

Thursday, 8 August 2024

“Towards a more diverse and inclusive wine community” Collaboration announced between Vinitaly International Academy and The Hue Society

The prestigious Vinitaly International Academy (VIA) Italian Wine Ambassador certification course lands in Chicago from 19-21 October 2024. Wine professionals from across North America will gather in Chicago at Navy Pier, to participate in two days of tastings and lectures 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.



VIA Chicago will be held from 19-21 October 2024 at Navy Pier, Chicago.

This 29th edition will **for the second time** involve a **special collaboration with The Hue Society**, with **two candidates** from The Hue Society community being awarded a **fee-waiver**. This collaboration further emphasizes VIA's work to open the door to people from under-represented communities who want to enter the wine sector as professionals.



Managing Partner of Vinitaly, **Stevie Kim**, commented: *“We are honored to announce the continuation of our partnership with The Hue Society for the second time this year. Our commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive international wine community remains unwavering. Collaborating with The Hue Society has facilitated greater access to wine education and training dedicated to those passionate about joining the Italian wine industry. Together, we hope to make a small step towards a more inclusive and vibrant wine world.”*

Tahiirah Habibi, founder of The Hue Society and one of Wine Enthusiast’s Future 40 Tastemakers, remarked, *“We are excited to continue our partnership with VIA this year! We know creating access is a vital part of helping our community thrive in this industry. We are grateful to have the opportunity to expand our work with partners like VIA.”*

The VIA Community now spans 48 countries around the world, with a membership of over 1300 people who have taken the course and 393 who passed the exam to become certified Italian Wine Ambassadors, of whom 16 are certified Italian Wine Experts.

What is Vinitaly International Academy

The Vinitaly International Academy certification course is recognized as the gold standard of Italian wine education. All elements of the course are carefully curated by VIA Faculty member Sarah Heller MW, assisted and advised by VIA 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 - The Book, 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 and to apply:

Click on the link below and complete the application form.

The Hue Society members, please indicate your membership in the “Motivation” section.

<https://www.vinitaly.com/en/academy/vinitaly-international-academy/courses/via-chicago-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. 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 member 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.