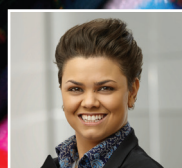


# ASI MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2022  
ISSUE #4



## THE ASI MOSAIC: A Global Community



**ELAINE CHUKAN BROWN,  
CARO MAURER, TSHEPANG MOLISANA:**  
Change begins with conversations

**ALBA HOUGH, HELEEN BOOM,  
RICARDO GRELLET:** ASI Diversity,  
Ethics and Compliance Committees



# ELEVATING SERVICE & SALES THROUGH DIVERSITY

A CONVERSATION WITH  
TONYA PITTS & MARYAM AHMED

MODERATED BY  
ELAINE CHUKAN BROWN  
PRESENTED BY CALIFORNIA WINES

**Elaine Chukan Brown:** What is the simplest way for people to understand Diversity in wine?

**Maryam Ahmed:** Everyone needs an understanding of privilege. Specifically, the difference between earned and unearned privilege. Unearned privilege is what gets a person into the room without having accomplished anything. That's typically related to skin color and gender. Earned privilege is what you work for, like a college degree or certification.

**Tonya Pitts:** Different people start from different places. Someone who hasn't been involved in the food and beverage industry or who – for socio-economic reasons -- hasn't been exposed to fine dining but wants to be a part of it is not starting from the same place.

**ECB:** What is required to launch a Diversity program?

**MA:** You need to have a clear objective, a realistic timeline, and a high degree of accountability. There has to be alignment between words and actions, between promises and follow-through. Otherwise, it's just performative behavior.



**Tonya Pitts** is Beverage Director of One Market in San Francisco and mentors for multiple diversity initiatives. Her 30-year career in San Francisco fine-dining is highlighted by a Wine Star Award nomination and numerous Best of Awards of Excellence.



**Maryam Ahmed** designs educational programs for food and wine businesses committed to diversity. She is a cast member on SOMM TV's show, "Sparklers" and was named a Wine Industry Leader by Wine Business Monthly.



**Elaine Chukan Brown** is the Executive Editor US for JancisRobinson.com and has created, advised on or mentored for diversity initiatives worldwide. IWSC named Brown Wine Communicator of the Year for 2020.

**ECB:** It's been said that, changing who makes the sale changes who makes the purchase. Do you agree with that?

**MA:** Absolutely, diversity is 100% linked to profitability. It isn't just a feel-good thing; it broadens the market for wine.

**TP:** You can see this at retail as well. In places like Target where African American brands are included as luxury brands, it makes wine more accessible to everyone.

**ECB:** Tonya, you were one of the first somms in California to create a by-the-glass list devoted to women winemakers. You've also done this for winemakers of color. How did you make it work?

**TP:** I'd been building the wine list and over time I realized I had a lot of women in the program so I decided to highlight them, to make them seen. Look, every wine has to have a hook or a story about how it came to be. But it also has to be something people like. That these wines have remained on the list proves that good wines are being made by a greater diversity of people.



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## ASI PARTNERS



# Welcome!



## Celebrating the ASI Family

When I started my term as president, I thought of ASI as a family. What I may not have known at the time was how big, how diverse, and how truly global that family is. Indeed, ASI is like a family tree, and our branches extend to all corners of the globe, cross over all ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, gender, and sexuality identities.

I happy to say in this edition of *ASI Magazine* we are exploring not only these branches but the leaves of the tree, that is the individual sommeliers who make up our rich and diverse world of sommellerie. Ours is a business of hospitality, of welcoming all guests into our world of food and beverage. A great sommelier is humble, gracious, compassionate, and understanding. This also has to be the lens through which we govern and operate our association.

To borrow a line from Heleen Boom, ASI Director Diversity Committee, as seen in the Our Team feature in this edition “the fact we (ASI Diversity Committee) exist is a statement we aren’t where we need to be.” I could not agree more. While we as an association consider ourselves to be open and inclusive, we are just at the beginning of the path forward. I look forward to the day when we hopefully will not need an ASI Diversity Committee. Until then, I and the rest of our board are committed to learning, and developing protocols and ways of executing communications, events, and contests with inclusivity in mind.

In this edition of *ASI Magazine*, our guest editors Elaine Chukan Brown, Caro Maurer MW, and Tshepang Molisana, a young, talented South African food and wine writer explore the issues of diversity within the wine and sommellerie world. We also introduce the members of our ASI Diversity Committee and chat with Alba Hough, Heleen Boom and Ricardo Grellet, our ASI Ethics Committee Director. In this interview, moderated by Alba, Heleen and Ricardo discuss the path forward and how these two important committees work together to create a open and welcoming environment within our association.

In addition, we have a wealth of sommeliers and industry professionals who share their stories providing you our readers incredible insights into their experiences. In our recurring Make Me a Match feature, we have asked sommeliers from our new observer member nations to provide wine and food pairings reflecting their culture and invited sommeliers from different parts of the world to think about how they would pair these dishes to show how we as sommeliers can be bridge cultural differences.

There is so much more to be found in the pages of *ASI Magazine*. I ask that you to take the time to read this very important edition and share it with your colleagues. The way forward for all of us to be more inclusive and welcoming is through communication, and shared learnings.

Cheers  
*William Wouters,*  
*President Association de la*  
*Sommellerie Internationale*

welcome

ASI President William Wouters



**WINE  
PARIS**



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# Change Begins with Conversations:

## a discussion of diversity and inclusion

A Conversation With ...

Change Begins with Conversations: a discussion of diversity and inclusion



Photo: Diogo Brandao/  
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Elaine Chukan Brown, who grew up in an indigenous family in Alaska is not only a highly respected wine writer and educator, but also holds a doctoral certificate in gender, women's, and sexuality studies. ASI asked Elaine, along with Germany-born and based Master of Wine Caro Maurer and Tshepang Molisana, a freelance journalist based in South Africa, to discuss their stories as it relates to diversity and inclusion in the wine industry.

There is an increasingly broad acceptance of the need of the wine, and all, industries, to become more diverse. Not only for the social impact but also for positive benefits that diversity brings via enhanced learning and awareness gained from numerous points of view. Becoming a fully diverse and accepting industry will not be easy or immediate but it is being discussed. Change begins with conversations.

We asked Elaine, Caro and Tshepang to ask each other about their experiences with the intent of sparking conversations between our readers, sommeliers around the world and wine industry partners about the importance of diversity and inclusion.

To read more about the social challenges facing the wine industry and potential solutions read Elaine's article on JancisRobinson.com titled Next Steps in Diversifying the Wine Industry.

[www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/next-steps-diversifying-wine-industry](http://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/next-steps-diversifying-wine-industry)

## About Our Guest Editors:



**ELAINE CHUKAN BROWN** is currently the Executive Editor (US) for JancisRobinson.com. In this role Brown’s responsibilities are to expand the coverage of US wine on the platform, as well as improve coverage of diversity, sustainability, and climate action in the publication.

Brown whose family is indigenous to Alaska (her mother is Unangan-Sugpiaq and father is Inupiaq) was born in America’s northernmost state and raised there by her indigenous extended family. Brown being the youngest of four-generations at the time.

Brown eventually left the state to pursue her educational goals which included doctoral work in philosophy, specializing in race and racism. Brown subsequently transferred to the wine industry, and now lives on the border of Napa and Sonoma Counties in California. From this home base Brown travels the world for writing, public speaking and education, teaching engagements.



**CARO MAURER** is a wine journalist from Bonn, Germany and has been a Master of Wine (MW) since September 2011. Upon graduating she was presented The Noval Award from Quinta do Noval (Douro), given to the student with the best dissertation, for her thesis titled *Erste Lage in Germany — a Classification in Development*.

Following a period working as a correspondent in New York and Los Angeles, Maurer was employed as copy editor for the German edition of *Forbes Magazine* and for the daily newspaper *Die Welt*, working as an editor of the lifestyle section of both publications. For nearly 25 years, she has specialized in food and wine. She now writes for the *General-Anzeiger* in Bonn, the magazine *Der Feinschmecker*, and *Decanter* magazine. She teaches the WSET Diploma in Germany, Austria, Italy, and Norway and is also involved in education at the Institute of Masters of Wine. She also chairs wine tasting and seminars, for amongst other clients including the VDP, Wine Australia and Wines of New Zealand. She is also a jury member for international wine competitions and is a panel chair at the Decanter WWA in London.



**TSHEPANG MOLISANA** is a South African freelance food and wine journalist. In this capacity she has written for a number of local and international publications including *The Mail and Guardian*, *Marie Claire*, *House and Leisure*, *Destiny*, *wine.co.za*, *Wines of South Africa*, *JancisRobinson.com*, *Pix* and others. She was also the first editor of *Places*, the inflight magazine for FastJet. She has additionally worked in radio, television and via podcasts. Her work as a journalist has been recognized with nominations and awards including being nominated for The Island Prize and winning the 2016 Veritas Young Wine Writer of the Year award. A WSET Level 2 graduate and possessing an Advanced Brandy Certificate and a First Star Cap Classique Certificate from the Cape Wine Academy, she has consulted with various restaurants in South Africa.



A Conversation With ...

Change Begins with Conversations: a discussion of diversity and inclusion

**Tshepang Molisana (TM):** While geography, terroir contributes much to wine, what, in your opinion, is the influence of family and community to the ways in which we experience wine?

**Elaine Chukan Brown (ECB):** Wine as an industry is unique in how deeply tied to family and community it is. Since its earliest stages of production, wine has been made through multi-generational family and community effort and helped feed the community. It is only in recent generations that larger, multi-national companies have also become part of the wine industry, but even so, the greatest number of wine businesses worldwide are family owned and led.

Part of what makes wine such a beautiful beverage to enjoy is that so many of the wines we love are also tied to a story of how a family found their way to the place they now farm, the work they do together, and how it helped shape the community where they live. Those deep roots and strong connections are also a key part of how we can collaborate to find solutions now in the midst of climate change. A family is simply a type of coalition. We can use these connections we already have to strengthen our community coalitions even more deeply to work together in the midst of climate change.

**TM:** As indigenous people, there is a specific way they refer to how the land has been connected to history and time. We often refer to wine in connection to provenance. Are there viticultural practices or ways that you can suggest, or can reference, that actively make it possible for future

generations to enjoy the same pleasures that we do?

**ECB:** We are in a crucial changepoint as a global community. Climate change is already impacting all of us and creating various sorts of severe situations worldwide from extreme drought to wildfires, to deeper frost and freeze, to surprise floods. Different parts of the world are facing different sorts of challenges that are only increasing. For the wine community to continue to prosper and enjoy fine wine we need to work together — collaborate, share insights and information, and foster joint problem solving — more than ever before.

For future generations to continue to enjoy wine, every member of the wine community must invest in change. Wine growers need to be willing to strongly move towards regenerative farming that better balances individual crops with its surrounding habitat. Wine buyers and distributors will have to be even more willing to rely on alternative packaging and find new transportation solutions to dramatically lessen their carbon footprint. Wine communicators and influencers need to help consumers better understand why these practices are so important and support the market changing in these directions. And ultimately each of us has to become more open to purchasing (and thereby supporting) wine from producers that demonstrate they are making these changes.

**Caro Maurer (CM):** To speak frankly ‘diversity is the order of the day.’ From film to panel discussions and employment opportunities having a mix of people is to speak frankly ‘the order of the day.’ Do you see this as enrichment?



Photo: kelsey-knight/Unsplash.com

Do you take advantage of the opportunities that arise? Alternatively, do you view this as this more compulsive or intrusive in nature?

**TM:** This is a complex and beautiful question, because we have come to understand that representation matters. This is represented by the box office success of Black Panther, Shonda Rhimes' various successes, and others. But we also know that it is about more than representation on screen, it's about the boardrooms and budgets where decisions are made, this greatly affects what eventually makes its way to the viewing audience and how it's perceived.

In my own experience, there have been many instances where I have tried to sit at tables and have had doors close or been deliberately brought to the table because of my background. It's a simple thing, when coming from an oppressed people and people going out of their way to bring you into the boardroom, speak a neutral language or pronounce your name correctly. I can imagine how difficult it was for those who were from one or two generations before me (and I thank them for knocking down some walls and doors, for making it possible for me to walk) and I can see how spaces have become more democratized over just these few years that I have worked ... . The simple answer is that South Africa is the perfect litmus test for difference and change. When you cut a pie and you give more slices out, it creates a happier and bigger table. I believe in bigger tables, and happier ones. I think it enriches our society to create more slices, to bring more seats to the table, to share, to imagine more worlds, than to hoard pie out of fear or lack of understanding. I

would love it if we could all be so brave, to commit to change and to embrace difference.

**CM:** Do you see opportunities in your job as a wine writer to do something for diversity and inclusion?

**TM:** Yes. When I was offered a bursary for my WSET Level 2, I recognised that I was fortunate enough to have a job and that I would be able to fund my studies. Cathy Marston (who facilitates the course in Africa) gave me the opportunity to pay it forward as a bursary. Through Judy Brower, who founded wine.co.za, I learned of a cooking school that has burned down in Khayelitsha, a township in Cape Town. We forwarded the bursary to one of their students, which was such a blessing. One day, while I was at work, the owner of the school phoned me to tell me that the student had passed his WSET Level 2, and I cried while I was at work, I was so happy.

I've been very fortunate, working with WOSA, for example, my column in 2022 focused on finding stories that showcase South Africa's wine industry's kindest and most sweet side. I'm fortunate that I get to discover these stories. For Destiny, I speak to powerful people who share their own wine stories, which has been wonderful. There's a lot of work to be done and I'm grateful that it's this work has been placed in my hands. Great example, for the past decade, I've been following the Nedbank Cape Winemakers Guild Protégés and I get to tell their stories as they evolve, and as they take their rightful place amongst the truly excellent winemakers and viticulturists of our world. For Eat Out, I've been fortunate to quietly review

A Conversation With ...

Change Begins with Conversations: a discussion of diversity and inclusion

restaurants and tell food stories for years. It's incredible, the people in these spaces have such rich and powerful ways of bringing food and wine to life. What a dream it would be to find ways to bring these stories to life after these difficult years. I would like to spend more time on audio. I think that a podcast has such power, as it gives us the ability to listen to voices and stories ... let's see what the future holds.

**ECB:** Caro, you are from Germany, but also lived for a time in the United States. Are there ways that living abroad changed your perspective on what it means to you to be Bavarian, and on your experience as a woman in Germany?

**CM:** To be honest, for a long time I didn't even know that there were cultural differences between different nations or what it meant to be Bavarian or German. Growing up in post-war Germany, like I did, you learned above all that being German didn't associate with anything positive. Nationalist feelings were frowned upon. When I went to the USA in 1988, I realised that being German is neither good nor bad, but simply a condition, with unique cultural and social characteristics. For example, in America, money is most important, and you may even ask people what they earn. It's a source of pride. In Germany, this would be a big taboo. In Germany, education more highly valued than the money. I think I felt the strongest difference when I lived and worked in Los Angeles for a summer, a city so focused on the physical, on looks, bodies and glamour, that I felt a bit like an alien. I realised then that I have different values and that I feel at home and well taken care of in Germany and still benefit from a multicultural environment.

I also never forget that today we live in Europe, where being German is only one of many facets. I am proud to be European. In terms of my experience as a woman in Germany, while this may seem naïve, I didn't think much about it after I returned in 1990. My father had four daughters. He never told me that I could not achieve anything in life if I really wanted to. I believed him. That is why I moved through the professional world with a great sense of self-evidence — and actually experienced almost only positive reactions. It was the golden 90s. There were many professional opportunities, and I simply took them. With a few exceptions, most of the colleagues, editors-in-chief, publishing

directors or publishers I worked with were even happy to finally have women at the conference table. When I then focused on wine as a journalist, it was no different: finally, a woman at the tasting! I always felt welcome. In the beginning, I may have been the exception, but today women are a matter of course in the wine industry in Germany.

**ECM:** You have a deep love of learning, which helped inspire first your WSET studies, and then the pursuit of your Masters of Wine (MW) as well. You were the first woman in Germany to earn the MW. Are there ways that your being a woman served as an advantage in your studies? There are now more opportunities for women in the broader wine world but it still takes hard work and dedication to a goal to succeed. As a woman who has helped create new opportunities for other women in wine, what advice do you have for others in wine hoping to not only succeed themselves but create new pathways and opportunities for others like them?

**CM:** It may sound surprising, but I never had the whole gender debate on my horizon. Today, I still see myself more as a human being, rather than a woman. I am convinced that true equality can only begin when we all feel equal. For me, that has always been a given. I have great male colleagues and I have great female colleagues. I don't think one or the other is better, nicer, smarter. Was being a woman an advantage in my studies? Objectively speaking, no, neither an advantage nor a disadvantage. For example, the Master of Wine exams are anonymous. The examiner does not know whether they are assessing the work of a woman or a man. All are equal and treated equally and that is how it should be. In the last ten years, there have been about the same number of male as female MW graduates. Overall, the total statistics still show two-thirds male MWs and only one-third female, but time will correct this inequality. But I do have a subjective assessment: I have always seen my role as a woman in the wine industry as an advantage. At the beginning, perhaps, because I was an exception, today because I have the feeling that I am respected. My advice to other women would therefore be: take all the rights and opportunities for yourselves as a matter of course. I think (and will gladly take all the blame for saying this) that the emphasis on one's own gender creates a difference that no longer exists today — at least in my environment.



## The Portuguese wine sector has had a remarkable evolution in recent years.

Although our country has been producing wines since ancient times, the truth is that very recently, bottled wine brands were not many. Also, in terms of exports, the performance of Portuguese wines has been impressive, having managed to maintain an almost constant growth in exports in value, at least since 1996. The truth is that a few years ago our country was only known for the production of Port Wine or Madeira Wine. Today the reality is quite different. It was in this sense that ViniPortugal, the Interprofessional Wine Association, was created in 1996, with the aim of helping to promote Portuguese wines in the world. The focus has clearly been on increasing the recognition of Portuguese wines around the world, promoting what sets us apart: a huge diversity of terroirs, more than 250 indigenous grape varieties and an innovative and highly professional sector. Portugal is, indeed, a world of difference.

Currently, ViniPortugal invests in 21 markets to promote the Wines of Portugal. From the study and analysis of these markets, what we can see is that Portuguese wines have been gaining market share in practically all countries. In many of these countries, our wines are already leaders in growth, in terms of volume and value. This huge growth is clearly linked with the diversity that Portuguese wines offer, for the joy of everyone that drinks our wines. We can assume the success of the path that Wines of Portugal has taken in recent years, but with the humility and clarity of the many challenges that lie ahead.



**The Wines of Portugal will continue to grow and provide the world with the pleasure of proving the excellence of our wines. Cheers to a better future, because we deserve it!**

**Frederico Falcão,**  
CEO ViniPortugal

# INTRODUCING THE ASI DIVERSITY, ETHICS & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEES

ALBA HOUGH WITH HELEEN BOOM  
AND RICARDO GRELLET



**“The fact we exist is a statement we aren’t where we need to be”** says Heleen Boom, Director ASI Diversity Committee.

The committee was created almost immediately after William Wouters began his term as ASI President in 2019. Alba Hough, a member of the ASI Diversity Committee, and an openly queer sommelier moderated this interview, on behalf of ASI Magazine, with Heleen Boom and Ricardo Grellet, Director ASI Ethics & Compliance Committee. While the two committees work independently, they also come together to share ideas, working towards shared goals to make ASI, and the world of sommellerie, more diverse, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming to all sommeliers and their guests.

ASI’s Diversity Committee is comprised of Heleen Boom (Director), Sarah Andrew (Australia), Jorald Julie (Mauritius), Jan Konetzki (United Kingdom), Mirko Pastorelli (Italy), and Alba Hough (Iceland) who also has a seat on the ASI Ethics & Compliance Committee, acting as a bridge between the two. In addition to Hough, and Ricardo Grellet, members of the Ethics & Compliance Committee include Samuil Angelov (Finland), Higgo Jacobs (South Africa) and Renata Moreti (Chile).

**Alba Hough (AH):** Let us start from the beginning. Please explain the purpose, roles, and goals of your committees.

**Heleen Boom (HB):** Ultimately, our role as the ASI Diversity Committee is to work towards making and ensuring ASI is an association that is open, and respectful to all sommeliers regardless of their gender, sexuality, physical ability/disability, religion, or ethnicity. Ultimately our work is to ensure ASI as an association is open, inclusive, and diverse and at all levels focused on ‘equality’.

We (our global community of sommeliers) must embrace the spirit of hospitality that guides our daily lives. It is our duty, and role, to ensure we are representative of the diversity of our global members, and act, in all ways,

like we would a great hospitality professional. That is, we must show the same amount of courtesy and care by our actions as an association to all members of our community, as we would to the guests at our restaurants or retail stores.

**Ricardo Grellet (RG):** The main purpose of the ASI Ethics & Compliance committee is to create and nurture an ethical environment within ASI, and the broader ASI family which includes its member associations, and the sommeliers who are part of these associations. As part of this work, we are protecting the image and reputation of ASI, but we also creating a framework of inclusivity, diversity and respect for all sommeliers and individual associations via codes of conduct and protocols of behavior. I think in this way we are supporting ASI become a modern association, one that is inclusive. That extends beyond LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer) and gender but also includes religion and culture. We must ensure in what we do everyone has a voice, including marginalized communities but specifically within the context of ASI, that even individual member country associations, regardless of their size or geographically location has a voice. Like the individuals within these associations, we must treat each member association as an equal.

**AH:** Let’s compare ASI then and now. Have you witnessed any general changes in behavior, as it relates to diversity and inclusion, within the association, at the competitions or within the structure?

**HB:** Speaking of my own personal experience, my first encounter with ASI was in San Remo (2013 ASI Best Sommelier of Europe contest). At this event, I noticed the entire Sommelier Contests Committee were male. I was told by someone on the committee, at the time, that the members were made up of previous champions (which have only been men). You cannot tell me there were not any women qualified to judge at that time? Ultimately, if you want



**Our Team**

*Introducing the ASI Diversity, Ethics & Compliance Committees*



Photo: rawpixel/123rf.com

to be inclusive you can be. It is your choice to act and not be complacent. Over the last two years the makeup of that committee has changed, with Véronique (Véronique Rivest, Canada), Paz (Paz Levinson, Argentina/France) and Heidi (Heidi Mäkinen MW, Finland) all now playing important roles of that committee. It is a good example of change, but it is not enough. It is just the start.

**RG:** Admittedly, I have been around for a while. I have to say, with no intent to stroke my own ego, that the ASI Ethics & Compliance Committee came from an idea I had. At the time, we, our Chilean association, were dealing with an ethics issue. Out of that issue, we started an internal committee, which ultimately resulted in us creating a code of conduct so we could deal with that case and future cases. What happened in Chile, is not dissimilar to other more recognized associations. I think FIFA, the world football governing body, had to create its own committee as result of transgressions within that organization. So, the work had to be done to create a committee within ASI. We set up the initial committee which included me as Director, a member of the board which we felt important to be in treasury as ethics in many situations has to do with money, a member of the bylaws committee and outside expert that could support us on legal issues. Since the creation of the Diversity Committee, we now someone (Alba Hough) from that committee on our team to support us and create a bridge between these two closely link identities within ASI. It also conveniently raised the number of members of that committee to five, which obviously has its advantages when it comes to internal voting.

Over time, we have created processes and methodologies to handle the various issues and situations presented to us. We are also learning how to share information and be transparent, yet confidential, in all steps of our process. This is important.

**AH:** What are some of the changes ASI needs to develop to be more relevant in this modern world?

**HB:** One thing that is really important is how we use language. The use of language is fundamental to, and a pillar of inclusivity. For reference, I remember speaking with Gaia Gaja about her experience working with sommeliers in Japan and China. We talked about how it was important not impose Western European language bias onto sommeliers working here, as their sensory experiences are completely different, as they have their own food, flora and fauna etcetera. These things we translate into aromas and flavours of wine are not the same as it would be for Western Europeans. We must recognize cultural identity and individuality in how we relate and speak about wine in our communications and at our contests, for example. We also must encourage more inclusive ways for our sommeliers to speak and relate to their guests, avoiding stereotypes and assumptions. I think back of being at a table and the sommelier suggesting to me “perhaps the lady would like a sweet liqueur,” presuming the woman at the table would like a sweet drink while the men would enjoy something more robust and drier. We must eliminate this dismissive and presumptive way of thinking. We also must recognize our wine vernacular has to be updated, and we all need to take more stock as to whether people identify themselves as male, female, or non-binary. Language is just one example. We

have to be thinking about how to apply inclusivity, sensitivity and responsibility to so many things such as the environment, issues of moderation and so much more.

**RG:** As we move forward, we must always be taking a top-down view, not getting stuck in the minutia. We must continue to be thinking both broadly and specifically about how we think about language, vocabulary as it relates to inclusivity, and how we can be transparent and open in sharing information. Speaking specifically to ethics, we must continue to foster a culture of diversity and inclusion within ASI and all its member associations. This is not just in codes of conduct but seeking to create a build a broader culture of inclusivity within ASI and our member associations, and apply this vision to everything we do, whether it is communications, contests etcetera. This evolution will begin with training on issues of diversity and inclusion and sharing the results of that training. Communication will be key.

**AH:** Contests are a major part of the ASI world. Should ASI make changes to its contest schedules and competitions rules be more inclusive?

**RG:** It is not just a goal, but the responsibility of ASI to move in that direction. In terms of contests, it is my opinion if you are capable to serve wine, as a sommelier at a restaurant then you should be capable of competing, and even winning, an ASI contest regardless of gender, sexual identity, skin colour, religion, or mobility, for example. Everyone needs, and must have, the chance to compete on a level playing field.

**HB:** Agreed.

**AH:** When it comes to diversity and inclusion how do you see the two committees collaborating?

**RG:** When William (Wouters) suggested a member of the Diversity Committee being on ethics committee there was no question, that we would make this

happen. I would say we are already collaborating closely now and together we can continue and support each other build strong committees.

**HB:** We are working collaboratively but we understand the roles each other plays. As a Diversity Committee we in sense can be the revolutionaries driving change. We are the ones that challenge the past and the status quo. Ethics on the other hand must be the law, right down the rules, codes of conduct and being the side that reviews and issues that arrives and be that unbiased judge to see if ASI's codes of conduct have been infringed.

**AH:** How can people with questions or issues contact your committees?

**HB:** There is a direct link to our committee: [www.asi.info/contact](http://www.asi.info/contact). We encourage everyone to contact us, whether they have a specific issue or simply want to learn more about our committee or how we can support their association with their diversity and inclusion programs.

**RG:** On our side, any of us can be reached via our email as see on the ASI website. Go to our committee on the contact us page and you will find all our emails. That said, if you know us, we can be reached by phone, WhatsApp or in-person. These conversations can start any number of ways.

That said, when someone has contacted us, we have essentially two options of where to take that conversation. It can either result in a claim or simply be a conversation. In either case the discussions are confidential. If it is a claim, that could result in a legal issue, we ultimately must move this our legal counsel. If on the other hand it is something our committee believes can be resolved via a discussion we chat internally and then conduct a formal investigation. If in this process we decide the action taken by a party goes against the code of conduct or infringes on the image of ASI, we then seek to work with the parties to ensure



there is an understanding. With all these cases we try to learn and understand the situation and formulate ways to ensure it does not happen again in the future. These conversations can create awareness and understanding about issues for our committee, helping us build protocols and accepted behaviors.

Ultimately, it's all about learning, understanding, and building a better and more inclusive future.

**Our Team**

*Introducing the ASI Diversity, Ethics & Compliance Committees*

# Evolving the language of wine

With Sandrine Goeyvaerts, sommelier, wine merchant and author of *Manifeste Pour un Vin Inclusif*

Feature Article

Sandrine Goeyvaerts is the author of the *Manifeste Pour un Vin Inclusif* (Manifeste for Inclusive Wine), a book that exposes the inherent sexist, racist, classist, and LGBTQ phobic nature of the language of wine. Goeyvaerts takes an anthropologic view on the development of the language the surrounds wine, in an effort to understand the inherent inequalities root within it, and as a way to understand how to eliminate them from the future language of wine. According to Goeyvaerts "I have explored the language of wine, untangled the complex and often twisted web of wine vocabulary, and unravelled all the obstacles: misogyny, invisibility, harassment, the glass ceiling, lack of legitimacy ..."

Ultimately as she says, "because language is a tool for emancipation, we have everything to gain by giving new meaning to the words of sharing and conviviality." *Manifeste Pour un Vin Inclusif* is also a practical guide, as it includes a lexicon of one hundred wine words and their unseen definitions and provides suggestions of how to speak about wine more inclusively.



Evolving the language of wine



Feature Article

*Evolving the language of wine*

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|  | <p><b>ASI:</b> Is it fair to say that the evolution of the language of wine (even if full of insensitivities) was a reflection of broader Western European historic insensitivities towards diversity of race, sexuality?</p> <p><b>SG:</b> Completely! Language is both the tool of society and the mirror of its evolution. In French, the disappearance of the word “autrice” for example, which is the feminine of “auteur,” over the centuries shows this quite well. Women authors existed until the 17th century: the better they had a dedicated word to name them and give them a place in society. Until men considered the word unworthy, indicating the function unworthy of a female mind, and erased the word from French dictionaries. Author became the norm, and a profession, an essentially, typically male function. The language of wine, the language of tasting, developed in the bourgeois salons of the 18th and 19th centuries, followed the norms of this society and its point of view: white, bourgeois, masculine, colonialist, rich. In Europe, and particularly in France, the man is the essential reference. There is a rule in our grammar that says, for example, “the masculine always prevails over the feminine.” This shows how much sexism is part of our culture, and how complicated it is to question it. Moreover, our “openness to the other” has long been made up of colonisation, and “exoticism” romanticised. We find this in our literature, but also in the words of wine, where tropical fruits are described as “exotic.”</p> | <p>can be translated as “it’s not for the gay persons,” introducing the idea that wine is a drink that must exude good old-fashioned cisheterosexual virility, both in its production and in its consumption.</p> <p><b>ASI:</b> In terms of way forward, how do you feel that gatekeepers (journalists, educators, sommeliers) are doing with eliminating sexist language from their wine vernacular? Are we as an industry making positive steps forward?</p> <p><b>SG:</b> I think it’s slowly changing, mainly because more and more women and POC (persons of colour) are taking up the issue, and not letting it go. It’s hard to fight discrimination that you don’t experience, because you rarely understand it in depth. That is why one way to address language inequalities is to work on making women, LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual), disabled, racialised people, ... visible. They are in the best position to make things change, to refuse what is offensive to them, and finally to open the world of wine to all. It is essential that at the highest level of decision making, in the big assemblies of sommeliers, journalists, winemakers, they make their voices heard. One of the levers of this action is through organisation: I think, for example, that the establishment of non-mixity groups makes it possible to develop political strategies to be put in place.</p> |
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Feature Article</p>               | <p><b>ASI:</b> There are perhaps some obvious words such as feminine versus masculine, legs, or voluptuous which clearly focus on stereotypical, sexist language to give wine a perceived personality. What are some less obvious terms?</p> <p><b>SG:</b> Are they that obvious? I’m not sure when I see that we still have to explain on a daily basis that not “feminine” applied to a wine is not appropriate, that it only transcribes stereotypes and that talking about “thighs” (feminine, it’s unspoken but that’s how it’s understood) is horribly sexist, since it reduces women to a piece of their body, a piece that can be discussed at will. Generally speaking, it’s not always the word itself that’s a problem — for example, the word “charpenté” refers in French to the body as much as to a table or a house — but rather its contextual use: “masculine and charpenté” is not appropriate, since it’s a cliché. In French we have many expressions too, such as “ce n’est pas un vin de tapette,” which</p>  | <p><b>ASI:</b> Is there white, western European bias to wine language? Examples might include such terms as brioche, garrigue etcetera that are clearly French-centric. Does the use of “euro” terms partly to blame for the “whiteness” of wine?</p> <p><b>SG:</b> Clearly yes! I am Belgian, and French-speaking, so for me brioche, candied fruits, and garrigue are known references and although I don’t experience garrigue on a daily basis, I don’t have far to go to do so. The vocabulary of wine has established standards, which is obviously essential if we want to establish a common language, but the problem is that these standards only represent a very small part of the world, Europe and more particularly France. There is a lot of talk in wine about “minerality”: tasters used to describe sensations of salt, which was wrong most of the time. It’s only recently that we’ve been talking about umami, because it’s only recently that this notion has reached us. What has been an essential concept in terms of flavour in Asia for hundreds of years is</p>  |
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Evolving the language of wine</p> |  |   |

only now beginning to be understood here: proof that we are not open to the world, and that our vision of tasting would benefit from it. Moreover, we completely ignore certain flavours, focusing only on what we know is “local” (with a few exceptions due to colonization, such as pineapples or bananas). But why don't our reports ever mention soy sauce? Of course, here in Europe we still don't know all the subtleties, but it is becoming a standard thanks to the explosion of quality Asian cuisine.

**ASI:** How do we edit the language of wine to be inclusive of different races, cultures and upbringings?

**SG:** By becoming aware of our place, our condition, and that the way we express ourselves never represents an absolute value. I am white and European, I grew up in a certain culture, but I can, without denying it completely, examine what sexist, racist or other biases it has and avoid using them. I can also listen to what others have to say, to tell, to express. We are all the fruits of our cultures, which makes us rich but also fallible. The temptation to consider that we are always right is great: instead, let's try to leave room for other tastes, other words, other wines.

**ASI:** Does it require a rewriting of the language or simply an acceptance amongst the wine elite that how a wine is described should be reflective of their own personal history and not a Western European's background?

**SG:** Probably a bit of both: let's banish terms that are clearly sexist, racist or homophobic, or classist, and on the other hand, let's encourage the wine elites to speak in a different way, without conforming to too narrow models, but by bringing in what constitutes them, at the most intimate level. I like to describe wine with memories, childhood or not. It is often more meaningful and universal to talk about feelings like these, the love of a mother's cooking, the feeling of freedom of a walk in the open air, a first kiss or a goodbye ...

**ASI:** To play devil's advocate on the last question. Given wine development was largely developed in Western, Central, Eurasia for many centuries, is it fair to say that the language of wine should have some inherent 'Europeanness' and there would be a danger to not respect the cultural traditions of wine by eliminating them in their entirety?

**SG:** To answer you in a slightly provocative way, perhaps it would be a just punishment for having tried to colonize a large part of the world? More seriously: the language is constantly evolving, and this thanks to the contributions of the outside world. It only dies when we stop feeding it: what comes from elsewhere only strengthens it, makes it alive. The European culture and history is not in danger of disappearing because we will make room for other cultures: it is a very dangerous idea that the purity of a language, of a culture, of a history from elsewhere, don't you think?

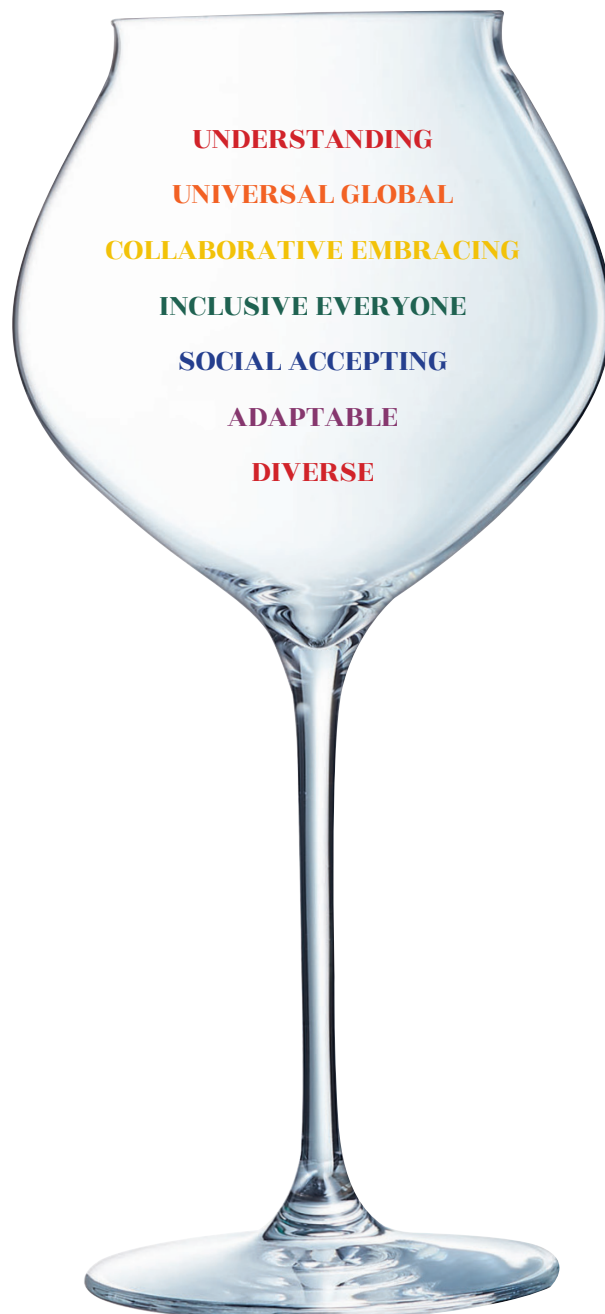


Photo: Contributed



## SCHOOL OF PORT'S FIRST EVER EDUCATIONAL BOOTCAMP HAPPENING THIS MONTH



**School of Port is Symington Family Estates'** educational platform that teaches wine trade professionals and wine enthusiasts about port & the Douro Valley. In September, School of Port will host the first edition of its Douro Somm Camp — an immersive educational bootcamp for the winners of 14 national sommelier competitions across Europe.

The objective of the 4-day event is to bring together some of the most promising European sommeliers for a rich learning experience in the Douro during the harvest. The participants will be given a unique opportunity to learn directly from those working in all areas of the port trade — from viticulturists to sales managers. They will visit the Graham's Port Lodge in Vila Nova de Gaia; the working modern winery at Dow's Quinta do Bomfim near Pinhão; and the traditional foot treading at the magnificent Quinta do Vesúvio in the remote Douro Superior. Over 4 days, they will enjoy tastings, masterclasses,

lunches with spectacular Douro views, and dinners with special wines and ports. There will also be a few surprises as the bootcamp aims to create a mix of learning and truly memorable Douro moments.

Fourteen professionals — winners of different national sommelier competitions — were selected to take part in this first ever edition: Adriaan Visser (Netherlands), Aitor Maiztegui (Spain), Carine Patrício (Portugal), Dries Corneillie (Belgium), Ellen Franzén (Sweden), Fabien Mene (Switzerland), Jakub Filipek (Poland), Jakub Přebyl (Czech Republic), Jonathan Gouveia (Denmark), Karoline Reinhold (Estonia), Marina Revkova (Ukraine), Patrick Bostock (UK), Sander Johnsson (Norway) and Sebastian Russold (Germany).

School of Port aims to establish Douro Somm Camp as a key annual fixture in the sommelier calendar, inviting the rising stars from national competitions every year to have a unique learning experience about port and the Douro.

# OUR GLOBAL FAMILY: **OUR STRENGTH IS OUR DIVERSITY**

**SHARING THEIR STORIES**



Feature Article

*Our global family: Our strength is our diversity*

# Miyuki Morimoto:

## overcoming Japan’s male-dominated sommelier culture

Miyuki Morimoto, sommelier at Conrad Tokyo, is one of Asia’s most accomplished sommeliers, but you probably have not heard of her before. Such is the challenge of living and working in a country, where women sommeliers are still fighting to gain the recognition, they deserve.

Morimoto was born and raised in Kanagawa prefecture and has been working in hospitality for more than a decade. According to Morimoto, her journey into sommellerie started with a transformative taste of 1995 Château Ducru-Beaucaillou when she was just 20 years old. According to Morimoto it was a wine “that captivated me by its wonderful flavour profile. Prior to tasting ‘Ducru’, I thought wine was austere, high in alcohol, and not to my taste. Thanks to this experience with an authentic wine, I was inspired to learn more about the influence of history, soil, and environment on wine.”

Since that first transformative taste of Bordeaux, Morimoto has worked, trained in both New Zealand and Australia, earned her Advanced Sommelier Certification from the Court of Master Sommeliers (2018), finished second at the 2020 Best Sommelier of Japan contest, the highest placement of any female sommelier in the history of the contest, and is currently preparing for the Master Sommelier Diploma in London, and a recent recipient of a Dom Perignon Golden Vines MW and MS Scholarship. She will represent Japan at the upcoming ASI Bootcamp in Malaysia and Best Sommelier of Asia & Oceania, another first for a female sommelier from Japan.

As for the future she says, “my dream one day is to be an inspiration for young emerging female sommeliers and to encourage them to thrive and shine despite the limitations imposed by the Japanese culture.”

**ASI:** What inspires you about your role as a sommelier?

**Miyuki Morimoto (MM):** It is sharing my knowledge with our guests, allowing them to feel as if they have traveled the world through the

wine. Even if they do not visit the country, they can imagine the scenery of the country through the wine. I do not think there is any other beverage like wine. I believe the charm of a sommelier is there well-rounded knowledge, as they can even connect deeply with guests who do not drink alcohol, since we study not only about wine but also other beverages.

**ASI:** Is it fair to say that sommellerie in Japan has historically been a male dominated industry? What challenges, if any, did you have as a young female sommelier studying and starting your career in Japan?

**MM:** By number of members, Japan is one of the countries in the world with the largest number of women holding sommelier certificates. However, this is just a figure. Only a handful of women actually work as ‘sommeliers’ in restaurants and hotels, and most of them work as flight attendants or wine school instructors. This is just an example, but the hotel where I work has five sommeliers including myself, and I am the only woman.

To tell you the truth, many Japanese guests and Japanese male sommeliers still think that a sommelier is a man. While working, I am often told “it is rare to see a female sommelier,” or asked “can a female work seriously as a sommelier?”

In this way, I am not myself or ‘Miyuki’ personally, but ‘the female sommelier.’ I am often treated like a panda bear, not as an individual but as a female sommelier. That is why guests want a male sommelier who feels secure to serve them. That is why they want a male sommelier as a billboard, and that’s why it’s difficult for a female sommelier to work in male field.

This attitude reflects Japanese society. Japan ranked 116 among 146 countries in the gender gap rankings in 2022, last place amongst the Group of Seven industrialized nations.

**ASI:** You have international experience working in Australia and New Zealand. What inspired you to work in these countries? Did you find them to be more open to women working as sommeliers?

Feature Article

Our global family: Our strength is our diversity



**MM:** In 2014, I took part in the All-Japan Best Sommelier Competition for the first time and placed fifth. In 2017, I won fourth place and was the “No.1 woman sommelier,” in the contest. That said, I didn’t want to be the “No.1 woman sommelier.’ I wanted to be the “Best Sommelier of Japan.” After this competition, I thought about what I was missing and decided that what I lacked was a language and a global mindset, so I started working as a sommelier in Sydney, Australia in 2018 and then in Auckland, New Zealand in 2019.

Through this experience, I felt that the way people working in the hospitality industry are treated in New Zealand and Australia is quite different from the way they are treated in Japan. Both guests and colleagues were very tolerant, respectful of sommeliers and attendants as a profession regardless of their gender or country of origin. We felt that they truly enjoyed our advice and explanations. The experiences as a sommelier in Australia and New Zealand, where diversity is embraced, raised my self-esteem.

**ASI:** You have recently earned the right to represent Japan at ASI Bootcamp in Malaysia and the upcoming Best Sommelier of Asia & Oceania contest.

How does this make you feel personally?  
How does it make you feel as a woman representing Japan at an international contest?

**MM:** I respect the reputation of ASI’s Bootcamp for excellence and commitment to career development. I believe it will be a stimulating learning environment and a place where I could connect with several like-minded sommeliers from all over the world. My passion for learning and my outstanding inquisitive and friendly nature have allowed me to connect with many people at the ASI Bootcamp, which will be a great asset to my life.

My desire is to share on my experience at ASI Bootcamp and the ASI Best Sommelier of Asia & Oceania contest to the next generation of female Japanese sommeliers. I am also looking forward to expressing my full personality at the contest, as I see it as more accepting of diversity than the All-Japan Best Sommelier competition. I am very excited!

**ASI:** You have recently been awarded a Dom Pérignon Golden Vines MW and MS Scholarship. Tell us about this, and what your future educational and career goals are?

**MM:** I’m honored beyond measure. What I have accomplished at this point couldn’t have been done alone. So, I truly appreciate to the people who have supported me.

I would like to continue my efforts to become a person worthy of this scholarship so that I can repay the people who are organizing this scholarship and selected me, via mentorship to others.

After hearing the news of the scholarship award, many guests came to dine at our restaurant, to congratulate me, and even drink Dom Pérignon with me, as result of hearing I had won the Dom Pérignon Golden Vines MW and MS Scholarship. If our guests and fellow sommeliers are encouraged by what I have done, I will never stop my progress.



Feature Article

## Laura Depasquale MS: breaking the glass ceiling

Laura Depasquale is by all accounts an incredibly successful sommelier and businessperson. She currently holds the title of Senior Vice-President Commercial Operations Artisanal Wines at Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits. Her journey to this lofty position began more than 30 years, working in the fine dining restaurant scene in New York City and Miami. At the time there were no floor sommelier positions. At the time, she progressed from server to beverage director, writing wine lists, managing the bar programs, managing, and training staff and acting as service captain allowing her to guide staff and guests on wine selections. When she eventually did become a sommelier, in Miami, there were only a few of them. At that time, her fellow sommeliers and the trade in general were supportive of her, but according to Depasquale “the biggest hurdle or inappropriateness (at the time) came from the restaurant guests remarking that I was a woman,

or I was too young, or too pretty to know much about wine.” We asked Laura about her journey, and the challenges, if any, of being a woman making her career path in what was then a very male dominated profession.

**ASI:** You achieved Master Sommelier status in 2004. Describe that accomplishment. What did it mean for you?

**Laura Depasquale (LD):** Passing the Master Sommelier Diploma was a huge personal accomplishment and a milestone event in my life. To accomplish anything at that level requires extreme dedication. For most people, it taps into an emotional side as well because you need to be completely present, completely focused and find a way to quiet the doubts inside your head. After I passed, I became much more confident and began to find my leadership voice. The accomplishment

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gave me the courage to reach much higher in my career and commit myself to breaking the glass ceiling.

**ASI:** Does it have any special meaning for you being at the time only the 13<sup>th</sup> woman to achieve the title? Does the very fact that in many articles you are acknowledged as one of the first woman Master Sommeliers only serve to accentuate the divisiveness of the sommelier industry?

**LD:** That's a tough question to answer without giving you a 'yes' and 'no' answer. It's hard to believe that I've been a Master Sommelier for almost 20 years. For the first ten years, it was pretty much necessary to identify as one of the "first." It certainly created an instant camaraderie among the women who achieved this and a spirit of reaching out to women who were trying to get there with coaching and encouragement. You have to remember that there were very few Master Sommeliers at all so being the 'youngest' or 'fastest to pass' or 'first in Florida' was a 'thing.' I found more divisiveness or dismissal on the industry side than the hospitality community. As my career ascended, I was not "one of" but the "only" woman in the room. I certainly have experienced "women in wine" fatigue at times. Seeing the same article or press piece regurgitated with different names and faces year after year was disheartening. I firmly believe we should be further along as an industry and community and that women and minorities should not have to have unique empowerment groups. Clearly, we are not, and the empowerment groups have an important place and a mission. Recently, I have become a Board Member of the Women's Leadership Council of WSWA (Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America) where our mission is to 'educate, elevate, and empower' women and men who want to develop leadership skills to help further their careers in the industry.

**ASI:** You, more than many, as a former board member of the Court of Master Sommeliers have been privy to the inner workings of this institution. Have they always done enough to create an inclusive and welcoming community? Was the sexual abuse that came to light, in your opinion, a result of the institution's own willingness to not address sexual harassment? Could some actions have been prevented?

**LD:** I'm proud of my service on the Board of Directors and as an officer. The Board of Directors terms are elected by the membership and all the Board of Director members serve as volunteers. During my tenure, we moved the organization from a scrappy barely staying afloat non-profit organization to a financially solvent non-profit with the ability to hire employees including Education and Examination Directors and expand our access to emerging wine, food, and hospitality communities. We developed a cadence of regular board meetings and committees to work on specific projects. We were finally able to look at our upper-level examinations with our counterparts in Europe and find a way to offer better preparatory opportunities. We analyzed our exam results and developed a greater opportunity to increase access to the Advanced and Master level examinations where we had a huge backlog of candidates. We started to offer Intro and Certified Exams in emerging markets. We rebranded as CMS-Americas and began outreach programs and exams in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Argentina giving the option of the written and service exams in Spanish. All these expansion and access strategies were financial, time and emotional investments by CMS to broaden the sommelier community and tear down the notion of elitism.

As a volunteer Board, we certainly made every effort to ensure that every candidate at any examination was treated equally and fairly and felt

Feature Article

*Our global family: Our strength is our diversity*

comfortable. We instituted a code of conduct for all Master Sommeliers present at examinations and we enforced it. We established the first ethics committee for any violations that came forward. At the time, we were only able to enforce our code of conduct at the actual CMS events. My term ended in 2015 and I elected not to continue as an officer. The #metoo movement happened a few years later and thankfully it empowered more women and men to find a voice to come forward if they have experienced unwanted and unwarranted behaviour.

**ASI:** Do you think the sexual harassment scandal that became public knowledge in 2020 has tarnished the reputation of the court? Will the exposure of sexual harassment positively force the court to become a more inclusive institution and less tolerant of sexual misconduct?

**LD:** Certainly, the events that transpired were difficult to comprehend and deeply saddened me on a personal level. I think the events of 2020 have strengthened the resolve of the CMS and made it a better organization. As a woman in the industry who has experienced sexual harassment and been left with little recourse other than one on one confrontations, I am thrilled to see CMS work so hard to take a leading position in this space. I would love to see the New York Times, or any prominent publication write a follow up piece and shine a light on the changes CMS has made. Many other organizations both educational and business oriented may find a way forward towards eliminating sexual harassment, institutional bias and providing safe and accessible learning and workspaces.

**ASI:** You have accomplished so much as a sommelier and as a businessperson. Do you see yourself as a role model for women working in hospitality or simply as a role model for anyone working in hospitality seeking to move from the floor to the boardroom?

**LD:** Thanks for this question. After I passed the exam, my boss at the time called me into his office and presented me with the choice between of one of two promotions. I could become a press, public figure within the organization or continue to my development along a business path. I remember answering 'business, of course!' I really wanted to become a role model for other women in the industry. I honestly did not even conceive that I would have the ability and opportunity to be a leading executive in Fine Wine at the largest wholesaler in the world, SGWS (Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits). I formally and informally coach and mentor many women in both hospitality and business. I am not done yet, but I sincerely hope that one of my legacies will be that I helped open the door to the boardroom for everyone.

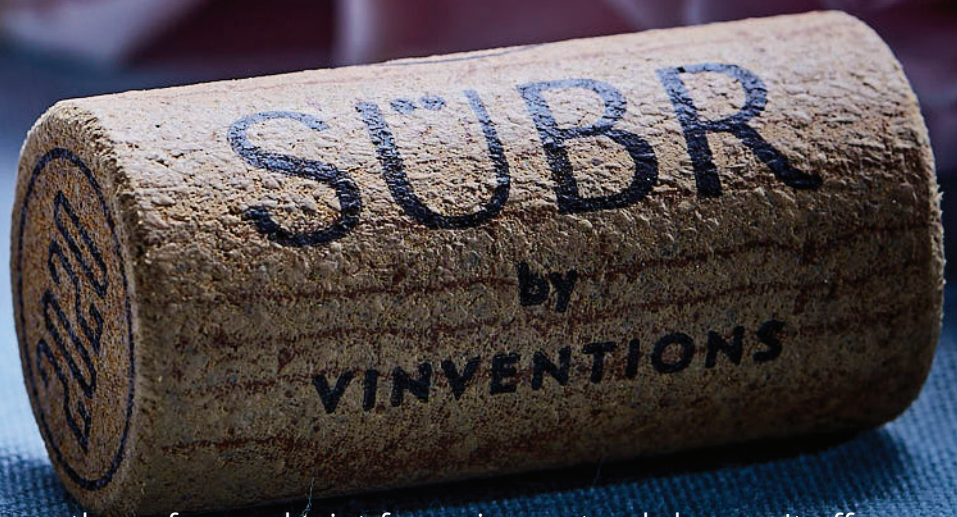
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## A FAMILY BEYOND SUSTAINABILITY

Our legacy is taking care of the planet for future generations

# Familia Torres: Regenerative viticulture against climate change



©ToniGalitó

Wildfires, heatwaves and drought have been the keynote this summer in many Spanish regions, and the probability that they will occur more frequently and forcefully is growing due to climate change. The effects of global warming in vine-growing and winemaking are obvious. Since 2008, Familia Torres has been taking steps towards reducing its carbon footprint and adapting to the new climate scenario through its environmental programme Torres & Earth. Its aim is to reduce its CO2 emissions per bottle in 60% in 2030 (scopes 1, 2 and 3) and reach net zero emissions by 2040.

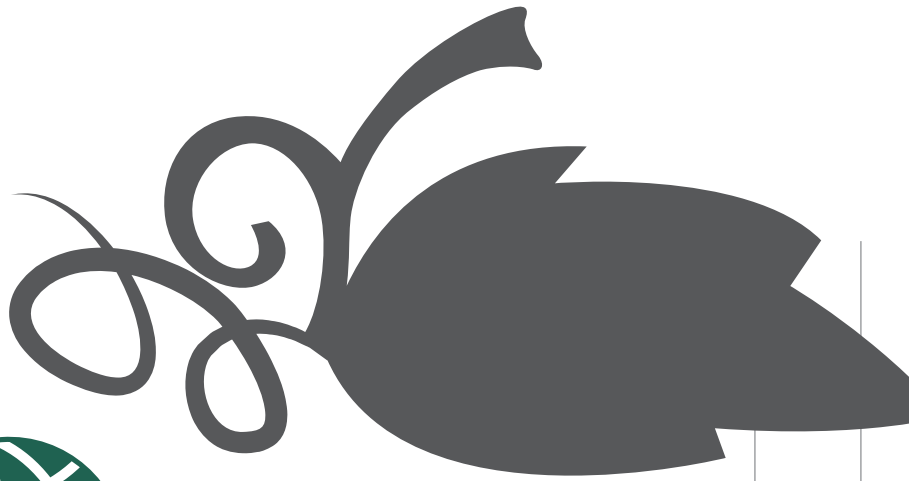
Two years ago, Familia Torres decided to embrace regenerative viticulture as a new way of tackling climate change. The main idea behind it is to restore life in the soil by imitating nature. The more life exists in the soils, the greater their capacity to draw CO2 from the atmosphere, thus making them a stronger asset in the fight to stop global warming. At the same time, the accumulation of organic carbon in vineyard soils will make them healthier, increase their resilience to erosion, and their ability to withstand drought, because they will retain more water. This will also encourage biodiversity,

creating a balanced ecosystem that benefits the vineyard and the planet.

Miguel Torres, General Manager of Familia Torres and member of the fifth generation, said: "All of the aspects that are a result of having more alive, balanced soils are very positive in vine-growing that is aimed at high-quality wines and in a context of climate change. These regenerative techniques will not only help us make better wines, but they will also allow us to turn our vineyards into large carbon sinks."

Familia Torres cofounded in 2021 the Regenerative Viticulture Association to drive a paradigm shift in vineyard management towards the implementation of this winegrowing model based on the carbon cycle, through the exchange of experiences and knowledge. The more regenerative viticulture spreads around the world, the greater the impact. The association will soon launch the Regenerative Viticulture Alliance Certification that will recognise the efforts of winegrowers and winemakers who act to curb the climate threat and biodiversity in their vineyards.

**Further information: [www.viticulturnaregenerativa.org](http://www.viticulturnaregenerativa.org)**



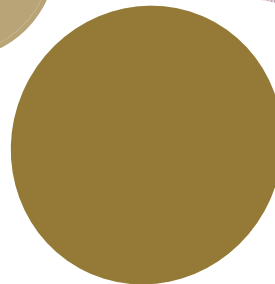
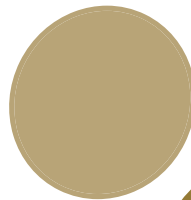
# David Lawler:

the more the merrier

David Lawler's career began in 1990 working as an apprentice at Melbourne's Marchetti's Latin, a renowned five-star restaurant. During those early years, David became one of Australia's first sommeliers. He applied his skills to the restaurants he worked in, whilst mentoring a new generation of sommeliers. An active member of the Victoria Sommelier Association, David was instrumental in the formation of Sommeliers Australia, creating a bridge between the various state-run sommelier associations. In 2013, David rose from vice-president to president, bringing new passion to the role and setting up the association for future success. He did so, all the while, living with MS (Multiple Sclerosis), a disease that attacks the central nervous system, often leading, in many people, including David, reduced mobility and even the loss of the ability to walk. David, made the hard decision to vacate his presidency, as a result of his ongoing battle with MS. ASI asked David about his experiences as a sommelier working with reduced mobility and how sommeliers and restaurateurs can welcome people with physical disability into their dining rooms.

**ASI:** Have restaurants adapted to inclusivity, specifically as it relates to physical disability, as for example they have to people with dietary restrictions, choices?

**David Lawler (DL):** The short answer is ... no. Certainly, there have been many positive developments in the way new restaurants are built with a greater importance placed on accessibility (ramps, washrooms etcetera). I also think the past few decades have seen an awakening of varied sensitivities. Alongside this, perhaps in an attempt to find some ease, comfort and accountability, I feel we have fostered a desire to have clear, 'tick box', right or wrong solutions. I simply use dietary restrictions as an example of how this complexity has been embraced and accepted by restaurants and guests. By comparison to the many shades of disability, the dietary conversation



is a relatively easy one to have now. Positively I think the conversation has begun, however there is much to achieve in regard to increasing inclusivity for various disabilities

**ASI:** In an article you once wrote you described 'willingness' and 'humility' as foundations of hospitality. If we focus on 'willingness' in the context of inclusion, you suggest that it goes beyond merely building ramps, installing accessible washrooms. Can you elaborate on how you view "willingness" as it relates to perhaps the often naïve, presumptive, and often well-intentioned attempts of restaurateurs to be "accessible"?

**DL:** Willingness can, and should certainly exist in the design, building and infrastructure of new establishments to include as many guests as possible. Of more significance to the hospitality experience, is human, warm, empathetic willingness to make each and every guest feel included. This willingness can manifest in a broad desire to help each and every guest (with or without impairments) to the best possible experience of wine, food,

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service and ambience on offer. I am referring to each and every guest with intention. Whilst there are particularities with regards to disability, we are trying to address a lack inclusivity. By focussing on our own 'willingness' to help all guests, we include guests with disabilities. Most guests do not want to be isolated or have their 'special needs' highlighted. If we encapsulate willingness and humility as pillars of our hospitality this will be achieved with discretion and dignity for all. When willingness is paired with humility (it is not about you...) it should eliminate the potential for 'over stepping' or presumptive decisions that can impinge upon a guest's dignity. For staff, it is simply having knowledge of your environment and its limitations, having a willingness to discover what will best suit the guest, and the humility to allow yourself the best opportunity to hear and understand the guests needs.

**ASI:** In previous articles you have defined humility as 'the quality of having a modest view of oneself.' Can you elaborate on how humility should apply in terms of a sommelier's interactions with all guests, but specifically those with a disability/accessibility issue?

**DL:** Humility can easily be the difference between a very good experience in a restaurant, with all the right knowledge and articulation of needs exchanged and delivered ... and a mind blowing, spine tingling, high definition, lifetime memory borne of elegant, seamless exchanges where you felt heard, understood, and appreciated. Most likely, there is very little difference in the dry information exchanged, or the quality of wine and food. Humility keeps us focussed on the guest and their needs. Sometimes this might result in the sommelier not getting much 'airtime', if the guests needs do not call for long prosaic musings about endless vinous details, then do not provide them with it. In my experience many sommeliers just want the opportunity to share knowledge, and perhaps show off a little of what they know ... stop it. A device I have suggested to some that have fallen into this trap, is imagining that all guests already know the lofty heights and endless depths of your knowledge; they are already impressed so you don't have to impress them anymore. If you can avoid being conceited or pompous, this allows for the exchange to be free from any unnecessary posturing, it allows you to hear the guest, and it allows the guest to feel heard. Everybody wins.

**ASI:** There is a danger when crafting experience with broad generalisations in mind. How can restaurateurs, sommeliers develop personalized experiences for their guests, specifically those with disabilities/accessibility issues?

**DL:** As certainly that is a very broad term. Always looking after a guest as if it's the first of many visits. This endows the staff with accountability and gentle motivation to learn (and remember) the unique things the guest may need or like/ dislike. Even if you never see them again, they will feel understood and heard. With regards to various disabilities and impairments, it heightens the importance of the guest to feel heard. At the risk of generalising; many people with various impairments, would prefer to be asked and tell you what their needs are rather than have you assume. This gathering of 'intel' about a guest will help to personalise the experience and thus make them feel appreciated Looking after any guest as though they will return is gently encouraging for them ... to return.

**ASI:** In your letter you focus on what restaurateurs/sommeliers/service staff can do to incorporate willingness and humility as it relates to their guests? What about applying that thinking to staff? How can restaurateurs focus the concepts of 'willingness' and 'humility' to inclusion of people with disabilities as part of their service staff team?

**DL:** This is perhaps an area of more significant obstacles. I feel it can be approached in a similar way. Employers and managers should have a clear understanding of the environment and its limitations as pertaining to the individual impairment. With this information and a willingness to understand what an individual can achieve and contribute to guest satisfaction. I think an objective and pragmatic understanding of what accommodations can be made or suitability to employment will be found. Not all environments can be suitable for all people. With willingness and humility, this can be better understood by staff, teammates, and employers.





# Accessibility:

## a customer's perspective

**With Peta Hooke, disability advocate, and host of The I Can't Stand Podcast**



Peta Hooke is a travel enthusiast, foodie, wine lover, and the host of "The I Can't Stand Podcast." She started her podcast as a more efficient way to answer the multitude

of questions she received about living with her disability.

According to Peta the importance of restaurant's addressing accessibility goes beyond the social value, there is an economic foundation to it. She elaborates "1 in 5 Australian citizens is disabled (not always visibly), yet only 32 per cent of disabled people frequent restaurants. The potential economic stimulus is immense." Consider the massive size of the disabled minority, and it is a bit perplexing why restaurateurs are not more actively engaging with this part of the population.

Since 2011 all new buildings in Australia must be accessible, but this leaves a lot of buildings that are not. Peta says "I encourage restaurant owners to understand the needs of their disabled customers. 'Do you identify your restaurant as accessible on your website? Are your staff trained and aware of the accessibility of your restaurant?' Peta suggests restaurateurs think about a disabled person's journey from the parking lot to the seat in the restaurant, asking themselves the questions "How accessible is that journey? Are tables far enough apart? Is there a ramp to get into the building? What are the barriers of your restaurant to someone living with a disability?"

For Peta, a restaurant addressing issues of accessibility also shows the thoughtfulness of the restaurant, which is an encouragement for



Peta and others to go out, dine and "spend their money." It all addresses an often-unspoken issue, disabilities among the staff. While Peta's disability is very visible, not all are. She says "it's important to build and foster an open environment for everyone within the workspace, whether they identify as LGBTQ, disabled, or cultural minority. Everyone wants to feel accepted."

For her next winery visit, consider accessibility issues. Her challenges include the high level of the cash register and the tasting bar. Imagine yourself being in a wheelchair and the spittoon placed high above your head on the bar.

It may take years for restaurants to address accessibility the same way they have addressed as David Lawler says in his piece dietary issues. Until then, Peta is going to keep dining out with friends, and frequenting accessible restaurants. Next up is Melbourne's celebrated Tonka restaurant, before she heads off to Morocco on holiday.

Feature Article

*Our global family: Our strength is our diversity*



# Anthony Gomes:

## from Bangladesh to Champagne

Anthony Gomes did not grow up thinking he would be a sommelier and caviste (wine merchant), owning and managing a wine shop in Champagne while growing up Bangladesh. However, under the threat of religious persecution — Gomes is Catholic — he made the hard decision to uproot his immediate family's life and leave his home country and set up a new life in France. As he says "it was like taking a step into the unknown, not knowing if they will be coming back or what lies ahead in their future. It was terrifying and I was anxious about the unknown, but I also knew, there was a chance for me to build a better future for my family and myself. This was the motivation that made me take such a giant leap of faith."

**ASI:** Why France?

**Anthony Gomes (AG):** I feel like France choose me, rather than me choosing France. When I made the decision to leave my country and family, I didn't have a destination in mind. I already knew wherever I went, there will be a difficult adjustment period. At the time, France was very welcoming to refugees, and as a country, they were kind to their citizens by providing them with rights that made sure they were taken care of. Those facts were a beacon to me and going anywhere else didn't make sense.

**ASI:** As an immigrant, with only a few years working as a waiter at a Sheraton hotel in Bangladesh how did you enter the wine world? Was it something you had wanted to pursue or did circumstance or fate bring you to into a life of wine?

**AG:** After arriving in France, the first thing I had to do was learn the language, of course. After doing so, I enrolled I in GRETA (a French network of adult learning institutions) and achieve my BAC (baccalauréat) degree. By then, I felt integrated in France, its language, and its beautiful culture. I was confident in myself and was ready to take the next step in my career. While settling down, my wife and I became acquainted with a family who later became our pillar of support in this country.

They introduced me to a wine school in Avize and the director there advised me to work towards the Certificat de Spécialisation en Commercialisation des vins, at CFPPA Avize, since I understood and knew how to speak English well. I would like to say a string of positive coincidences has led me to where I am.

**ASI:** Tell us about your journey in the wine world. Did your upbringing play a factor, positively or negatively, into your love of wine?

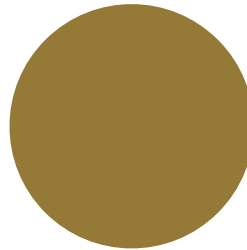
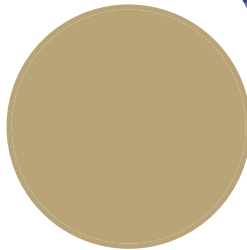
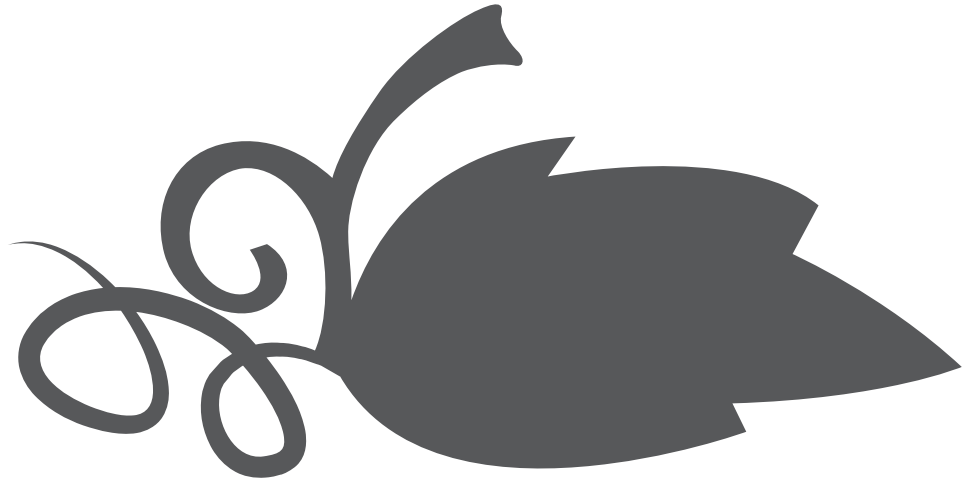
**AG:** After I achieved my certification, I had the privilege of working with Mikael Rodriguez (currently President ASMA (Association des Sommeliers du Maroc)) at Le Dokhan's Bar. It was here, where I truly was introduced to the wine world and my passion for this craft was born. Being raised in a country where alcohol was prohibited, I didn't have the opportunity to study it like I did while working with Mikael. This made me eager to learn and understand wine better. Not to mention, in France, wine is not just a commodity — it is a part of our culture and history and is treated with the utmost respect. There is an art to it that one would not understand unless they took the time to. I really appreciated that because wine is something that is very important in my religion, and that was one of the things that drew me closer to this world. In conclusion, I wouldn't say growing up in a country that didn't have as rich of a wine culture put me at a disadvantage, if anything it contributed to my curiosity and passion which got me as far as I am today.

**ASI:** Is it fair to say you are the only caviste in Champagne from Bangladesh? Has you ever experienced racism or felt marginalized while working in Champagne?

**AG:** It is fair to say I am probably the only caviste from Bangladesh in France. When it comes my shop, although my speciality is Champagne, I love the wines of France and of other countries, as well. In my shop, I have 400 shelf positions dedicated to the wines of Champagne and the remaining 900

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Our global family: Our strength is our diversity



are reserved for wines from different regions, with Burgundy being a strong focus. I am also in the process of exploring different countries, like Italy, Spain, Portugal and the USA.

I am grateful to say that I have not experienced racism in this industry, at least not that it was obvious to me. Everywhere I have gone in France, I have felt welcome. I am extremely lucky to have developed long-lasting relationships with many growers, who have generously shared their knowledge with me through tastings and explaining how they work. It has become an important and very popular feature in our shop to host tastings with producers and pair their wine with authentic Bangladeshi food which my wife prepares.

**ASI:** What's next on your wine journey? Will you expand your business? Expand your education?

**AG:** My goal is to visit and learn from all the wine-growing regions around the world. In terms of expansion, of course, as a business owner — improving my business is always a goal. However, I would also like to introduce the wine culture I have found in France to Bangladesh. As the years progressed, so has my country, and I hope to share my knowledge and passion for wine with them. I would like to broaden their perspectives, so they understand there is more out there in the world for them.

**ASI:** Finally, what makes a great Champagne for you?

**AG:** I love the artisanal nature involved in making champagne. The style of champagne, I gravitate towards, is mineral driven where you can feel how the producer's passion in expressing their individual terroir(s) comes through. For me personally the expression of terroir is the most thrilling aspect and tasting, discovering and exploring the different wines of this region from the different climates, soils and producers is a great passion.

Feature Article

*Our global family: Our strength is our diversity*



## Jihad Errachid:

defying traditions,  
a Muslim's journey  
to sommellerie

Jihad Errachid is just starting his journey into the world of wine and sommellerie. As Moroccan born Muslim, his journey is being supported by his family even if the occupation is not totally understandable to them.

Feature Article

*Our global family: Our strength is our diversity*



**ASI:** Why did you choose to pursue a career in sommellerie?

**Jihad Errachid (JE):** I had been following the actions of the ASMA (Association des Sommeliers du Maroc / Moroccan sommelier association) and their president Mikaël Rodriguez with whom I have worked at La Mamounia. They inspired me.

Also, as wine is part of French heritage, I am already quite familiar with it. French culture is very present in Morocco. The field of wine interests me in different forms, I love to discover the complex production of wines and spirits, all the subtleties it includes. Also, I greatly appreciate the moments of the tastings. Being novice, I often discover new grape varieties. Another point that I particularly like is the service. I am always inspired by the protocol of the establishment but also by certain clients. I really enjoy when I'm in the room. I have been working in some of the most prestigious restaurants and hotels in Morocco, and have always admired the sommelier teams, and have always wanted to join them.

**ASI:** Has your family been supportive of this decision?

**JE:** My family supports the fact that I move forward and that I continue to progress from year to year. Being from a traditional and Muslim family, the domain of the sommellerie is necessarily not well known or understood.

**ASI:** Have you seen changing attitudes in Morocco with respect to service of alcohol?

**JE:** In the prestigious establishments where I have served; I have observed an increasingly strong interest in wine. Moroccan customers are more and more curious and interested in sommellerie.

**ASI:** You will be studying in France. Can you tell us a little about the school and why you choose to learn there?

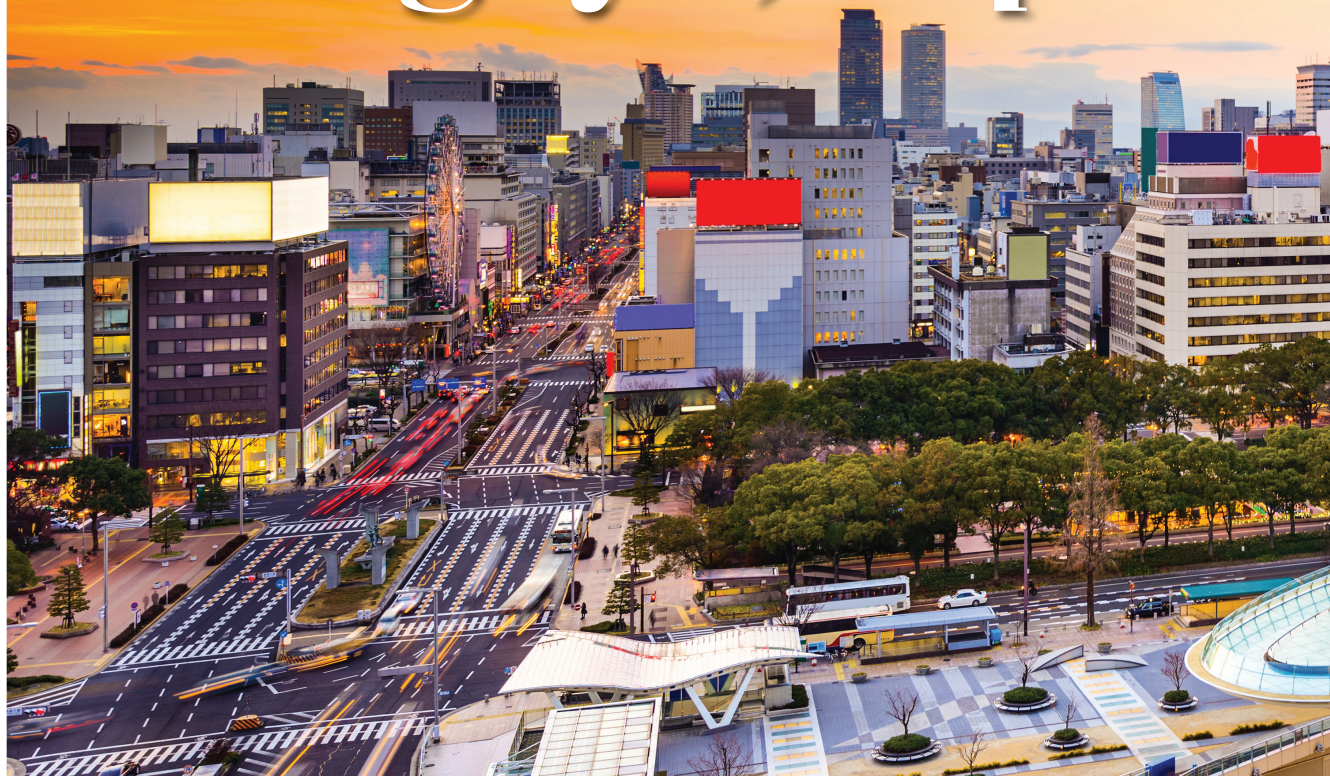
**JE:** I choose France because it is the cradle of the global sommellerie and obviously, it was natural for me to go to there. Indeed, the French service is very special, has a lot of rules, and requires a great amount of study and regiment, which I am ready for. The CFA Médéric represents the flagship of education in the hotel and catering industry. It is a public and very renowned Parisian school and comes highly recommended by players in the industry. On top of it, it is known as a school who likes to give chance to everybody, it is a very inclusive school who knows how to grow talents wherever you come from or whoever you are.

As part of my education, I had to find a restaurant to work with. I managed to get an opportunity with Yannick Alléno, a French chef with a Michelin three-star restaurant. It's a big honour for me to be part of this French institution. I will do my best to help Yannick Alléno, and his team.

**ASI:** Are you working towards an end goal? If you could create your own career path in this industry where would that path take you?

**JE:** I don't have a predefined objective at the moment, because I already feel that France will bring me new perspectives. I prefer to leave myself free to deepen the things that will please me the most. In the long term, I would still like to succeed in bringing the expertise of the sommelier back to my country, Morocco. Eventually, I would like to become the best Moroccan sommelier, and work with young, well-trained and motivated teams to make the art of wine shine in Morocco. I would also like to be able to inspire the next generation who are interested in sommellerie.

# ASI Hosts General in Nagoya, Japan



Happenings

ASI Hosts General Assembly in Nagoya, Japan

Earlier this summer, ASI hosted its annual General Assembly in Nagoya, Japan. The annual event brought together presidents and other representatives of their member associations to review the past year's activities and the board and committees' plans for the upcoming year. It was also a chance to welcome new member associations to ASI and vote on the host country for the 2026 ASI Best Sommelier of the World contest.

Of this year's assembly, ASI President William Wouters says "we think of ASI as a big family. Our job, as a board, is to be guardians and stewards of ASI, is to provide strong leadership, and help guide our member associations and sommeliers around the world towards an even brighter future. We were thrilled to see more than 20 associations make the journey to Japan, while the rest watched the meetings via our online platform. This unity supports our belief we are on the right path forward."

Hosting a General Assembly is never an easy task, but recently it has been further complicated by the hybrid nature of the event. Attendees at the most recent General Assembly were present both in person and online. The decision to create ASI General Assembly's as hybrid models was brought on by the pandemic. The 2020 was General Assembly was held as an online only event, while the 2021 (Mainz, Germany) and 2022 versions as hybrid recognizing the continued travel limitations related to the pandemic, and a desire to mitigate cost for some associations. Of the decision to continue to host the event as a hybrid event Peer Holm, ASI Secretary General, says "we had gotten used to hosting meetings via Zoom, and have seen that a simultaneous translation was possible through this platform." While this provided an achievable solution for hosting presentations, voting for the host country of Best Sommelier of the World 2026, required the use of a second platform that could ensure

# Assembly



Photo: Sepavo / 123rfcom



Photo: Contributed

the security and anonymity of the process. Holm says “from a technical perspective, this was my biggest challenge as it meant helping attendees use two systems at one time. We (along with ASI Assistant Juliette Jordan) had to keep an eye on all communication platforms. Not only were fielding

questions coming in from Zoom, but also Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp etcetera, at the same time we were keeping the online presentations on time (which Holm admits punctuality is an addiction).. so my final duty was also to keep another eye on the watch.” Thankfully for Holm “our friends

Happenings

ASI Hosts General Assembly in Nagoya, Japan



Photo: Coward Lion / 123rf.com

in Japan have a culture of hospitality and service. This was visible throughout the event. As soon as any support was needed, the team of the Japan Sommelier Association were there to care of the issue in a proficient and efficient manner."

As part of the General Assembly, ASI further solidified its position as the world's largest sommelier association, by welcoming three new observer member associations (Colombia, Ecuador, and Vietnam) and promoting Kazakhstan to full member status. ASI now counts 65 full and observing member associations. Of the new members, Wouters says "we were honoured this year to welcome new associations to our family, that showcase the global diversity of sommellerie. Sommellerie continues to evolve, adapt, and become an ever more engrained part of the world of gastronomy."

Also, at the General Assembly, the members of ASI voted on the host of the ASI Best

Sommelier of the World contest in 2026. Strong presentations were made by Latvia and Portugal, but ultimately the member associations awarded the rights to Portugal, in a closely contested vote. On the news of Portugal winning the right to host the contest, ASI President William Wouters says, "both countries presented exemplary bids, and I am confident either would have made a great choice. As a resident of Portugal, I am personally excited to see the food, wine and hospitality of my adopted country showcased to the world. I look forward to supporting the Associação dos Escanções de Portugal (the Association of Sommeliers of Portugal) in planning and executing this event."



Of the honour, Tiago Paula, President of the Associação dos Escanções de Portugal, says "for our association and for all the sommeliers of Portugal, this is a very important achievement. After receiving news like this, our first feeling was almost indescribable. There was a sense of euphoria and also a



Photo: krasnevsky / 123rf.com



Photo: vector99 / 123rf.com

feeling of accomplishment for having achieved a great common objective. Now, the team is very enthusiastic and very aware of the importance and dimension that this event brings and the value it comes with, as well as a full sense of responsibility for it.”

The opportunity to host a contest like this is also an opportunity to showcase the host region. Of that opportunity Paula elaborate “this will be an excellent opportunity to share, value and promote the diversity of our native varieties, which are more than 260, as well as our different terroirs. Portugal is a country with a huge tradition in wine production which, in recent years, has exponentially increased in quality, focusing on innovation but also reinventing traditions, which is fundamental for our culture and way of being. This will also serve as a door to open and share with the world, our gastronomy, this one being so diverse and with so much tradition, and our art of hospitality. It is a whole culture to be valued and divulged, where the sommelier’s work and role as its ambassador is crucial.”

# Diversity on the Wine List

With **Véronique Rivest** and **Nina Jensen**

Somm Perspectives

There is little question diversity and inclusion is topic many restaurateurs and sommeliers have on their mind. Yet, little is said about how it translates onto a wine list. Should it be part of the thought process? We asked two legendary sommeliers.

Véronique is one of the world's most respected. Veronique earned the title of Canada's Best Sommelier in 2006 and 2012, and Best Sommelier of the Americas in 2012, she placed in the top 6 at the World's Best Sommelier Competition in 2007 and 2010. In March 2013, she became the first woman to reach the podium at the World's Best Sommelier Competition, by taking 2nd place.

Joining Véronique is Nina Jensen, sommelier at Denmark's much lauded Restaurant Alchemist (No. 18, San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants). Nina came to the world's attention in 2019 at the Best Sommelier of the World contest in Antwerp, Belgium where she was runner-up, joining Véronique as the only woman to attain this position at a world contest.

**ASI:** Should diversity be represented on a wine list? Or should a list simply be a matter of wine quality and the other classic selection factors (price, variety of styles/regions)?

**Véronique Rivest (VR):** Well, first answer that comes to mind is: everything we love about wine is its diversity! And that's not only diversity in origins and styles of wines, but of people who make them. We know people are an integral part of terroir, and if we celebrate terroir, we celebrate diversity in people, culture and traditions.

For me, and Soif (Veronique's wine bar), quality is the number one criteria. But as I often say, there is good and bad everywhere. Not one country, region or grape variety has a monopoly on quality. Quality can be found everywhere and can take on many

forms. So yes, diversity should be represented on a wine list, but for us it is not for diversity's sake only, nor our first motive. Quality is first, but then diversity just comes naturally as we love and celebrate diversity in all of wine's aspects.

And of course, as I have evolved in a world with many barriers — I started in France as a young Canadian woman selling wine to old French men. So, everything was "wrong" about me, or worse yet, cute), I do tend to support those that come up in the wine world with such barriers.

**Nine Jensen (NJ):** The good news is that you are bound to already include female winemakers on your list if you are selecting for quality as well as recognition within the wine world as some of the most well-respected wines are crafted by women. The matter is of course ratio. Whether it becomes a real subject of your wine list or impacts the curating highly depends on the concept of your restaurant: Are you in a tradition bound restaurant with great verticals represented on the list? Are you a restaurant more centered around climate change? How small or large is your wine list? Do you have a tight concept foodwise and how does it connect with the wine list? What kind of staff do you have? Can they communicate adequately if you choose to let your theme be, for example, diversity? How is the availability where you are based? What does your budget look like? Those are just some of the many considerations going into curating a wine program.

A good restaurant with a solid wine program is a passion project, sure, but it is also a business. Not that choosing diversity means you diminish your wine program or business — as long as you do your job and select well and remain unbiased in your evaluation of the wines. Diversity can easily exist amongst tradition; I believe it is never

Diversity on the Wine List



Véronique Rivest  
Photo: Contributed

constructive to make everything fit into the same square box. It is a matter of balance. And I don't believe any winemaker wish to hear that you are carrying their wines because of their gender, sexuality, mental illness or race. They want to hear it is because you in fact find it delicious.

That being said, representation does matter. It always does! But I believe we have a greater, more efficient and direct impact on choosing diversity through the staff we employ and how we run our company policy. In that regard, we carry a huge responsibility.

**ASI:** If diversity is (or you think should be, part of your wine list creation calculus) do you think it should also be called out on your wine list? Or does identifying a wine as made by an underrepresented community do a disservice to those wines and the people behind making them?

**VR:** This is a much harder question. I think there is validity to both. But coming back to what I said above, quality is first. And then, in a restaurant setting, we aim to make out guests happy. Part of that, is getting them a wine, they will enjoy, and that is a completely different story for each guest. They rarely ask for a wine made by a woman, or a black winemaker. They are looking for something to go with their food, or their mood. But once the wine is chosen, then of course they love to hear the stories of the people behind them. That's when we can actually make a difference by telling those stories and raising awareness.

**NJ:** Again, it depends totally on the restaurant but there are only very few cases where I see that being ideal. On a fun, quirky wine bar you can surely make it a theme of a flight of wines poured BTG (by the glass) for instance, but in a fine dining setting is another ballgame. I think it is much more a question of educating your staff to know what wines represent diversity and they can, in the situation, judge whether the guest would appreciate to get more of a background story or an additional sales point. If you intend to make it a stated point of your list or of a BTG selection you will need to respect your employees by equipping them adequately to understand why it matters and why you have chosen it.

I believe, for a clear concept where diversity (in togetherness with quality) is the ultimate goal, a cool wineshop is a way more suitable format. Here you can be upfront, and your customers will embrace it, perhaps even choose you over your competitor on that ground. The big difference is the customer in that setting chooses to be informed, whereas by booking a table for a nice night out that might not be their goal which we should respect in servicing our guests.

**ASI:** How do you address diversity and inclusion in your hiring practices? Is it a conscious part of your decision making when it comes to hiring?

**VR:** These days, with huge staff shortages, it's close to impossible to be picky about anything when it comes to hiring, but seriously, I really think how

we act and behave as corporate citizens is the best staffing policy we can have. It says something about us and attracts people who are drawn in by such behaviour. Basically, leading by example. Having a fair, transparent and respectful workplace, that gives everyone a fair chance, and encourages everyone to continuously learn and grow and help them move along. Even if it means losing them.

Without making any clear decision or commitment about having a diverse workplace, we naturally do. Our staff is very diverse in terms of men and woman, sexual orientation, and people of colour. Unfortunately, not at all in terms of people with disabilities as our physical layout makes it impossible.

**NJ:** My current workplace is naturally very diverse as we are close to 100 employees of different cultural and professional backgrounds and nationalities working in different departments. When we hire new staff, we look at how a potential employee would affect the balance within the team and on their personality rather than skills. The skills we can build. Your character and personality we want you to have and cultivate authentically. Thereby we are gaining diversity dynamically as we are taking into consideration what or who we are missing in the staff group in terms of the mental space you take up and contribute with. Our staff comes from all over the world, so we have made it a point to establish a clear company policy including company values. I believe it's a matter of setting a clear line and taking the time to let your staff understand why everyone is an important part of cultivating company culture and what your core values actually mean. When we conduct interviews, we present our values to set a clear aim for them as future employees. In my view, as a leader you must define and voice the company's values to set a clear aim for your staff. And those are not your values as a leader but the values of the actual workplace. Values that get to belong to all of the employees to nurture and use to ensure a healthy work environment. Because we believe that in a healthy workplace there is space for inclusion and diversity hence, it is how they emerge.





Courtesy of Grupo Peñaflor – Bodega Trapiche

# Glass in hand ambassadors

***Sommeliers in the world more widely operate in a greater number of areas and roles. Currently, they do not only work at restaurants, but they also play a key role when communicating the product in different fields.***

In producing countries with renowned wineries, they are the link between enologists and their audience. They can transmit the passion with which wines are produced, their specificities and the best way to enjoy them, from the glasses to use, to the serving temperature and dishes to match with.

Besides consumers for whom they develop tailor made tastings, they also provide trainings to customers, they make presentations to colleagues and the specialized press, adjusting their speech according to the context. The pandemic has opened new opportunities, and virtuality allows reaching new customers and consumers around the world, to whom the virtues of wine may be transmitted.

Within companies, they provide trainings to the different areas depending on their portfolio. Moreover, together with enologists, they develop technical sheets, to ensure the use of expert language, but also accessible to the public in general.

They additionally make recommendations in e-commerce, suggesting wines for different seasons, consumption situations and styles that the consumer desires.

Another major area is hospitality. They receive tourists in wineries and their restaurants, acting as real ambassadors.

For these roles, their education and knowledge, both of the domestic and the international market, is vital. They must have the ability to develop relationships and communicate correctly, count with a wide general culture as well as being business oriented.

In any case, sommeliers always aim at elevating experiences, proposing situations that empower the connection with the wine, its origin, and history. They transmit their passion for this beverage creating unique and unrepeatable moments.



**TRAPICHE**  
ARGENTINA

Make Me a Match:



# MAKE ME A MATCH!

Embracing our  
Cultural Diversity

*Embracing our Cultural Diversity*



Photo: Cntributed

ASI is family of member associations. These member associations themselves represent a wealth of cultural diversity. A good example is our newest observer members, Colombia, Ecuador, and Vietnam. We asked these new family members to provide a classic regional dish and local pairing. In the spirit of embracing cultural diversity, we then challenged sommeliers from different nations to suggest a pairing from their region to match the dishes.



Wahoo Ceviche  
Photo: Contributed

Make Me a Match:

Embracing our Cultural Diversity

# Discover Ecuador

## Wahoo Ceviche

With **Gabriela (Gaby) Pozo (Ecuador), President AESOMM Asociación Ecuatoriana de Sommeliers, Sommelier DOC Wine Bar and Irdi Lushi (Albania), 2019 Best Sommelier of Albania**

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### Gaby's Pairing:

**Casa Agave Chawarmiske (Miske) & Lime Cocktail**

Ecuador's Andean region sits at more than 2500 meters above sea level is home to Miske. Miske is a distilled beverage made from Andean blue agave pulp. My selection is Casa Agave Chawarmiske (Miske). Miske is a very citric ancestral spirit that can offer notes of white rose, orange, grapefruit, passion fruit and notes of smoke and umami taste. To pair it with ceviche, I suggest using it to make a lime-based cocktail. The cocktail enhances the flavours of the wahoo fish and the combination results in a very tasty combination.



### Irdi's Pairing:

**2020 Shesh i Bardhë, Albania**

My selection is the 2020 Shesh I Bardhë. Shesh I Bardhë is white autochthonous grape varietal. The wine itself is a dry, straw and gold hue wine, with clear, fine, and expressed varietal aromas such as tree fruits (apricot, yellow apple, quince), mint and wild yellow flowers. The wine is full bodied, a little warm as result of the alcohol, and boasts a subtly round texture as result of bottle aging. Despite this the finish is long and fresh. It makes a precise pairing to this dish as its freshness is balanced by the sweetness of the fish, and the smooth character of the wine balances the fresh flavours of the ceviche preparation.



Embracing our Cultural Diversity



About the Dish: When it comes to classic Ecuadorian dishes it always comes down to the region. Ecuador is a country that is very rich in resources and each region has a variety of dishes and ingredients. This dish featuring citrus and salt cured wahoo fish from the Galapagos Islands is served over a passion fruit sauce was created and served at SOMOS, a restaurant that blends traditional Ecuadorian ingredients with global flavours.

Wahoo Ceviche  
Photo: Contributed



# Discover Colombia

## Filete Cartagenero

With **Izaskun de Ugarriza**, Head Sommelier Takami Group (Bogotá, Colombia) and **Bruno Scavo** (Monaco), freelance sommelier

**About the Dish:** Filete Cartagenero is a baked sea bass fillet with Titoté Rice, consisting of moist rice cooked in coconut milk and finished in butter with a touch of fresh coriander.

### Izaskun's Pairing: Hechicera Rum Central Mule Cocktail

This adapted version of the Moscow Mule is based on Hechicera rum. Hechicera rum is originally from Colombia's Caribbean coast and made using the solera method in ex-bourbon American oak barrels. The rum is aged for between 12 and 21 years. To make this variation of Moscow Mule, Hechicera rum is mixed with ginger beer (or ale), honey and mint. This marriage of this cocktail and the filete is unquestionably a great regional pairing. The dish's creamy, coconut notes integrate perfectly with the subtlety of the caramel from the rum, while the fresh and juicy flavours of the fish marry with the semi-carbonated nature of the "Mule." The combination finishes with the sensation citrus provided by the ginger and mint which helps to cleanse the palate and introduce the next bite.



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**Bruno's Pairing:  
2021 Clos Saint Vincent  
"Le Clos" Bellet Rosé**



My choice is a rosé wine from Bellet, the local denomination on the hills overlooking Nice, my birthplace, made from the unique, indigenous grape variety Braquet.

Filete Cartagenero is a tasty dish with delicate texture provided by the sea bass, hence, my selection of a typical rosé. The secret of this match lies in having a sea bass cooked to perfection to have a smooth flesh. This, together with the textures offered by the side dish, are perfect to mirror the round and mellow core of the rosé Bellet, which despite some fairly gentle acidity, stays fresh, supporting the dish. The rice is cooked in coconut milk and finished with butter, so it somehow brings up a sweet dimension which needs enough body, fruity aromas, and something reminiscent of sweetness. A Rosé Bellet crafted to perfection such as "Le Clos" from Clos Saint Vincent has the sum of all: medium-body, pomegranate and strawberry flavours and a touch of liquorice, which adds a sweet-like elements to the aroma of the wine. The wine's fine and spicy tannins feel like tangerine peel and add freshness to the dish while the typical iodine-like aftertaste of the Braquet perfectly matches with the savoury character of the fish. Finally, the cilantro needs a wine with a character of its own, which is the case of this Bellet, comes with its spicy notes of aniseed and liquorice, splashed with some blossomy scents recalling roses and peony.



**Bánh Mì**  
Photo: Contributed

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# Discover Vietnam

## Bánh Mì

**With Le Hoang Khanh Vi, Vice-President Sai Gon Sommelier Association (Vietnam), Head Sommelier and Training Director of WeWine and Alexandros Bouzikas (Greece), Head Sommelier, F&B Manager Katikies Garden, Santorini, Greece**



Filete Cartagenero  
Photo: Contributed



**About the Dish:** As a result of the prior occupation of Vietnam by the French several traditional Vietnamese foods are influenced by French culture. One of the most interesting ones is “bánh mì” which is an adaptation of the French baguette. In the 1950s, Vietnamese began to experiment with the recipe, incorporating ingredients in their own way to suit their taste. As a result, the bread is softer in the middle, compared to a baguette and has a crispy crust. To make “bánh mì” we add roast pork, pâté, homemade mayonnaise, pickles, and green onion. Over time Vietnamese “bánh mì” has been honoured by international media, often being described alternatively as “the best street food in the world”, and “the best sandwich in the world.”

**Khanh Vi’s Pairing:**  
**Cà Phê (chilled coffee drink)**



In Vietnamese bánh mì is considered the perfect choice for breakfast as it is not only delicious but also easy to take away. A bánh mì takeaway store can be found on every street in Vietnam. Vietnamese tend to enjoy cà phê (coffee drink) with bánh mì. There a number of variations of cà phê including salted coffee, coconut milk coffee, fruit coffee, yogurt coffee, egg coffee, the latter being one of the most unique coffee drinks in the world. For enjoying the bánh mì the most popular are iced black coffee, and condensed milk coffee. The thought of this crunchy and warm sandwich, filled with ingredients makes every hungry stomach so happy and of course a sip of coffee along awakens the mind to the beautiful combination it presents with bánh mì.

**Alexandros’s Pairing:**  
**Estate Biblia Chora Areti White (100% Assyrtiko), Pangeon PGI, Kavala**



Bánh mì is a rustic street food made with crusty bread, slow-cooked fatty pork, the rich pâté, and the tricky pickle was a real puzzle for me to offer the perfect Greek wine combination. Assyrtiko proved my hero, but the ones that emerge from mainland Greece. These ones tend to be rounder and fruitier which works well with the intense flavors of bánh mì. Also, the crispy acidity and the hints of minerality emerged, cutting through the fattiness of the pork and elevating the vibrancy of the sandwich.

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Embracing our Cultural Diversity

# Cocktails

Inclusion is not a garnish,  
it's an ingredient

With Lauren Mote, co-owner Bittered Sling

Happenings

ASI Tutorials: Cocktails: Inclusion is not a garnish, it's an ingredient



All Photos: Jonathan Chovance

**Sommeliers are increasingly challenged to display a level of knowledge and service skills that extend beyond the traditional blind wine evaluation, and decanting of wine. In depth of knowledge of beer, spirits, other fermented beverages, coffee, tea, water, and more, are now requirements of the profession. Increasingly, as cocktail culture rises in all corners of the globe and increasing pressures placed on sommeliers to be wine stewards, managers and bartenders, the need to be able to craft cocktails with the same skill, precision, and flare as wine service are requirements of the job. Watch our cocktail tutorial to discover how to make classic cocktails to the ASI standard.**



**WATCH THE VIDEO**



Lauren Mote Photo: Contributed

In this edition of *ASI Magazine*, we are highlighting the issues of diversity and inclusion, shining a light on the inequalities that pervade our industry. The same issues that exist on the restaurant floor, behind the line in the kitchen, also exist behind the bar. We asked Lauren Mote, a sought-after consultant and expert in the global spirits industry, and author of the recently launched *A Bartender's Guide To The World* (Random House), to give her perspective. In addition to being the Global On-Trade Manager of Excellence Programming for Patron Tequila, she is also the co-founder of Women Celebrate — a social media initiative to highlight those who identify as women in the drink industry and their achievements.

Of the importance for sommeliers and bartenders knowing each others role, Mote says “generally, as beverage professionals, we should all have the expertise to speak broadly and confidently across all topics ... for example, a high-end venue with a dedicated team of wine professionals might not be the right place, for time to be divided between the floor and the bar. However, being able to speak confidently about a drink’s recipe, profile and classic origin is brilliant for guests, and likewise a bartender should fully understand the differences between a Bordeaux and Burgundy, just as a loose example.”

Of the challenges of being women in an historically male dominated industry Mote says “I think the answer starts with the question — why are women isolated as being different generally? This is a lot to unpack — we are fighting for equality, whilst also looking forward to a day where this is less of a question and more of discussion in which

**Happenings**

*ASI Tutorials: Cocktails: Inclusion is not a garnish, it's an ingredient*

all voices are heard. As Jackie Summers once said 'being truly inclusive is not just carving out a seat at the table but inviting others to join you.' Changes are being made, albeit slowly, but they're happening. As more women gain a position of power, the more women can steer agendas, create appropriate business pillars and open up the conversation to be more inclusive. However, there is still some work to be done."

Perhaps as Mote suggests, the very fact we ask these questions, is enough of a statement to suggest we can only become more inclusive and should look forward to that day when these questions are not asked. Mote elaborates "the paradigm shift becomes most evident when the element of surprise is removed — yes, there are female master distillers, chefs, sommeliers, CEOs and directors, there are also female bartenders, which comes as a shock to some in certain parts of the world. You just have to look at what is happening in countries like the USA, where fundamental freedoms are being stripped from women (amongst other groups), to realise that the conversation must continue, the revolution is not over and all are invited and encouraged to play a role in the movement."

While sommeliers speak in reverence to a wine's provenance and place, the same is true about cocktails. The spirit world, rich in its own traditions, historically has been less outwardly to its connection to the origin of its raw ingredients or the cultural traditions behind a spirit. Of the need to embrace and protect cultural traditions when crafting regionally inspired cocktails Mote says "it's so important to understand our past, remembering that each part of the world has a story to tell, with different people behind nurturing the land and creating unique products that we continue to enjoy today. As such, a modern-day professional must be one part historian and strike the balance between cultural appreciation versus appropriation. Ensuring the proper acknowledgement and adoption of cultural elements or identities should remain part of the overall story."



Photo: Contributed

### Westphalia

**Area of inspiration:** Westphalia, Germany

**Inspired by:** the Hanky Panky

- ½ oz (1.5 cl) Jägermeister
- 1½ oz (4.5 cl) gin
- ¾ oz red (2.25 cl) vermouth
- 2 dashes lemon bitters

**Garnish:** Lemon twist

**Method:** Fill a mixing glass with cubed ice. Add the Jägermeister, gin, vermouth, and bitters. Stir with a bar spoon for 15 to 20 rotations. Using a julep strainer, strain into a Nick and Nora glass or coupe. For the garnish, use a peeler to remove a nice piece of peel from a washed lemon. Using a paring knife, trim the edges on all sides. Twist the peel to express the oil over the cocktail, then drop it into the glass.



Photo: Contributed

## Century Plant

**Area of inspiration:** Teotihuacan, Mexico

**Inspired by:** the Michelada

- 1 oz (3 cl) mezcal
- 1 oz (3 cl) Celery Cordial
- 1 oz (3 cl) aloe vera juice
- Sparkling ginger beer (non-alcoholic), cold
- Saison beer, cold
- Pinch kosher salt

**Garnish:** lime wheel (fresh or dehydrated), fresh parsley sprig

**Method:** To a shaker filled with cubed ice, add the mezcal, cordial, aloe vera juice, and salt. Using some force, shake hard for 5 seconds. Using a Hawthorne strainer, strain into a Collins glass filled with cubed ice. Top with equal parts ginger beer and beer. Garnish with the lime wheel and parsley.



Photo: Contributed

## Here Comes the Sun

**Area of inspiration:** Bangalore, India

**Inspired by:** the Collins

- 1 oz (3 cl) vodka
- 1 oz (3 cl) Solar Flare Orange Vermouth
- 1 oz (3 cl) Cinzano Orancio vermouth
- $\frac{3}{4}$  (2.25 cl) oz all-purpose cordial
- 1 bar spoon orange or ginger marmalade
- 1 dash grapefruit bitters
- Chilled carbonated water, as needed

**Garnish:** Lemon twist, fresh edible marigold flowers

**Method:** Add cubed ice to a Lewis bag and smash into chips with a mallet. Fill a wineglass (tall or stemless) carefully with cubed ice and add the vodka, vermouth, cordial, marmalade, and bitters. Stir gently with a bar spoon to chill. Top with carbonated water as needed and stir just to combine. For the garnish, use a peeler to remove a nice piece of peel from a washed lemon. Using a paring knife, trim the edges on all sides. Twist the peel to express the oil over the cocktail, then drop it into the glass. Add the flowers and serve.

# MEMBER NEWS



Matouš Forman Photo: Contributed

## THE SOMMELIER ASSOCIATION OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC HAS NEW LEADERSHIP AND BIG PLANS ▲▶

The Sommelier Association of the Czech Republic (AS CR), which has been promoting the sommelier craft in the Czech Republic and improving the quality of the field both locally and abroad, elected new faces to its leadership in June. The board will be led Ivo Dvořák as president, with Zlatko Míčka and František Koudela, as vice presidents. Dvořák takes over from Martin Pastyřík, who has been the president since the association was founded. In recognition of his work Pastyřík was given the lifetime title of Honorary President. Of his contribution Martina Šoltová, marketing and PR manager of AS CR says “it is hard to describe in words what Martin Pastyřík stood for during their time in the Association. The cooperation will certainly continue, we stay in



Photo: Contributed

touch and look forward to where we will move the organization together with its representatives in new roles.”

The Sommelier Association of the Czech Republic (AS CR) also formed the Sommelier Council, led by Klára Kollárová, is a group of sommeliers and experts working in the field, that will participate in national and international sommelier competitions, helping to make the sommelier craft better known while also displaying professionalism and performance of the highest quality.

As part of association’s plans that include continued educational efforts, organized tasting, they are committed to making Czech wines known beyond their country’s borders via continued and enhanced collaboration with other national associations including ASI.



Vincenzo Arnese Photo: Contributed

Also, recently, Matouš Forman has won the 23rd annual Czech Sommelier of the Year contest, during the Bohemia Sekt Trophée Sommelier Championship, at competition held at the magnificent National Theatre in Prague.

**VINCENZO ARNESE IS THE TAITTINGER UK SOMMELIER OF THE YEAR 2022 ▲**

Vincenzo Arnese has been crowned Taittinger UK Sommelier of the Year 2022, joining a prestigious group of winners including Gerard Basset, Ronan Sayburn, Gearoid Devaney and Xavier Rousset. The head sommelier at Alain Ducasse at the Dorchester beat 2022 runner-up Agnieszka Swiecka of the Five Fields restaurant and 2019 runner-up Gareth Ferreira of Core by Clare Smyth.

Of the decision to compete Arnese says "I took part in the Taittinger Sommelier of the Year competition as a personal goal to develop my skills and myself. Being part of prestigious events such as this has pushed my limits as a sommelier. I enjoy taking part in tasks and having blind tastings as I appreciate the adrenaline that those stressful situations can generate. No matter the result I know I can always learn something new and improve my skills."

Although the competition was intense and stressful, Arnese impressed the judges with his knowledge as well as his stage presence, confidently dropping jokes about cigars during his role-play task. Of the victory, he says, "being named Sommelier of the Year 2022, is my most important accomplishment to date. I had



**Andrea Martinisi**  
Photo: Contributed

the opportunity to enter many certifications like WSET and Court of Master Sommeliers and I took part in other competitions, yet I never experienced anything like the Sommelier of the Year regarding the effort required and prestige it bestows."

**ANDREA MARTINISI NEW ZEALAND SOMMELIER OF THE YEAR 2022 ▲**

For the second time, Andrea Martinisi has captured the title of New Zealand Sommelier of the Year. Competing against 11 candidates, including two guest sommeliers from Australia, Andrea demonstrated his skills,

and convincingly confirmed his position as New Zealand's top sommelier.

The Italian-born Martinisi, who is now a permanent resident of New Zealand, has an impressive resumé. Currently the General Manager and Head Sommelier of Michael Dearth's The Grove Restaurant in Auckland, he has previously worked Heston Blumenthal's legendary The Fat Duck and Gerard Basset's Hotel Terra Vina, in the United Kingdom.

The New Zealand Junior Sommelier of the Year was won by Kristen Tay, who works as a junior sommelier under Andrea Martinisi at The Grove.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of three hikers silhouetted against a bright, orange and yellow sunset sky. The hikers are on a rocky mountain peak. One hiker on the left stands with hands on hips. The middle hiker is climbing a rock, and the hiker on the right is standing and reaching out to help the middle hiker. The sun is a large, bright circle in the upper right corner.

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