

Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024

## **Vitaly International Academy debuts in Kazakhstan with the 30th edition of the Italian Wine Ambassador Certification Course**

**Vitaly International Academy (VIA) announces the 30th edition of its prestigious Italian Wine Ambassador Certification Course, taking place for the first time ever in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 18-20 November 2024.**



*VIA Almaty will be held from 18-20 November 2024*

For its landmark 30th edition, Vitaly International Academy (VIA) makes its historical debut in Kazakhstan, hosting its renowned three-day Italian wine-course in Almaty, the country's largest metropolis. This expansion provides Italian wine professionals across Eurasia with unparalleled access to the expertise and opportunities offered by the prestigious VIA course. Candidates will gather in Almaty to participate in two days of tastings and a series of in-depth seminars, focusing on Italy's most important wine producing regions, as they prepare for the grueling exam on day three to become certified Italian Wine Ambassadors.

### **Why Kazakhstan?**

Almaty is one of the most important wine hubs of Central Asia and the most densely populated city of Kazakhstan, which is rapidly becoming a key center in this rapidly emerging market for Italian wine. Thirty percent of the wine imported to Kazakhstan comes from Italy with a value of €15m in 2023.



Italian wines are favored alongside Italian cuisine which is popular in the region but also pair well with the local food of the region.

**Darya Nagornyak IWA** from Kazakhstan said: *“If you want to dive into the world of Italian wine, gain the deepest knowledge and make friends around the world - VIA Kazakhstan is the right choice!”*.

### **What is Vinitaly International Academy**

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 VIA Faculty Sarah Heller MW assisted and advised by Chief Scientist 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, now encompassing 48 countries worldwide, proudly includes over 1,300 participants who have taken the course, with 393 successfully passing the exam to become certified Italian Wine Ambassadors. Among these distinguished ambassadors, 16 hold the esteemed title of certified Italian Wine Experts

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.”*

Candidates also benefit from participation throughout the year at events such as Gita Scolastica (academic field trips across Italy), 5StarWines – the Book, OperaWine and wine2wine Business Forum, giving them the opportunity to continually increase their knowledge and expand their connections across the wine sector.

Applications for the Italian Wine Ambassador Certification in Almaty are now open at the following link: <https://www.vinitaly.com/en/academy/vinitaly-international-academy/courses/via-almaty-2024/>. For more information, please contact [via@ext.veronafiere.it](mailto:via@ext.veronafiere.it).

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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 teaches the flagship Italian Wine Ambassador course. To date, there are 393 Certified Italian Wine Ambassadors of which 16 are also Italian Wine Experts.