

Tuesday April 9, 2024

Vitaly International Academy celebrates the induction of 36 new Italian Wine Ambassadors

Vitaly International Academy proclaimed 36 new Italian Wine Ambassadors. The prestigious title was conferred after an intensive 5-day course held in Verona from April 4 to April 8. The course consisted of seminars, masterclasses, and wine tastings, culminating in a challenging exam and blind tasting. Students who successfully passed the exam gain the title of Italian Wine Ambassador while everyone who participated in the course now joins an international network of Italian Wine Ambassadors, dedicated to promoting Italian wine culture worldwide.



The 36 newly appointed Italian Wine Ambassadors with President of Veronafiere Federico Bricolo, VIA Faculty Sarah Heller MW, and Managing Partner of Vitaly Stevie Kim.

The 27th edition of the flagship event was held at the VIA headquarters at Veronafiere with 64 participants and ended today, April 8, with the pinning ceremony officiated by President of Veronafiere Federico Bricolo. The course is divided into two modules: first, online theoretical lectures, with access to the study platform; second, in-person for the tastings, masterclasses and seminars with the focus of the course on native Italian grape varieties. The participants had the opportunity to taste 150 Italian wines in five days. There were four guided tastings lead by two Masters of Wine and nine masterclasses



presented by Italian consortiums: Consorzio Tutela Lambrusco Doc, Consorzio per la Tutela del Franciacorta, Consorzio del vino Brunello di Montalcino, Consorzio Tutela Vini Montefalco, ISWA, Istituto Marchigiano di Tutela Vini, Consorzio di Tutela del Primitivo di Manduria DOP, Consorzio di Tutela del Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOP, Consorzio di Tutela Vini DOC Sicilia.

The 36 new Italian Wine Ambassadors join the VIA Community which now spans 46 countries around the world, with a membership of over 1300 people who have taken the course and 394 who passed the exam to become certified Italian Wine Ambassadors.

The event showcased an impressive roster of educators, including Chief Scientist Professor Attilio Scienza, Faculty member Sarah Heller MW, and guest Faculty Andrea Lonardi MW and Gabriele Gorelli MW, underscoring VIA's commitment to excellence in wine education. VIA's latest program not only fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of Italian wines among its participants but also contributed significantly to the global promotion of Italian wine culture. We congratulate the new ambassadors on their achievement and look forward to their contributions to the wine industry.

The new Italian Wine Ambassadors are:

James Bruce MacNay	Yonatan Alberto Rivera	Yvonne Zohar de Jonge
Mário Márcio Lescano Júnior	Ordonez	Benoit Lecat
Irina Ponomarenko	Mihoko Schenone	Dana Peixotto
Chuan Ann Tan	Wim Sas	Celia Canhassi Corigliano
Stephane Leroux	Gianluca Di Taranto	Chong Wang
Pierre Molinie	Edoardo Nicoletti	Jaeyeon Kwon
Xeniya Volosnikova	Cameron Jones	Jae Min Ju
Aki Ezaki	Shirley Shu Wen Tan	Iona Baker
Yina Yu	Peihong Huang	David Gertiser
Nixon Munga	Hiroko Someya	Caroline Cocheret
Riccardo Bernasconi	Joe Benvenuto	Jamie Verbraak
Lindsay Johnson Cole	Ryan Robinson	Roza Zharmukhambetova
	Kavita Converse	

What is VIA?

The Vinitaly International Academy (VIA) certification course is recognised as the gold standard of Italian wine education. All elements of the course are carefully curated by the VIA Faculty team, assisted and advised by Chief Scientist Professor Attilio Scienza. The foundation of 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 2015, 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 corner 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."*



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. 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 394 Certified Italian Wine Ambassadors of whom 16 are also Italian Wine Experts.