

Saturday, 22 December 2023

## Vitaly International Academy returns to New York with the Italian Wine Ambassador Certification Course

The Vitaly International Academy will once again hold the prestigious Italian Wine Ambassador course in The Big Apple from 4-6 March 2024. This year's event will be held for the first time at the headquarters of Banville Wine Merchants in midtown Manhattan, welcoming participants for the three-day intensive course diving deep into the intricacies of Italian wine.



Wine professionals from across North America will gather in New York City, hosted by **Banville Wine Merchants**, to participate in two days of tastings and seminars as they prepare for the rigorous exam on day 3 to become certified Italian Wine Ambassadors. VIA Faculty member Sarah Heller MW will be on hand to lead the tastings and a series of in-depth lectures, focusing on Italy's most important wine-producing regions. This will be the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the VIA course, with the VIA Community now spanning 46 countries around the world, with a membership of over 1300 people who have taken the course and 346 who passed the exam to become certified Italian Wine Ambassadors, of whom 16 are certified Italian Wine Experts.

This year marks the first collaboration with Banville Wine Merchants. **Managing Partner of Vitaly, Stevie Kim**, commented: *"Banville's generous offer to host the VIA course at their headquarters in New York give students the opportunity to take the course within the structure of an important American importer of Italian wines. Banville Wine Merchants was founded in 2004 by Lia Tolaini-Banville and her father, Pier Luigi "Louie" Tolaini and they remain family-owned, with a huge passion for Italian wine."*



## What is VIA

The Vinitaly International Academy certification course, organised by Veronafiere and Vinitaly, is recognised as **the gold standard of Italian wine education**. All elements of the course are carefully curated by the VIA Faculty team, made up of Sarah Heller MW and Henry Davar IWE, assisted and advised by scientific advisor Professor Attilio Scienza. The ethos behind the course is a sound scientific focus on the native grapes of Italy and on the characteristics of the 20 regions' biodiversity, history, culture, and business.

The VIA Community, composed of all students who have ever studied the program since its inception in 2017, welcomes wine professionals and wine enthusiasts from all over the world, forming a supportive and professional network that extends far beyond the limits of the classroom and includes lasting friendships, an open forum for sharing wine information, and career opportunities. Members continue to participate throughout the year in events such as Academic Field Trips all across Italy, gathering in Verona to judge at 5StarWines & Wine Without Walls, attending OperaWine and wine2wine Business Forum, and continually increasing their knowledge and growing their connections across the wine sector.

Students who take the VIA course come from every aspect of the wine sector, including educators, journalists, importers, hospitality, retailers, and beyond. Faculty member Sarah Heller MW reflected on the impact of VIA, *"We invite students to join a profound and up to the minute conversation about Italian wines and what makes them so unique in the world, giving them new tools to communicate these wines and the solid foundation to become true Ambassadors, promoting Italian wines around the world."*

For more information:

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Click on the link and complete the application form:

<https://www.vinitaly.com/en/training/vinitaly-international-academy/courses/via-new-york-2024/>

About: [Vinitaly International Academy](#) (VIA) aims to be the gold standard of Italian wine education. It offers a complete educational path with standardized courses that will teach professionals and educators to master the diversity of Italian wine in a rigorous, organized manner. VIA's main objective is to foster a global network of highly qualified professionals such as Italian Wine Ambassadors and Italian Wine Experts: in turn, they will support and promote Italian wine throughout the world. VIA was founded by Stevie Kim, Managing Partner of Vinitaly International. The new VIA ecosystem avails of the guidance of Italian trade associations Federdoc, Federvini, Vignaioli Indipendenti FIVI, and Unione Italiana Vini as members of the Institutional Advisory Board. Italian vine genetics scholar, Prof. Attilio Scienza, oversees VIA's scientific and educational direction as the Chief Scientist. VIA Faculty Sarah Heller MW and Henry Davar teach the flagship Italian Wine Ambassador course. To date, there are 346 Certified Italian Wine Ambassadors of which 16 are also Italian Wine Experts.