



Vendange Institute
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Course Descriptions

WSET® Level 2 Intermediate Certificate in Wines & Spirits

The WSET Level 2 Intermediate Certificate in Wines and Spirits course is intended for those working on the front lines in the hospitality industry who have little or no previous wine knowledge. In the UK, where the course originated, the Certificate is a requirement for employment at many restaurants, hotels and wine retail outlets. Among Vendange Institute's Intermediate Certificate grads are servers who have worked/are working in local restaurants (Lapointe's, Hy's Steak House, Wellington Gastropub, Social, Fat Tuesdays, Juniper, Mambo), local sales representatives for national wine and spirit agencies (Vincor, Corby Distilleries, Philippe Dandurand), retail customer service representatives (LCBO, Wine Rack), and Cordon Bleu-trained chefs. The course is also suitable for members of the general public who have an interest in wine, and would like to learn more.

The course runs one evening a week, for eight weeks, and each class is two-and-a-half hours (6:30 – 9:00pm) for a total of 20 hours of class time. The WSET recommends a minimum of 28 hours being spent on the course, divided between class time and private study, therefore, students should expect to spend at least one hour per week studying on their own. In the ninth week, students write a one-hour exam (see details below). Wine tasting is part of every class, and more than 50 different wines, ranging in price from \$10 to \$80 dollars, are tasted throughout the course. Students who successfully pass the exam receive the WSET® Intermediate Certificate and pin. More than 50% of our Intermediate Certificate graduates go on to take the WSET Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Wines and Spirits.

Course Materials: Wines and Spirits, Looking Behind the Label – is a full-colour, beautifully-illustrated, 90-page textbook which includes, maps, labels and a glossary of useful terms. The Study Guide includes, “key facts” summarized from the textbook, self-study questions and answers, and a section to write tasting notes. The Specification Booklet outlines the syllabus and required knowledge in the “learning outcomes” section, as well as providing exam details, sample exam questions, and a list of types of wines that will be tasted in the course. The Intermediate Level Systematic Approach to Tasting Card is laminated for convenience and durability, and includes an extensive list of wine descriptors. All course materials are contained in a sturdy and convenient study pack. In addition to the WSET materials, handouts will be given out each week to help students organize the material and to aid in final review before the exam.

Course Outline: The Intermediate Certificate Course covers the key facts for over 110 wines and spirits from all over the world, and gives students a basic understanding of why these wines and spirits taste the way they do. The course is laid out as follows:

Week 1: Introduction to Tasting Technique; Service and Storage of Wine; Wine and Food Matching

Week 2: Labeling; Factors Affecting Style, Quality and Cost of Wines

Week 3: Chardonnay and Pinot Noir

Week 4: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Sauvignon Blanc

Week 5: Syrah, Grenache and Riesling



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Week 6: Italy, Spain and Portugal - New World Wine Regions Practice Quiz

Week 7: Champagne, Sparkling Wines and Sweet Wines - Old World Wine Regions Practice Quiz

Week 8: Spirits, Liqueurs and Fortified Wines (Sherry, Port)

Week 9: Exam

Class Structure: The class begins at 6:30pm. In addition, from 6:00pm each evening, there is wine available for tasting. The classes are meant to be interactive between students and instructor, rather than “lecture” style, so students are expected to do the reading on each week’s topic ahead of time in order to be prepared. Students should also review the material again in the week following the class, as each class begins with a short quiz on the previous week’s material. Each class includes a tasting of 6 wines spread out over intervals throughout the evening. Starting about halfway through the course, students will have the opportunity to do “blind tasting”.

Exam: There is no tasting exam, only a written exam. The exam is one hour long, and is comprised of 50 multiple-choice questions. This is the only test that “counts”. The other practice and review quizzes are for the students’ own feedback, and marks are not recorded.

Availability: Registration is Ongoing - Courses are held year round. Please contact us for more information.



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WSET® Level 2 Professional Certificate in Spirits

This internationally accredited course is sponsored by all the leading spirit producers worldwide to help foster learning and understanding of the international drinks trade. Running eight weeks in length, the course offers candidates the opportunity to learn about and sample spirits from the four corners of the world. The ninth week is set aside for the exam date. All categories of spirits are covered, with a specific emphasis placed on those widely selected in our market. Successful candidates will gain invaluable knowledge towards careers in the hospitality industry, LCBO, or wholesale distribution. Others may simply wish to learn more about the beverages they enjoy.

Course Materials:

- "The Complete Bartender's Guide"; a 400 page textbook
- 138 page review guide with self-study questions and answers cross-referenced with the textbook and blank tasting sheets for recording sampled spirits
- Specification booklet outlining the syllabus and required knowledge

Exam: Is held on the ninth week of the course. The exam is an hour long and is comprised of 50 multiple-choice questions. Part 2 is a written tasting note. The exam must be ordered from the WSET three weeks prior to exam date.

Availability: Registration is Ongoing – Courses are held year round. Please contact us for more information.



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WSET® Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Wines & Spirits

The WSET Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Wines and Spirits course follows from the Intermediate Certificate and is intended for those working in a management capacity in the hospitality industry, or those in a position to advise management on wine-related matters. In Ontario, LCBO Product Consultants are required to have the Advanced Certificate in order to receive their highest pay grade. Among Vendange Institute's Advanced Certificate grads are servers/sommeliers/food and beverage managers who have worked/are working in local restaurants and hotels (Ambiente, Brookstreet Hotel, Signatures, Luxe, Beckta, Stella Osteria, Empire Grill, Restaurant 18, Manoir Hovey), owners/local sales representatives for wine and spirit agencies (Vinum Novum, Authentic Wine and Spirits, Lifford Agency, Pacific Wines and Spirits); LCBO Product Consultants, wine event company owners (Groovy Grapes), On-air wine show hosts (This Food, That Wine; Grape Potential); and wine educators (Algonquin College, La Cité collégiale). The course is also perfectly suitable for members of the general public who have a good foundation in wine and would like to build on that knowledge. While the Level 2 Intermediate Certificate is not a pre-requisite for the Level 3 Advanced Certificate, it is expected that students will be familiar with the material covered in Level 2. The Advanced Certificate is quite in-depth, and even those with extensive wine knowledge will find it challenging. Potential students who are unsure of whether they should take Level 2 or Level 3 can obtain a placement test from the school.

The course is run one evening a week, for 14 weeks, and each class is two-and-a-half hours (6:30 – 9:00pm) for a total of 35 hours of class time. The WSET recommends a minimum of 84 hours be spent on the course, divided between class time and private study, so students should expect to spend at least three and a half hours per week studying on their own (though many students have reported spending five or six hours per week in private study). In the 15th week, students write a two-hour exam (see details below). Wine tasting and blind tasting are part of every class, and more than 90 different wines, ranging in price from \$10 to \$80 dollars, are tasted throughout the course. Candidates who successfully pass the exam receive the WSET® Advanced Certificate and pin. The Advanced Certificate is a pre-requisite for the WSET Diploma Course.

Course Materials: Exploring the World of Wines and Spirits is a full-colour, beautifully-illustrated, 240-page textbook, written by Christopher Fielden with a foreword by Jancis Robinson. The Study Guide includes, “key facts” summarized from the textbook, self-study questions and answers, large-scale maps, and a section to write tasting notes. The Specification Booklet outlines the syllabus and required knowledge in the “learning outcomes” section, as well as providing exam details, sample exam questions, and a list of types of wines that will be tasted in the course. The Advanced Level Systematic Approach to Tasting Card is laminated for convenience and durability. All course materials are contained in a sturdy and convenient study pack. In addition to the WSET materials, students will receive approximately 60 pages of handouts to help organize each week’s material, and to aid in final review before the exam.

Course Outline: The Advanced Certificate Course gives in-depth coverage of over 275 wines and spirits from all over the world, taking into consideration such factors as: grape variety, soil, climate, viticultural and vinification techniques, and commercial factors. The course is laid out as follows:

Week 1: Tasting Technique; Labeling Regulations; Factors Affecting Cost of Wine

Week 2: Winemaking



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- Week 3: France I: Bordeaux and Southwest France
- Week 4: France II: Burgundy and Alsace
- Week 5: France III: Loire, Rhone and Southern France
- Week 6: Champagne and Sparkling Wine
- Week 7: Italy
- Week 8: Spain and Portugal (Light Wines)
- Week 9: Germany and Other EU Countries
- Week 10: Other Old World Countries and South America
- Week 11: Australia and New Zealand
- Week 12: South Africa and North America
- Week 13: Spirits and Liqueurs
- Week 14: Liqueur Wines (Port, Sherry etc.)
- Week 15: Exam

Class Structure: The class begins at 6:30pm. Classes are meant to be interactive between students and instructor, rather than “lecture” style, so students are expected to do the reading on each week’s topic ahead of time in order to be prepared. Students should also review the material again in the week following the class, as each class begins with a short quiz on the previous week’s material. There are also several practice quizzes throughout the course, two practical mock tasting exams, two “theory” mock tasting exams, four practice map quizzes, one winemaking quiz, two practice short answer assignments. These quizzes and assignments are all optional and do not “count” towards the final mark. (However, records show that students who opt to do these extra quizzes fare much better on the final exam).

Exam: The exam consists of a 15-minute practical tasting exam and a one hour and 45 minute written exam. The tasting exam requires students to taste one wine blind, write an accurate tasting note for it, identify it from a list of four possible wines, and correctly identify its approximate retail cost. The written exam is comprised of 50 multiple-choice questions and four short-answer questions which may be of a fill-in-the-blank type, a matching type or a mini-essay type.

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WSET® Level 4 Diploma in Wines & Spirits

The WSET® Level 4 Diploma in Wines and Spirits is a program of study for wine professionals and consumers who are serious about pursuing an advanced, internationally recognized wine credential. WSET® Diploma is one of the most advanced courses of wine study offered in the World and regarded as the best route towards Master of Wine accreditation.

The WSET® Level 3 Advanced Certificate is a prerequisite for enrolment in the WSET® Level 4 Diploma program.

Testing takes place through a combination of course work assignments, tasting notes portfolios, blind tasting, closed-book essay exams and a multiple choice exam.