wine tourism, but also for the people, the food, and the wines produced there. Especially those made from the Torrontés Riojano grape, which is native to Argentina, and delivers unique, expressive, exotic and food-friendly wines.

I really like El Esteco Old Vines, from Bodega el Esteco, made from very old vines grown in "parral" from Cafayate at 1700 meters of altitude. Also the Cellarius Torrontés, from Bodega Isasmendi, a small family-run winery in Cachi at 2500 meters of elevation. While not from Salta, I have to mention Susana Balbo's (also known as the "Queen of Torrontés") Barrel Fermented Torrontés from Altamira, a sub-region of the Uco Valley.



Some Sommelier

# M



# Make me a match

## Ceviche

Ceviche





Photo: Unsplash.com

Few dishes better express the collective of South American cuisine than ceviche. The dish, which involves the quick curing of fish in an acid, typically the juice of citrus fruit, is produced throughout the continent with regional variations reflecting both the type of fish used and the variety of vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices added. ASI asked four South American sommeliers for their pairing suggestions.

## Ceviche

- 1 lb filet of firm white fish  
such as Chilean sea bass  
or North Atlantic halibut,  
cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 cup lime juice, freshly squeezed
- 1 small red onion, sliced
- 1/4 cup red pepper, finely diced
- 1/2 cup cilantro, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Sea salt, to taste
- Cracked pepper, to taste

**Directions:** Combine fish and lime juice in a non-reactive bowl. Refrigerate for one hour. Add onion, pepper and cilantro. Cover and refrigerate for another hour. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Serve.





**Héctor Gascón** Photo: Contributed



**Martín Bruno** Photo: Contributed

## **Héctor Gascón, Venezuela**

For a basic ceviche I would recommend a sparkling white wine with high acidity that complements the citrus and the fresh flavours of the dish. The freshness of the wine will also balance the spicy heat of this dish. Of course, Venezuelans often pair ceviche with beer, so a non-wine suggestion would be a refreshing and creamy Pilsen-style beer such as Polar.

### **Pomar Brut (Lara, Venezuela)**

This is a great Venezuelan example of a fresh and crisp sparkling wine. "Pomar Brut," a blend of Chenin Blanc, Macabeo and Malvoisie, from Lara in Venezuela, pairs very well with ceviche. If you prefer an octopus or shrimp-based ceviche, I would recommend something with the same freshness as Pomar Brut but with some elegant red fruits aromas such as "Pomar Brut Rosé", which is a blend of Chenin Blanc and Syrah.

## **Martín Bruno, Argentina**

As a result of its preparation ceviche is dominated by citrus flavours, which is complemented by a distinct savoury tone from the fish. As a result, ceviche needs to be paired with wines with a similar vibrant acidity, elevated aromatic intensity and overall freshness. In Argentina we can find wines of this characteristics in several regions, but specially two come to mind: San Pablo, Tunuyán, Valle de Uco, in Mendoza and Trevelin, Chubut, in Northern Patagonia.

### **Zuccardi Polígonos Valle de Uco Verdejo (Mendoza, Argentina)**

San Pablo is one of the coldest sub-appellations of the Uco Valley in Mendoza. This Spanish variety has adapted very well, and the wine, which does not go through malolactic fermentation is defined by its acidity, and distinctive flavours suggestive of lemon peel, citrus blossom and fresh cut herbs. This acid and flavour matches perfectly to the typical flavours of ceviche.

### **Nant y Fall Riesling (Patagonia, Argentina)**

Trevelin, located on the 43rd south parallel is one of the newest GI (Geographical Indication) of Argentina, and one of the world's southernmost wine regions. There are already some very interesting examples of white varieties such as Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. The Nant y Fall Riesling from this region is dry, austere and possesses a fresh salinity. It makes for a great contrast for the more pronounced flavours of ceviche. It would be especially good if the ceviche recipe calls for a generous dose of chili peppers, and cilantro.



**Tiago Locatelli, Brazil**

My suggestion is a wine made in the Serra do Sudeste, a rather new wine region in the extreme South of the Rio Grande do Sul State. It has a slightly more continental climate than the more well-known Serra Gaúcha.

**Hermann Matiz Alvarinho (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil)**

Although Hermann winery is most famous for sparkling wine it also produces some amazing still wine. Their Matiz Alvarinho which is fermented in steel spends a couple of months in old barrels, which brings some texture to the wine without overwhelming the fruit. It is full of peach, citrus and floral notes, in combination with a light-body and vibrant acidity on the palate. Overall it offers remarkable balance. It will make a perfect match with classic sea bass or halibut ceviche.

**Marshall Strika, Chile**

Ceviche is something we eat a lot of here in Chile in its various forms. There are spicy and not so spicy versions. There is the Peruvian or the Chilean-style. While there are differences to be found the base of this dish is always fresh fish, onion, citrus juice, salt and pepper. That always remains the same. In terms of Chilean wine, the most traditional pairing is a fresh, young, apple, green fruit, vegetal (green chili, chives) and mineral-flavoured Sauvignon Blanc from one of the vineyards found along our generous coastline.

**Casa Marin Cipreses Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc (San Antonio Valley, Valparaiso, Chile),**

**Tabali Talinay Sauvignon Blanc (Limari Valley, Chile)**

**Casa Silva Lago Ranco (Los Ríos, Chile)**

Chile has general coastline, so you can find amazing Sauvignon Blanc from one end to the other in places like Limari in the north, the San Antonio Valley in Valparaiso and the Los Ríos region in the south of the country. All offer a distinctive and refreshing character that make them a match for ceviche.



Tiago Locatelli Photo: Contributed



Marshall Strika Photo: Contributed

Make Me a Match

Ceviche



# ASI CERTIFICATION 1 & 2:

## ASI introduces globally recognized certifications

An interview with  
**Giuseppe Vaccarini,**  
Director ASI Exam Committee

Our People

ASI introduces globally recognized certifications: a Q&A with Giuseppe Vaccarini

This past December, 242 candidates representing 29 nationalities sat the first ASI Certification 1 exam. A little more than a month later, it was announced 171 achieved the required 65 per cent passing mark, making them the first recipients of the ASI Certification 1.

ASI Certification 1 which will be followed by the launch of ASI Certification 2 later this year, is according to ASI President William Wouters “a result of the board and committees of ASI actively working to deliver our member associations, and sommeliers around the world, the international levels of sommellerie they have been looking for. We believe the creation of the certifications is a great example of our commitment to be an association focused not only on contests, but the overall education and well-being of sommeliers everywhere.”

To learn more about the ASI Certifications, and

what they mean for sommeliers in the future, ASI interviewed Giuseppe Vaccarini, the architect of the new levels. Vaccarini needs little introduction, as he won the title of ASI Best Sommelier of the World in 1978 and was a two-term President of ASI; leading the association from 1996 to 2004. He now leads the Exam Committee, working in partnership with other committee directors and members on a number of initiatives.

**ASI:** What inspired you to propose adding the new certification levels?

Thanks to the experiences gained in the hospitality and education sector, I have always had it clear in my mind that to create a full professional curriculum (and a profession) you must start with young people. The ASI Diploma is practically reserved for those who have already reached a high level of knowledge, but it is not for everyone as it is based on rigid professional criteria that includes a deep





GIUSEPPE VACCARINI  
WORLD'S BEST SOMMELIER 1978

Photo: Contributed

knowledge of all the facets of sommellerie, such as tasting, wine culture, food and wine pairing, oenology, viticulture, alcoholic beverages, beers, in depth knowledge of international cuisine and much more, along with a mastery of foreign languages.

Today, unlike in the recent past, one becomes a sommelier with a good foundation of theory, but it is above all a practical profession that one learns and practices with one's own experiences exclusively on the "battlefield". Young people who enter the world of sommeliers cannot resist the strong temptation to stand out and challenge their colleagues. It is in this context that the new certifications fit within ASI.

**ASI: Why is this the right time to launch these new certifications?**

ASI Certification 1 and ASI Certification 2, really meet the needs of young people who are starting in our profession. They were made a necessity since the vast majority of ASI member countries are at the stage where they need to improve their education and develop certification systems. The

ASI Diploma exam alone is too exclusive for most of their member sommeliers. The proposal of a broader range of qualifications stems from an idea that I have been maturing for, since the launch of the ASI Diploma 10 years ago. It meets my motto: *"sommellerie is a school of life."* After consultation and sharing with my team I proposed these two new qualifications at the Mainz ASI General Assembly this past July (2021). The board and member associations of ASI in attendance enthusiastically approved the full project.

**ASI: What's is the purpose of these certifications and why was it important for ASI?**

The purpose of two new levels, along with the ASI Diploma, is meant to align the sommelier's international knowledge and skills among the ASI member nations.

These exams are open to sommeliers or future / aspiring sommeliers studying or working in the oeno-gastronomic world (restaurants, wine bars, wine merchants, distribution...), as per the OIV (International Organization of Vine and Wine)



		<p>definition. The candidates must also be members of one of ASI's member national associations.</p> <p>The world is evolving quickly: inventors and scientists propose innovations that we appreciate as they improve our lifestyle day after day. In this constantly and rapidly evolving context, ASI cannot wait. <i>"Those who hesitate lose!"</i> This is why the ASI Exam Committee now offers the two additional levels of certification including the possibility to offer them in languages not available for the ASI Diploma. In addition, when ASI Certification 1 or ASI Certification 2 is included in the national examinations, the approved ASI certification logo and the member national association logo could appear on their certificates upon approval by the ASI. In this case, it will signify ASI's approval/endorsement of the member national association's certification. This also allows each member national sommelier association to align its own certification with the ASI guidelines and the minimum competencies recommended by ASI.</p> <p><b>ASI:</b> How do these certifications support a wine professional in their career path?</p> <p>A great purpose of these new certifications is to attract young people to a profession that offers a rewarding job and a career as unique as it is prestigious by turning their dream into reality.</p> <p>From the first certification, the young person is driving a "Ferrari" on the "highway" of this profession.</p> <p>This is a great advantage as they immediately have the opportunity to focus on the objectives of their professional career. It will allow them to have many chances of success and success in a relatively shorter time precisely because, through the exams and the certificate, they will have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and to compare themselves with colleagues from all over the world.</p> <p>Let's point out that only ASI member associations have the possibility to offer these exams to their members. We believe it is an additional way for them to attract young people and to guide them.</p>
	Our People	<p><b>ASI:</b> The ASI Diploma is one of the most prestigious designations for any sommelier to aspire to. Do you see these new certifications as supporting those in their quest to become an ASI Diploma graduate or should we look at these as independent of the Diploma?</p> <p>The ASI Diploma is the highest level of proficiency expected from a sommelier in the ASI global environment.</p> <p>The ASI Sommelier Diploma certifies the skills required of sommeliers and professionals in the restaurant-hotel sector who achieve a <i>'high standard of service together with a deep knowledge of world food and wine, of the management of the beverage sector and of the culture of the vine and wine,'</i> transforming their work into art.</p> <p>The goal and the logic is always the same: to stimulate young people from the very beginning of their career to aspire to the ASI Certification 1 and Certification 2 and, subsequently, to the ASI Diploma.</p> <p>Currently the two new qualifications are independent from the Diploma: those who wish to approach the sommelier world can sit for ASI Certification 1, continue with ASI Certification 2 and conclude with the ASI Diploma. If they already have a good knowledge base, they can sit for the ASI Certification 2 directly, gaining experience toward the ASI Diploma. As already mentioned above, the ASI Diploma remains independent of the two ASI Certifications. Those who believe they have already achieved a high level of preparation and experience can take the Diploma exam without taking either the Certification 1 or Certification 2 exams.</p> <p>Passing the exam and thus obtaining the ASI Diploma for the candidate means the fulfilment of an aspiration that certifies them at the highest professional level.</p> <p><b>ASI:</b> Please outline the level of knowledge expected to complete each certification exam and what type of questions, skills are required to complete each exam.</p>
	International Standards of Sommelierie, a Q&A with Giuseppe Vaccarini	



## ASI CERTIFICATION LEVELS EXPLAINED



**ASI Certification 1** - Assessment of the minimal international theory required for a prospective sommelier. This Certification has been prepared mainly for students of hotel institutes and room service staff who intend to start a course of improvement in our sector. It aims to cover the broad general knowledge necessary for a young person to feel comfortable as an assistant sommelier with domestic or foreign clients and is aimed at certifying commis sommeliers.



**ASI Certification 2** - Assessment of the minimal skills required for a sommelier in an international environment. This primary qualification is the accepted international level required for a sommelier in the ASI global environment. This Certification is aimed at those who have already been in the profession for some years and who are able to hold the responsibility of head sommelier. The skills cover a broad spectrum of international knowledge and professional skills required to perform his / her duties comfortably in most environments. The focus is on brands / products / recipes / known or distributed globally, as well as on viticulture, winemaking, grape varieties, service etiquette, wine tasting protocols, stock management, customer care, food pairings, etc.

For each certification and for the Diploma, the tests are calibrated on three different levels of difficulty.

The minimum level that the candidate must pass for certification 1 & 2 is 65% of the total score referred to all theoretical and practical tests. For the Diploma, the minimum level that the candidate must achieve is 60 per cent for the Silver level, and 70 per cent for the Gold level. A candidate competing in their mother tongue, can only achieve the Bronze level.

It goes without saying that for ASI Certification 1 and ASI Certification 2 levels the most obvious simplification refers to the possibility of choosing your own national language, precisely to facilitate the approach to the exam and to the world of sommeliers. For these two certifications, the questionnaires propose questions on the basic topics of the profession that increase in difficulty with ASI Certification 2 and with the ASI Diploma as shown in the following three examples based on the same subject:

### Example: ASI Certification 1

**Question:** DOCG is a labelling term used for:

- a. Rioja
- b. Barbaresco
- c. Late Harvest sweet wine
- d. Yarra Valley

### Example: ASI Certification 2

**Question:** There are four municipalities in the Langhe entitled to the "DOGC Barbaresco." Name 2 of them.

For the ASI Diploma, the questionnaire is structured in such a way as to evaluate the depth and mastery of the knowledge acquired while remaining in the classical and traditional topics, while the practical tests take into consideration the ability to react, the application of service techniques, the attitude and style of the candidate.

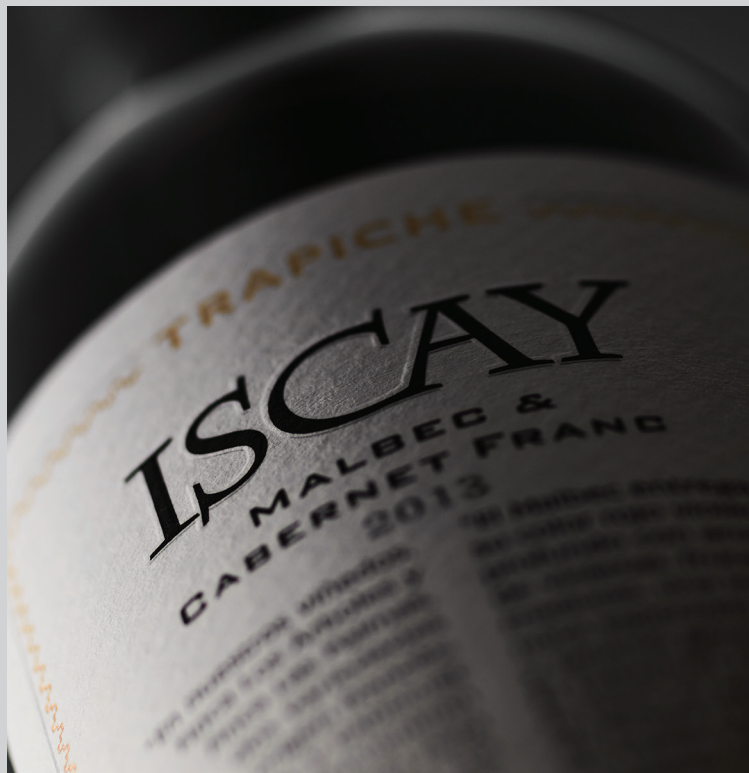
### Example: ASI Diploma

**Question:** Write the composition of the soil of the DOGC Barbaresco and at least five of its numerous geographical mentions (crus).



		<p><b>ASI:</b> Any project like this requires a team. Tell us a little about who has contributed to the development of these certifications and what their role was in the creation.</p> <p>It's true, the team is essential! I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to identify suitable people whose profile corresponds to sommeliers and, or experts with years of experience in the hospitality and wine teaching sector. Ours is an inseparable team. Everyone brings ideas and suggestions. Specifically, with respect to of the certification extension proposals, I can say that at the base the input started from myself but was immediately grasped by everyone. The idea of the two new certifications has matured over time as a result of considerations made in my numerous travels, in particular in South America and Asian countries, where I had noticed that young people turned to other international organizations to learn about wines and obtain a certificate proving their skills. It was immediately clear to me that ASI should intervene and meet the needs of thousands of young people who wish to improve themselves and enter the world of sommeliers.</p> <p>For everything achieved to date by the Certification Exam Committee, I thank the past president Shinya Tasaki and the current President William Wouters for having believed in the certifications and favoured their development, the General Assembly and the national presidents who shared the choices, But, I particularly would like to thank the members of the Committee: Michèle Aström-Chantôme, Saiko Tamura-Soga, Edwin Raben, Jean-Vincent Ridon, Andreas Matthidis, Leo d'Addazio, Alberto Merico who immediately worked with competence, great commitment and passion, making important and decisive interventions and contributions to the improvement of all ASI exams which also benefits the Sommeliers Contests Committee and the Education Committee.</p> <p><b>ASI:</b> What's the long-term vision of the ASI Certifications/Diploma?</p>	<p>The project of the ASI 1 &amp; 2 Certifications and the Diploma is as ambitious as it is demanding. We are aware of it but determined to achieve the goal which is to introduce young people to the profession. The success of a project is primarily measured by numbers.</p> <p>The attendance at the exams to date have been very positive. This stimulated us to continue with the certification levels. However, numbers do not have a soul, and the members of the Exam Committee also add the value of human contact by personalizing the assistance to the member association presidents and their local jurors. We want our members to believe that in the world of sommellerie a cordial relationship favours communication and will further the expansion of the credibility of ASI like a wildfire via the traditional and effective "word of "mouth system."</p> <p>We are also happy to see the progression of some countries where sommellerie is very recent. The level of the candidates is increasing in a tangible way and their motivation is real. These certifications should only help these countries attract and retain people to this profession.</p> <p><b>ASI:</b> What are the objectives and programs of the Certification Exam Committee for the next few years?</p> <p>In addition to being 100 per cent volunteers, the members of the ASI Certification Exam Committee are visionaries as they have outlined coveted projects to be implemented in the coming years.</p> <p>The path is not easy and quite demanding like all things that give long-term qualitative results. Those who work in catering and in the tourism and teaching sector know that at least three generations are needed to create and affirm a philosophy of life, a new way of cooking, a tasting method, service techniques, etc. We are still at the end of the first one and about to enter the second but with the conviction and commitment of wanting to achieve the goals that, we hope, will be shared by the General Assembly.</p>
	<b>Our People</b>		
	<i>International Standards of Sommellerie, a Q&amp;A with Giuseppe Vaccarini</i>		





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Somm Perspectives

No Alcohol Wines?



Photo: Chef&Sommelier



# SOMM PERSPECTIVES NO ALCOHOL WINES?



Pierre Vila Palleja is owner and head sommelier of Le Petit Sommelier, an upscale Parisian bistro known for its extensive wine list. Palleja has gained experience work at The Ritz, the Hôtel de Crillon and Restaurant Lasserre. A well-known wine writer, Pierre has an authoritative knowledge of the wines of France.



Ian Blessing, is a former sommelier at The French Laundry, Chef Thomas Keller’s iconic Northern Californian restaurant. Of the experience Blessing says, “I had the privilege of serving the best wines in the world, and tasting things never imagined I would even see in person.” However, six months after the birth of his first child with wife Carly, also a sommelier at The French Laundry, the couple decided to forego a previous life of what Blessing describes as ‘chronic alcohol abuse’ and embrace non-alcoholic beverages. The decision led the couple to create All The Bitter, a line of alcohol-free cocktail bitters that tasted like the classics found behind every bar.

The rise in non-alcoholic wine consumption is undeniable. ISWR, a global research company focused on the beverage alcohol industry, expects the sale of low alcohol (less than 7.5 per cent abv) and zero alcohol wines to rise by 31 per cent by 2024 in 10 key markets (Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom, and USA) and double by the early 2030s.

The movement is in large part driven by millennial consumers seeking healthier lifestyles via a more moderate approach to alcohol consumption. According to Masters of Wine Student Irem Eren, Business Development Manager and Sales Director of BevZero, a global company focused on de-alcoholization technology “zero-alcohol and low-alcohol wine as an opportunity for the wine category to innovate and reinvent itself and an exciting part of wine’s future. No / Low alcohol is not a trend anymore, it is a category which is here to stay, and the market is out there....no / low alcohol wine is a way to get younger consumers into wine, who are the drinkers of tomorrow.”

Do they have a place in the fine dining world? We asked two sommeliers for their perspectives on no and low alcohol wines.

Somm Perspectives

No Alcohol Wines?



		<p><b>Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI):</b> Global data suggests there is a substantial rise in popularity of non-alcoholic wines, beers and spirits. Why do you believe we are seeing this rise in demand of no and low-alcohol wine, beer, spirits?</p> <p><b>Pierre Vila Paleja (PVP):</b> There may be a rise in demand in some places, but to be honest, I don't feel the necessity to sell those products here. I realize it is far from being a "modern" attitude but as a business owner I have to be realistic about the amount of time and cost required to invest in a non-alcoholic beverage program. At my restaurant (Le Petit Sommelier) our focus is wine. At any one time there are four sommeliers on the floor, not including myself. I have to be very focused on our ultimate goal. To have my sommeliers invest time and energy to explain non-alcoholic beverages is comparatively not worth it from a business perspective, in my opinion, at this time.</p> <p><b>Ian Blessing (IB):</b> Using the United States as an example, 30 per cent of the population doesn't drink alcohol at all, and another 30 per cent consumes less than one drink per week. No- and low-alcohol wine, beer, and spirits are rising in demand for the same reason we see the rise of gluten-free and plant-based foods. Vegetarians don't want to be confined to salad when they dine out, and people who avoid gluten don't want to be forced into a burger on a bed of lettuce. No- and low-alcohol wine, beer, and spirits are rising in demand for the same reason.</p> <p>We're seeing massive growth in the non-alcoholic market because millions and millions of people crave the flavour — and even more importantly, the ritual — of beer, wine, and cocktails, but they don't want to drink alcohol. We'll see the next big wave of growth once bar and restaurant owners make the connection that inclusive beverage options, like inclusive dining options, will generate more revenue.</p> <p><b>ASI:</b> Do you think quality wines, beers and spirits can be made via de-alcoholization or are there better ways to produce these products?</p>	<p><b>PVP:</b> When I evaluate these products it isn't a matter of whether there is or isn't alcohol. It is a matter of taste. I apply the same standards to wine. The pleasure of wine isn't about the alcohol, it is in the flavours, textures and balance. When I have tasted these no alcohol wines, I see their intent but to be honest I have found the quality only to be moderate. I've found in the wines I have tried a lack of balance in the mouthfeel. I think this may come down to the producer's main focus being on the removal of the alcohol so in a way the final taste is a secondary thought. In this way any criticism isn't about the lack of alcohol but way they are made as the de-alcoholization process changes everything in terms of final flavour and balance.</p> <p><b>IB:</b> At the end of the day, they are all non-alcoholic beverages simply being made in different ways, however, it is important for customers to understand which is which. Some people in recovery from alcohol abuse are very sensitive (whether physiologically or mentally) to the small fraction of alcohol that is in de-alcoholized drinks, and they may prefer 0.0 per cent ABV (Alcohol By Volume) drinks. The 0.5 per cent ABV in most beers and wines, no matter how insignificant in terms of effect, is a big no-no for many sober people.</p> <p>The other big difference, which is especially relevant to sommeliers, servers, bartenders, and people working in retail, is how the different products taste. De-alcoholized drinks taste more like the base product they're replicating, whereas the composite products are more their own thing while trying to replicate the feeling of drinking an alcoholic beverage. Acid League's Wine Proxies are a great example. They're not going to fool anyone into thinking they're wine, but they do a great job at capturing the balance, acid, freshness, complexity, and nuance of alcoholic wine. But because they are made with vinegar, as a very specific example, they might not be suitable for everyone's palate. It's important to understand these products, in the same way that sommeliers understand the differences between wine regions, so that we can describe them accurately for our guests.</p>
	Somm Perspectives		
	No Alcohol Wines?		



I don't believe there's necessarily a right or wrong way to make quality wines, beers, or spirits at the moment — the market is still figuring itself out. I've had good and bad examples of both production styles in each category. What's more important is the craft that goes into it, the ingredients, the development of the flavour profile, etc.

Wine is probably the segment of the market that should consider this question the most seriously. Sparkling wine can absolutely be done well via de-alcoholization. With the benefit of bubbles and high acid, mouthfeel isn't lost, and as long as the flavours are right you can produce a very convincing sparkling wine alternative (beer benefits in the same way with bubbles, yeast, malt, etc. covering up for the fact that the ethanol was removed). Still wines, however, don't have anything to hide behind. There are no bubbles and you're not mixing them with anything else. Still wines are unique in the no alcohol beverage world because they stand completely on their own, naked after their 10 to 15 per cent alcohol was removed without anything to make up for the flavour, body, complexity, and nuance that was stripped away along with the alcohol. (Some wines add grape concentrate or other fruit juices back afterward, but it doesn't improve things nearly enough.) There are some good wines, and quality is improving quickly. But so many red and white wines are just bad — absolute shells of whatever it was they were, to begin with, which is I suspect not very good alcoholic wine.

**ASI:** Do you feel it is important for sommeliers of "fine dining restaurants" to have non-alcoholic wine, spirits or beers as part of their beverage offering?

**PVP:** When you go to a destination restaurant like mine, guests want the whole experience. It's not only about food, but the wine to compliment it. It's not a matter of getting drunk, it is simply a matter of drinking wine as part of the full gastronomic experience. I've worked in restaurants such as L'Espadon at The Ritz Paris, where we had an extremely extensive tea program and tea service regiment. To be honest, no one really cared about

it. When I took over my restaurant, I realized we do have to have some non-alcoholic beverages such as teas, fruit juices and non-alcoholic beers but this represents a very small proportion of the all the beverages we have. So while we offer ample options, I really need to dedicate myself to an extensive wine list, because it attracts people that are very concerned by the entire gastronomic experience. There is also the matter of revenue. The time spent on the wine cellar, training to staff is a major investment and so this has to be reflected in our efforts.

**IB:** It's important that all restaurants begin to consider their non-alcoholic beverage offering, especially fine dining. Just because someone chooses not to drink alcohol doesn't mean they should have their drink options limited to water, juice, soda, or tea. Imagine being part of a group that's drinking Grand Cru Burgundy all night with their lobster, duck, and wagyu beef, and you're stuck with a Coke. What if instead, the sommelier could offer an NA chardonnay for the lobster, a Northern Rhone-inspired "Wine Proxy" with the duck, and an Old Fashioned with the steak? Suddenly you feel included, and your experience goes from mediocre to an 11. Guests are paying upwards of \$400 for a meal should be entitled to non-alcoholic options beyond soft drinks.

From the beverage program perspective, we're simply leaving money on the table by neglecting non-alcoholic beverages. Fine dining restaurants that don't offer an a non-alcoholic pairing (or at least wine, beer, or cocktail options) are missing out on every single person who dines and doesn't drink alcohol. Those guests are either spending five dollars on beverages or the cost is being waived entirely because it's so insignificant. Most non-drinkers would be thrilled with an non-alcoholic pairing options and would gladly spend 50 dollars or more for drinks that complement their meal. As a restaurant without non-drinkers options, you're losing business to restaurants that do offer inclusive drinks — a party that includes non-drinkers is more likely to book a special meal at a restaurant that caters to them.

		<p>I believe non-alcoholic wines are just as capable of pairing with food as their alcoholic counterparts. The same principles still apply: pair complementary flavours, match intensity, go with the dish or against it, bubbles and acid cut through fat, etc. There are things to consider, of course, like no alcohol reds won't work nearly as well with high-fat food (steak for example) because they lack alcohol. No alcohol wines lack intensity compared to their alcoholic counterparts, so you have to be careful how intense the dish is or the wine will be lost. On the other hand, non-alcoholic wine (and spirits/cocktails) have some interesting advantages over full alcohol products. Dishes that are easily overwhelmed by high-alcohol, fish for example, or spicy food, are great candidates for no alcohol wine.</p>	<p><b>ASI:</b> When crafting a beverage list, should they be treated as a separate category, or do you think we've reached a point where no and low alcohol products have a place on our core wine, beer, and spirits list?</p> <p><b>PVP:</b> As per my earlier responses, at this time I currently don't have any on my list.</p> <p><b>IB:</b> I don't think either is necessarily wrong or right, but if they're a separate category they should be with the rest of the wine, beer, and spirits, rather than on a different side of the menu or lumped in next to the kids' drinks. Personally, I'd prefer to see them right alongside the core wine, beer, and spirits, with a designation that they're non-alcoholic. The best suggestion I've seen is by Jeffrey Morgenthaler — an award-winning bartender and writer based in Portland, Oregon — who suggests listing everything together, but with the ABV printed alongside each cocktail, beer, wine, and spirit. This enables everyone to make informed decisions, whether they're looking for 0.0% ABV or just looking for something lower alcohol because they have to drive later, or have already had a few strong drinks, or just don't want to get too buzzed. This absolutely feels, to me, like the best way to structure drink menus.</p>
	Somm Perspectives	<p>On a more personal level, the pairing of wine (or beer or cocktails) with food can really evoke the comforting feeling of ritual. Some of our more memorable pairings were Luminara Napa Chardonnay with a shrimp alfredo pasta, Leitz German Pinot Noir with salmon and mushrooms, Acid League's "Dragon Blood" (inspired by Rhone syrah) with duck, and Athletic's "Tucker's West Coast" IPA with fried fish tacos. The last dish instantly transported me back to San Diego 10 years ago, eating fish tacos and drinking Sculpin IPA on the beach. Stick with the same general rules of food and beverage pairing, while considering the strengths and weaknesses that 0% ABV might bring, and NA wines pair brilliantly with food — sometimes even better.</p>	
No Alcohol Wines?		<h2>What are Wine Proxies?</h2> <p>Wine proxies, or crafted 'wines,' are products craft, often from fruit juices, teas, vinegars, herbs and spices to replicate the sensation of wine. According to Ian Blessing the "the best crafted 'wines' are full of soul and punch different enough from wine that you'll never mistake them, and the producers don't really want you to — they're unique "wine-like" beverages. The best alcohol-removed wines have enjoyable flavors and aromas but lack soul and punch. I haven't seen anyone yet take the best of both worlds: a well-made, de-alcoholized wine base and combine it in the way that Acid League does with tea, vinegar, herbs, flavors, bitters, etc. I have a feeling this may produce the most satisfying wine."</p>	

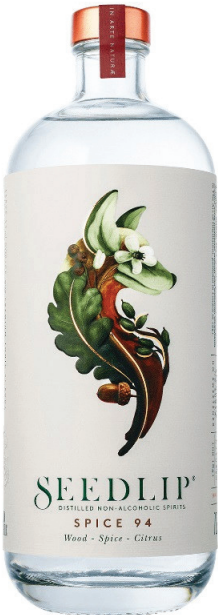


# Ian Blessings Favourite No Alcohol Beer, Wines and Spirits



**BEER:**  
Athletic Brewing,  
Untitled Art, Two Roots,  
Wellbeing, Barrel Bros,  
and Rationale.

**WINES:**  
Noughty, Leitz, Teetotaler,  
Luminara, Ariel, and Studio  
Null. We also love Acid  
League’s Wine Proxies,  
as well, which are in a  
slightly different  
category.



**SPIRITS:** Lyre’s, Monday,  
Free Spirits, The Path-  
finder, Seedlip, Spiritless  
Kentucky 74, Ghia, Dhos,  
and Wilderton.



Photo: Contributed

## Hibiscus Sour

(Non-Alcoholic Cocktail Recipe)

Recipe provided by Ian Blessing

- 2 1/2 oz (75 ml) hibiscus tea, chilled
- 3/4 oz (23 ml) grapefruit juice,  
freshly squeezed
- 3/4 oz (23 ml) lime juice,  
freshly squeezed
- 1/2 oz (15 ml) agave nectar
- 5 dashes All the Bitter  
New Orleans Bitters
- 1 egg white

Directions: Add all ingredients to  
a cocktail shaker and “dry shake”  
(without ice) for 15 second. Add ice,  
shake again until chilled, and double  
strain into a couple glass.



**THE COMPETITION  
IS OPEN**

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## **S.PELLEGRINO IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT APPLICATIONS FOR THE NEXT EDITION OF S.PELLEGRINO YOUNG CHEF ACADEMY COMPETITION ARE NOW OPEN.**

**Up to 30th April 2022**, young chefs under the age of 30 will be able to apply for S.Pellegrino Young Chef Academy Competition 2022-23, the world's most exciting culinary talent search, with the opportunity to share the signature dish that expresses their unique creativity and vision with the world.

The latest and fourth edition of the competition follows a hugely successful showing in 2019-21 despite the challenges presented by the global pandemic. Indeed, some 300 young chefs and mentors from 50 countries and regions around the world were involved in a fast paced, high quality competition that was eventually won by exciting young chef Jerome Calayag at the Grand Finale in Milan.



Through the Academy Competition, S.Pellegrino looks to identify the game changing culinary talent of the future; young chefs that have the potential to change not only the kitchen, but the world. The competition is a great opportunity for young chefs to connect with and be mentored by the world's best chefs, as well as forge strong professional networks with their peers, showcase their talent and skills on the international stage, and gain visibility that could help propel them onto the next level in their careers.

With that in mind, we encourage you to share this news with your networks and to anyone who you think it may be of interest to. You may already know the next S.Pellegrino Young Chef Academy Competition winner!

**For more information on the application process and the work of the Academy, please visit the Academy website.  
[www.sanpellegrinoyoungchefacademy.com](http://www.sanpellegrinoyoungchefacademy.com)**





# VINEXPOSIUM

## WINE PARIS & VINEXPO PARIS 2022



Marc Almert Photo: Contributed

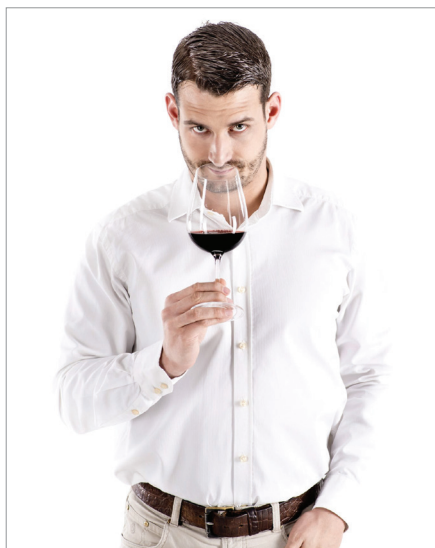


Piotr Kamecki Photo: Contributed

### Vinexpo Challenge with Marc Almert and the battle of the sommeliers.

At the recently held Wine Paris & Vinexpo Paris, Marc Almert, reigning ASI Best Sommelier of the World (2019), was joined on stage by Piotr Kamecki (ASI Vice-President Europe), for a thrilling blind tasting challenge organized by Vinexpo. The challenge consisted of a blind tasting of nine wines (five white and four red). Attendees were asked to guess the origins, vintage and grape varieties used in their production. To support the attendees, the esteemed hosts guided the participants through the challenge, sharing their tips and experience along the way. Among the wines tasted were well-known classic varieties including Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, but also more recent trends like Albariño or Grüner Veltliner. According to Almert "the key is to taste! Identify commonalities amongst various varieties and make concise notes!" To ensure typicity Almert additionally suggested tasting wines from "the classic regions." The winner of the event was Arpin Manukian, an Armenian Master of Wine student.

Also at the event, three of Europe's best sommeliers set out to test their skills in front of an enthusiastic crowd of eager wine and food enthusiasts." With only a description of a dish to work from, the three contenders battled it out to see who the winner of this gastronomic conquest would be? Overseeing the contest was reigning ASI Best Sommelier of the World, Marc Almert of Germany.



**Jakub Přibyl** Photo: Contributed



**Salvatore Castano** Photo: Contributed



**Suvad Zlatic** Photo: Contributed

They entered the ring of competition ... corkscrews drawn and dressed in their polished sommelier attire, the armor of the trade. The battlefield was Vinexpo Paris at Paris expo Porte de Versailles ... The dish to be paired, a creamy polenta made with mascarpone cheese and seasoned with truffles. It's the type of dish, that can allow a seasoned sommelier to go down a myriad of pairing routes, ranging from the traditional to the unexpected. With corkscrews ready all that was left to determine was which sommelier would vanquish the others in "the battle of the Sommeliers." It was now up to the contestants to demonstrate their pairing prowess. Entering the ring of battle were Salvatore Castano (Italy, ASI Best Sommelier of Europe & Africa 2021), Suvad Zlatic (Austria, second runner-up ASI Best Sommelier of Europe & Africa 2021) and Jakub Přibyl (Czech Republic, fourth place, ASI Best Sommelier of Europe & Africa 2021).

Přibyl took the first jab, pouring Non-Vintage Champagne Palmer Blanc de Blancs a Chardonnay dominant blend made from grapes sourced from three cru vineyards in Montagne de Reims and the Sézanne. Přibyl explained his desire to select a wine with some extended time on the lees, which this house is known for, so the autolytic notes and texture of the wine aren't lost to the texture and complexity of the dish.

Next up was Castano who, perhaps not surprisingly as an Italian, kept the pairing classic by selecting the 2016 Fontanafredda Barolo Vigna La Rosa, the iconic wine from this historic Piedmont estate. Castano explained the flavour synergies of the similarly earthy wine and the truffles, will utilize the Barolo's acid backbone to cleanse and refresh the palate of the creamy texture of the dish. Castano reminded the attendees of the value of classic pairings and the need for balance in the pairing.

Zlatic also came ready to battle. His wine of choice, the 2016 Sassoalloro IGP Castello di Montepò, a 100 per cent Sangiovese from Tuscany. Of the pairing Zlatic suggested the ripe fruit, oak aging and texture of the wine would cover some of the sweetness offered by the polenta. As an off the wall suggestion, Zlatic also suggested an aged sake as a non-wine option. The latter getting the nod of approval from some of the top tier sommeliers in the crowd. Host Marc Almert agreed that non-wine options should be part of any great sommelier's repertoire, suggesting teas, cocktails and other beverages should all be potential pairings. Přibyl agreed, suggesting in his home country beer can often be suggested as a pairing. In this instance, Přibyl recommended a Weissbier as it would "works with creaminess of the polenta."

In the end, with votes cast, the victor was Salvatore Castano's classic match, although the real winners were the attendees, who bore witness to a spirited but jovial contest of three accomplished sommeliers.



# On the road to Paris

## Best Sommelier of the World: less than 365 days to go!

The 'One Year to Go' event for the next ASI contest for Best Sommelier of the World 2023 took place recently during the Wine Paris / Vinexpo Paris wine fair, which brought together the main players of the wine and spirit sector. The event allowed the contest organizing committee from the host Union de la Sommellerie Française (UDSF) to outline plans and events to be held for the following year, as well as announce the partnership with Wine Paris / Vinexpo Paris for the upcoming World contest.

The launch event represented a symbolic step forward for ASI and USDF. This past November ASI hosted the first of three continental contests leading into the ASI Best Sommelier of the World contest, to be held in Paris, February 7th to 12th, 2023. The ASI Best Sommelier of Europe & Africa contest took place last November in Limassol, Cyprus. Italian, Salvatore Castano, won the title and became the first official candidate for the ASI Contest of the Best Sommelier of the World. More recently Valeria Gamper of Argentina won the title of the ASI Contest for the Best Sommelier of the Americas 2022, in Santiago, Chile earning her a place at the World contest in Paris. The final continental contest, the ASI Contest for Best Sommelier of Asia & Oceania, will take place in Taiwan, from November 7th to 10th. The ASI Best Sommelier of the World 2023 will take place in Paris from February 7th to 12th, 34 years after the last contest was held in France. It will gather nearly 70 candidates representing 67 countries during 4 days of high-level tests.

The international delegations will be hosted at the hotel Pullman Montparnasse which has recently been revamped. Quarterfinals and semi-finals will also be held there. The announcement of the semi-finalists will take place in the prestigious setting of the Paris City Hall. The final and closing

ceremony, held at Paris La Défense Arena, will offer a thrilling show that is sure to amaze the 3,500 professionals and amateurs expected. This event, accessible to the public through a ticket office that will open in June, is a rare opportunity to attend a contest of great intensity, in a large-scale setting, featuring talented candidates, and authentic products.

The tests reflect the daily work of sommeliers and highlight their qualities and skills. Thus, candidates are evaluated on their knowledge of wines, spirits, and all beverages from around the world but also on their quality of service and their ability to advise and bring to life emotions to customers.

The final will close a year of events orchestrated by the Union de la Sommellerie Française (UDSF). Its president, Philippe Faure-Brac, himself Best Sommelier of the World 1992, underlines the ambitions of this commitment "we are very pleased to start the countdown today, almost one year to the day before the final. It is an honor for the French sommellerie to be able to host this event in the country of gastronomy. We look forward to share with all our partners the activities that will punctuate the coming months around their know-how, especially with master classes and tastings. The first step of this calendar will be the selection of the French candidate for the contest, on March 21st, among seven great French sommeliers who volunteered this year."

ASI President William Wouters says of the ASI Best Sommelier of the World contest: "it will put sommellerie on the world stage. Thanks to the philosophy of excellence of our hosts, the Union de la Sommellerie Française, I can guarantee this event will be not only be a world-class celebration of our best sommeliers, but also French gastronomy and a wonderful showcase of our partners."

# MEMBER NEWS



## ASI CERTIFICATION 1 EXAM RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE!

The much-awaited results of the first-ever ASI Certification 1 exam, which was held on December 10th, 2021, are available on the ASI website.

Hosting the ASI Certification 1 exam was a tremendous and truly worldwide exercise, with 242 sommeliers from 17 countries representing 29 nationalities participating. ASI would like to congratulate all the participants around the world, that successfully passed the exam. Bravo!

Special thanks to the ASI Exam committee for their hard work and dedication in making it possible!

## ASI DIPLOMA EXAM WILL TAKE PLACE ON MARCH 14TH

Offered in French, English or Spanish, the yearly uniform exams, administered on the same day by participating national associations, include written tests, blind tastings, essays, service tests and oral presentations.

Visit the ASI website ([www.asi.info](http://www.asi.info)) for more information about this year's examination. If interested in taking or hosting the exam next year? Contact your ASI member national sommelier association for details. The list and the contacts of the ASI member associations can be found at [www.asi.info](http://www.asi.info) in the 'Members' section.'



## CHRISTIAN MEZGER REIGNS OVER PARAGUAY

ASI applauds the Sommelier Association of Paraguay for hosting their first Best Sommelier Contest this year! The final took place on the 19th of January, and the title went to Christian Mezger, followed closely by Alejandra Gavigan and John Kennedy. Both Christian and Alejandra represented Paraguay at the recent Best Sommelier of the Americas contest, held in Santiago, Chile.

## NEW BEST SOMMELIER CROWNED IN ALBANIA

The contest for Best Albanian Sommelier of 2021 was held this past December in Tirana. Eight competitors were put through a variety of practical and theoretical tests. Denis Pjetrushaj emerged victorious, follow by Algerta Azis and Vilçens Hima.



## JOB JOVO NEW SOMMELIER CHAMPION OF ZIMBABWE

Job Jovo, head sommelier of the Oyster Box Hotel, in Durban, South Africa is Best Sommelier of Zimbabwe 2021. ASI would like to express congratulations to the Job and kudos to the Sommelier Association of Zimbabwe for organizing the event!

## WE MISSED IT. YOU SHOULDN'T:



## KAROLINE REINHOLD WON THE TROPHÉE CHÂTEAU MUKHRANT'S "ESTONIA'S BEST SOMMELIER 2021"

The competition took place in Kultuurikatel on June 15th. Reinhold, who works for the Argmar Group, was joined in the final by Tarvo Sarapuu from Lore Bistoor, Mikk Parre from the wine bar Pop!, and the best of the Estonian Sommelier School, Kevin Lilleleht from the wine bar Rosin. Tarvo Sarapuu was named runner-up while Mikk Parre took home third place in the final.



## THE WINNER OF BEST SOMMELIER IN THE BALTICS 2021 IS NARIMANTAS MIEŽYS FROM LITHUANIA

The title of Best Sommelier in the Baltics was awarded at the Vana Tallinn Baltic Sommelier Grand Prix held in Tallinn this past October. The title went to Narimantas Miežys from Lithuania. In second place was Martynas Pravilonis of Lithuania, followed closely by Mikk Parre of Estonia. The title of Young Sommelier was awarded to Kevin Lilleleht of Estonia.



# INDUSTRY NEWS



Photo: Unsplash

## VINEXPO AMERICA AND DRINKS AMERICA

There's just a little more than a week to go before Vinexpo America and Drinks America bring the world's wine and spirits trade together at New York's Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, on March 9th and 10th. The organizers for the joint trade-only expos have just put the finishing touches on a robust schedule of educational programming and networking opportunities. Just announced are a lineup of thought-provoking sessions at The Buzz, and the addition of three master classes that will take attendees on a deep dive into the wines of Chile, Provence and the Czech Republic, respectively.

Registration is available online through March 8th. Attendees can register at either [www.vinexpoamerica.com](http://www.vinexpoamerica.com) or [www.drinksamerica.com](http://www.drinksamerica.com) to gain entry to both shows.

## BLOCKCHAIN UNCORKED, CHAMPAGNE AND FINE WINE HIT THE NFT MARKET

NFTs, the digital counterpart of collectibles, have produced nearly \$10 billion in just a few months. Luxury champagne and wine brands are now venturing into the realm of digital assets. Rarity, exclusivity, desirability, traceability: NFTs are obviously of interest to luxury which includes of course the wine industry. Back in October, Dom Pérignon has become the first in its sector to take the plunge into NFTs by launching limited edition boxes of its 2010 vintage and its 2006 rosé, which were "designed" in collaboration with the megastar Lady Gaga. The 100 bottles — a few drops in the ocean of bubbles produced by Dom Pérignon — and their digital versions were offered for sale in a 100% virtual space.

Read more about how NFTs could infiltrate an industry that already deals in rarity: [worldcrunch.com/business-finance/nft-wine](https://worldcrunch.com/business-finance/nft-wine)



## ASI TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF GÉRARD BASSET

The board of ASI is pleased to announce the second ASI Gérard Basset Lifetime Achievement Award will be announced as part of the ASI Best Sommelier of the World 2023 activities in Paris next year. Basset who passed away in 2019 after a long battle with cancer emulated the best qualities of a sommelier. Basset remarkably was a Master of Wine, Master Sommelier, ASI Best Sommelier of Europe (1996) and in 2010 won the title of ASI Best Sommelier of the World. The award, to be presented by his wife Nina and son Romané, will be given to someone in the field of sommellerie that has demonstrated leadership, humanity and helped shape the sommelier profession in their country.

Of the award, William Wouters says "this is an opportunity for ASI to recognize our 'hidden heroes.' Over the next year we will ask our member countries to nominate a working sommelier, journalist, educator or wine influencer that has supported the growth of sommellerie in their country. Ultimately the award will be given to someone that has shown great leadership but also embraces the best qualities of Gérard, which includes his curiosity, determination, kindness, charisma and humility."

In 2021, Serge Dubs, himself a prior ASI Best Sommelier of the World winner, was awarded the first Gérard Basset Lifetime Achievement Award.

# ASI BOOT CAMP

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COMING FALL 2022