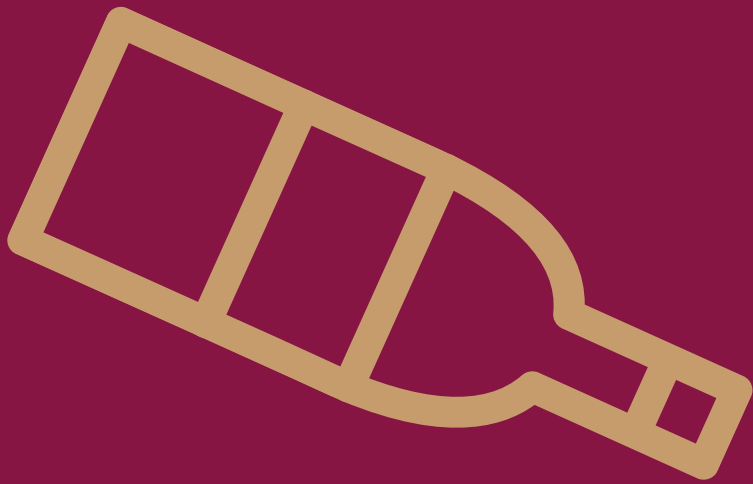


The Definitive Wine Training Guide

TEACHING RESTAURANT STAFF TO SELL WINE

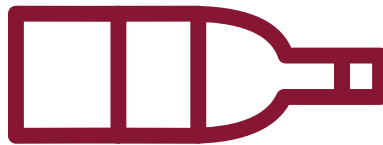


Why Use This Guide?

The world of wine can be intimidating. Wine culture has a deep history and an ever-changing present. That history – full of unfamiliar château names, extensive varietals, and misunderstood terms – can make becoming knowledgeable about wine seem like a lifelong process.

But learning about wine doesn't have to be scary for new servers. With the right focus and a blend of education and fun, you can train your staff to become experts at selling wine. This is different than becoming a wine expert.

Your chief concern is that *your staff is able to sell the wine on your menu.*



This guide will help you build a strategy to train staff on how to sell wine.

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I. New Employee Training

The restaurant industry has a 72% turnover rate for staff.*

Managers are constantly hiring and training new employees while watching veteran staff leave.

By creating a standard training program, you can create consistency in your restaurant.

It's important to recognize that training can have a strong impact on employee turnover rate. The right training and coaching of staff can keep employees engaged and happily employed.

A study on employee commitment, *Public Personnel Management*, detailed that proper training decreases an employees likelihood to leave a job by 9%.

New employee training should focus on the experience of tasting wine and clearly communicating to guests what to expect from a wine. Communication is key in sales, and selling wine is no different.

It's important to remember that just as new hires may be intimidated by wine service, your guests can be just as uncertain.

The most important aspect of beginner wine training is giving novices the confidence to speak intelligently about wine to their guests.

It's crucial to practice a consistent wine training program to ensure consistency in your restaurant and retain staff.



The restaurant industry has 72% turnover rate for staff

Proper training decreases an employees likelihood to leave a job by 9%

*Per 2015 Bureau of Labor Statistics report

Let's Talk Over Wine

The best place to begin training is with a simple and honest conversation about wine. Talk about your own personal wine preferences, and ask them about theirs.

Hearing your new staff talking about wine in a casual setting will give you a better understanding of their baseline knowledge.

Drinking wine is the best way to understand how to talk about wine. But before you begin tasting with trainees, it's best practice to compile notes and documents to use during and after tasting

Providing new hires with wine notes is important. Compile a binder that has tasting notes and information on all your wines. If it's too difficult to cover all wines, then start with your by-the-glass pours.

Tech Sheets

These are easy to get from your wine distributors. Just ask for them in email, or bring printed copies to your restaurant.

Personal Tasting

These notes are more time-consuming to create, but whoever is in charge of your wine program can put these together and add relevant selling points, and instruct on preferred language and style of selling for your restaurant.

Grape Information

Giving background information on grape varietals can be very helpful for wine novices. It gives them familiarity when approaching your wines, and will help them in speaking about the differences between wine styles to guests.

25% of wine drinkers are intimidated buying new wine *

Communication between server and guest is crucial for making guests feel the confidence to try a new wine. This "discovery" experience will turn a good experience into a great one.

45% of wine drinkers are loyal to their favorite grape*

*Per 2015 Wine Consumer Survey from Taste4 Wine Service



Learning How to Taste

It's important for new hires to learn *how* to taste.

Not everyone has been to a wine tasting, but there are certain practices that will yield a more educational training.

A wine tasting should be done after a training shift, not before. Or done at a dedicated time when a trainee won't be responsible for anything besides tasting.

It's best to taste white wines on a separate occasion from reds. Your palate can be overworked.

Reserve some privacy for your tasting so trainees will feel comfortable.

After tasting a wine, have your new hire fill out a tasting sheet and write down personal notes on their tasting experience. This can be used in conjunction with the notes you've provided.

Having staff write personal tasting notes is important because it will make them more comfortable using their own language to describe wines.

Great, free resources to take advantage of

Just click the text below and be whisked away to wine resource heaven.



Wine Basics: A Beginners Guide to Wine
How to Write Excellent Wine Tasting Notes



Certified Exam Tasting Grid - White
Certified Exam Tasting Grid - Red

The Elements of Tasting

Wine tasting makes use of our animalistic hunting senses: Sight, Smell, Taste.

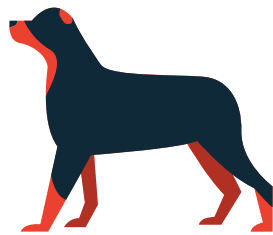


Appearance: Wine tasting begins with another sense: Sight. Familiarize your staff with how a wine looks before you taste.

Color – general wine color

Opacity – how transparent or translucent a wine is

Viscosity – the weight of a wine as determined by alcohol volume.



2. **Smell:** What aromas do you get from the wine? It's important to teach staff to smell, because the sense of smell is integral to taste.



3. **Taste:** The big 4 flavors: Salty, Sweet, Sour or Bitter will all be at play here.

Also look for flavors that are reminiscent of more familiar foods or elements. These relatable terms help sell.

Look for Fruit, Floral, Earth, and Mineral

To heighten flavors, open mouth slightly and breath through your mouth and nose at the same time.

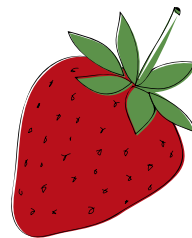
Sell Me On It

When selling wine, it's important to ignore using wine jargon and instead use terms that act as selling points. The following are common wine phrases that customers look for in wine descriptions.



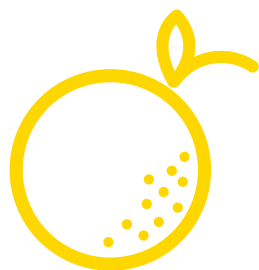
DRY

It's Important that servers know where your wines fall on the dry/sweet spectrum



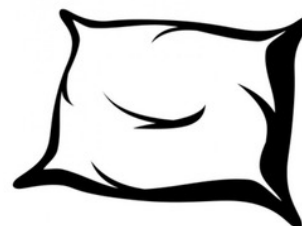
FRUITY

A better word than sweet. Often used to describe Pinot Noir.



CRISP

Used for lively whites like Sauvignon Blanc. Connotes acidity and bright citrus



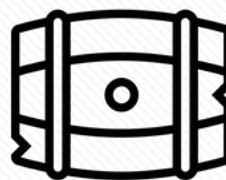
SOFT

For easy drinking wines. Used with reds like Gamay or Grenache, and whites like Chenin Blanc or Riesling.



RICH/BIG

Can be used for both reds and whites. Often used for hearty reds like Bordeaux



OAKY/UNOAKED

Common Chardonnay descriptor referring to barrel influence.



SPICY/PEPPER

Red wines like Malbec can often be described as peppery.



TANNIC

For wines with a dry & puckery finish. Tannins are bitter compounds from wood.

Taste Test

It's important to have a written test after your tastings. The idea of a looming test inspires accountability in your trainees.

Give staff 2-3 days to study after finishing wine tasting before giving them their test. Remember, a test is there to encourage accountability, and to make sure staff knows information about your wines, and how to sell them.

A wine test should show what trainees know and if they can communicate about wine. A test shouldn't be used to "catch" staff's shortcomings. Some beverage directors choose to allow these tests to be open-book.

This is one approach, but memorization and calling information to mind without aid will be helpful during service when staff is serving a table.

Tech tips for study sessions



To help staff study for their wine tests, have them set up an account with Quizlet. It's a free and simple tool to build flashcards, study guides, and quizzes. The nice part is that the website is mobile friendly, so staff can study off of their phone without the need of downloading an app.



Taking advantage of technology to communicate with younger staff is important. Sending quizzes, tasting notes, and reminders via email, or through messaging features on scheduling apps like Hot Schedules will make improve your communication with new employees.

2. On-going Coaching for Staff

It's important to continue training and coaching your employees after the new-hire training period is over. Coaching is an important aspect of managing employees. It's also one of the most underrated and underperformed roles of management.

Coaching keeps employees engaged, and helps to build better relationships between management and staff. This isn't about lecturing or scolding staff if they make a mistake, it's about continually relaying useful knowledge and skills that will help them grow in their position.

Continued wine education should expand on your new staff training. When training new staff, the focus should be training staff to feel comfortable selling the wines on your menu. But continued education should have a broad focus, and give staff deeper knowledge on the wine.

There are many great resources to help you build your on going training program. It's important that your restaurant becomes a resource of information for staff.

That sounds like a lot of responsibility. But don't worry! You're in luck! There is plenty of great wine information available to you that is already compiled in neat packages like books and youtube video series.

Intoxicating resources to start with



Windows on the World Complete Wine Course by Kevin Zraly

The top selling wine book in the world that comes with quizzes to test yourself on the material.

The Wine Bible by Karen MacNeil

A top selling wine book with an updated edition that is "A guide that has all the answers." A very approachable book that lends a global view on wine.

WSET 3 Minute Wine School

A video training series on YouTube that features the most knowledgeable industry pros breaking down wine regions and grapes in 3-minute videos.

Areas To Focus Training On

Once your staff has a foundational understanding of different varietals and the common characteristics of popular grapes, then you can begin building knowledge on where grapes are grown through out the world. It's important to understand that wine is a global product, and just where exactly a wine is produced can have a significant effect on a wine's qualities.

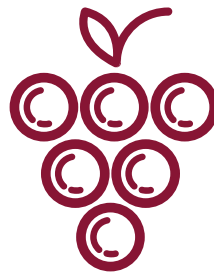
Understanding the global connection between grapes is important for servers because it gives them the knowledge to make wine suggestions and encourage guests to travel through the world of wine

Coaching helps staff grow their skills. They will reciprocate this coaching with loyalty to their job,



Wine Regions

It's important that your star servers know their wine regions well. Wine regions impart certain characteristics on wines, so being able to understand and reference regions will help sell to customers.



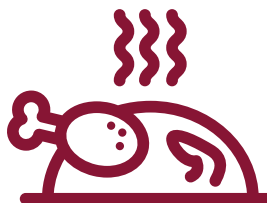
Grape Varietals

Understanding grape varietals and their qualities is key for advanced wine selling. Wine drinkers are often loyal to certain grapes, and being able to up sell based on varietal preference will increase sales.



Old World vs New World Wines

Staff should be familiar with the differences between Old and New World wines. If a guest asks about Burgundy Reds, your staff should be able to sell them an Oregon Pinot Noir. Understanding Old World regions and their relevant grapes is important.





Food + Wine Pairing

Pairing a wine with food elevates a meal into an amazing experience. Train your staff to pair your stellar dishes with stellar wines.

Wine Pairing Chart

Click on the image for version to print, or use the image link to share it with a friend.

Don't drink alone. Pair it with food.

<i>White</i>		<i>Champagne • Spumante • Prosecco</i>					
							
		<i>Greens</i>	<i>Shellfish</i>	<i>Soft Cheese</i>	<i>Spicy Food</i>	<i>White Fish & Salmon</i>	
		<i>Riesling • Muscato • Gewurtztraminer</i>					
							
		<i>Soft Cheese</i>	<i>Charcuterie & Pork</i>	<i>Spicy Food</i>	<i>Creamy Dessert</i>	<i>Poultry</i>	
		<i>Chardonnay • Viognier • Sémillon</i>					
							
		<i>Veggies</i>	<i>Shellfish</i>	<i>Soft Cheese</i>	<i>Poultry</i>	<i>White Fish & Salmon</i>	
		<i>Pinot Gris • Trebbiano • Sauvignon Blanc</i>					
							
		<i>Greens</i>	<i>Shellfish</i>	<i>Hard Cheese</i>	<i>Poultry</i>	<i>White Fish</i>	
<i>Red</i>		<i>Pinot Noir • Beaujolais • Gamay</i>					
							
		<i>Veggies</i>	<i>Shellfish</i>	<i>Salmon</i>	<i>Poultry</i>	<i>Charcuterie</i>	
			<i>Syrah • Malbec • Cabernet Sauvignon</i>				
							
			<i>Hard Cheese</i>	<i>Charcuterie & Pork</i>	<i>Spicy Food</i>	<i>Beef</i>	<i>Chocolate</i>
		<i>Zinfandel • Sangiovese • Merlot</i>					
							
		<i>Veggies</i>	<i>Hard Cheese</i>	<i>Poultry</i>	<i>Beef</i>	<i>Charcuterie & Pork</i>	
		<i>Port • Sherry • Ice Wine</i>					
							
		<i>Hard & Soft Cheese</i>	<i>Creamy Dessert</i>	<i>Spicy Food</i>	<i>Chocolate</i>	<i>Pork & Charcuterie</i>	

3. Sticking to the Process

After building out your training process and finding the best course to train staff for your restaurant, it's important to stick to the process.

Why waste all that hard work of developing a program to train staff and not utilize it for every new hire and veteran staffer you have on the floor.

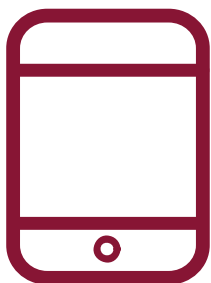
Consistency is key when it comes to training. Your program may seem like a lot of work at first, and it may even scare some staff away, but that's okay. When you look onto the floor during service on a busy Saturday night, you'll be confident knowing you have a team of all-stars selling wine.

Wine is the cornerstone of the beverage industry. Despite the growth of the craft beer industry and the revival of cocktails and brown spirits, wine is still the leading revenue generator for many restaurants.

But realize that consumer preferences are shifting, and new wineries and imports are changing the look of many wine menus. It's important that you tweak and update your wine training to include modern trends.

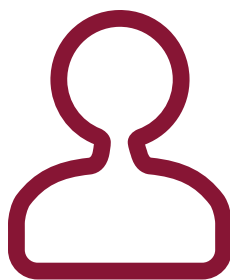
Wine doesn't have to be intimidating. Remember, you don't need a staff of sommeliers. You just need staff who can sell your wine.

Bonus resources to keep staff fresh



Uncorkd Digital Menus are a great, modern way to help train your staff and keep their knowledge vibrant.

Restaurants that use Uncorkd digital menus utilize our expert tasting notes to train staff during pre-shift and through out service.



Wine Reps are top notch resources to use for wine training. Your reps will come in and train your staff on their wines.

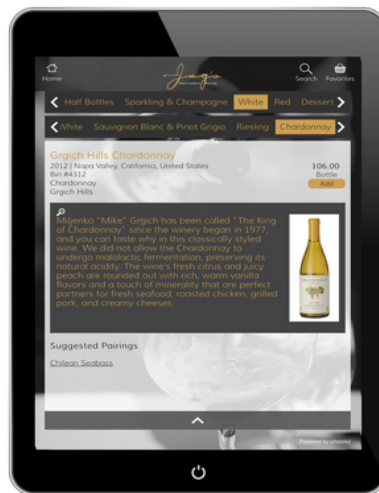
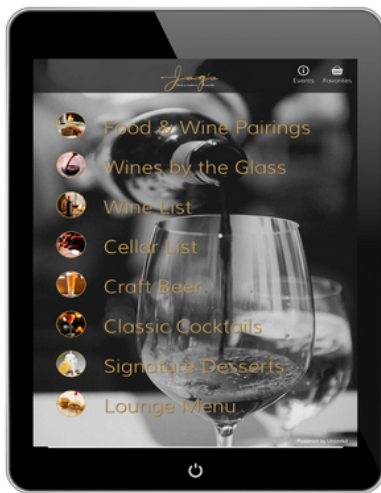
Since they're in the business of wine sales, their training will focus on teaching your staff to sell.



Wine Tastings and Events are fun ways for staff to taste wine out in the wild.

It keeps them up-to-date with new releases and makes for a great team bonding experience.

Thank you for reading the Definitive Guide to Wine Training by Uncorkd!



Uncorkd is a digital menu solution that gives restaurants more control over their beverage program. With Uncorkd, you can update selections instantly with no need to reprint menus. And our menu analytics help you make better decisions for your business.

We found that the key to increasing sales is simple: educate guests. Our extensive beverage database provides expert tasting notes to use on your menus and give guests the informed confidence to spend more on their beverage choice.

To learn more about how Uncorkd digital menus work to grow beverage programs and increase beverage sales, click the link below to visit our website or call us:

www.uncorkd.biz
773.683.1492

