UNLV Sommelier Academy

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Take your love of wine to the next level. Thanks to the numerous fine wine cellars at resorts, restaurants, and private residences throughout the Las Vegas Valley, there is great interest from those desiring to be connoisseurs or sommeliers. The UNLV Sommelier Academy will provide the opportunity to swirl, sniff, and sip as many wines as possible to increase your knowledge or become an expert. Completion of the introductory and advanced programs in the UNLV Sommelier Academy will also qualify you for jobs in many different aspects of the beverage industry.

Sommelier Responsibilities & Opportunities
A sommelier, or wine steward, specializes in wine service, education, and stock. A restaurant sommelier is charged with managing the wine inventory, advising on food and wine pairings, assisting patrons in wine selection, and educating service staff. A sommelier will be equally at home negotiating with vendors to secure the best prices, leading wine tastings for customers or servers, or partnering with the culinary staff to create food and wine pairings at varying price points.

While serving as a sommelier, wine steward, or beverage director in a restaurant is the most obvious career ambition for sommelier certificate students, it is certainly not the only employment path. Liquor wholesalers, distributors, retail operations, and wineries also value the focused knowledge of a trained sommelier.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Nevada ranks fifth in the nation for Food and Beverage Manager mean salaries, which includes sommeliers. Sommelier salaries vary considerably based on experience and knowledge.

-BLS Online Occupational Employment Statistics
Get Started with Vine to Wine: The Fundamentals

Vine to Wine: The Fundamentals builds a strong foundation of wine knowledge for beverage professionals as well as wine aficionados. All experience levels are welcome.

Whether you work in the food and beverage industry and seek professional advancement, or you want to impress your friends at the dinner table, Vine to Wine is the perfect place to start. Course content begins with an overview of the wine making process. We will cover the major types of grapes and discuss the different conditions affecting the world's primary wine regions. Enjoyment of a wine is enhanced by exceptional presentation, so we will cover essential service skills employed by the pros. Guest speakers will infuse fresh perspectives on all aspects of the wine industry.

Students will typically taste about 12 different wines each class day. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify key wine characteristics in a blind tasting.

Tuition for Vine to Wine is $1,599. Call 702-895-3394 to inquire about group registration discounts.

Successful completion of Vine to Wine will prepare you for the advanced course of study. You will also be well prepared to pass introductory levels of testing from other accredited agencies.

Complement your wine education with a guided excursion to Napa, CA. Napa’s climate and soil combine to create one of the world’s premiere wine production regions. Tour vineyards and wineries, sample local wines, and see production from start to finish from an insider’s point of view, all under the guidance of UNLV Sommelier Academy instructor Heath Huidt.

Advanced Sommelier Program

There is a high demand for qualified sommeliers in Las Vegas thanks to the numerous fine wine cellars at resorts and restaurants throughout the valley. Professional wine service staff and skilled beverage management are central to a well-run food and beverage operation.

Designed by industry experts, the Advanced Sommelier program is an extensive, in-depth study of all the wine regions of the world. Students will taste 12 or more wines per session, with blind tasting and evaluation a critical part of the class. Administrative and managerial skills are also crucial; wine/beverage service, food and wine pairing, creating and operating a wine program on multiple levels, inventory, and staff training will all be covered.
Speakers from the industry will share their perspectives with participants. Three field trips during the class offer students real life experience in the industry. There will be an optional wine country trip where the class will work at a winery doing different tasks. Assessments will include curriculum-based testing, service exams, blind tasting, restaurant-based food/wine pairing, and restaurant operations.

The program meets all day, once per week; completion takes approximately six months. Tuition is $3,299. After completing the Advanced Sommelier program, you will be prepared to pass advanced testing levels of other accredited agencies.

Instructor

Sommelier Heath Hiudt was selected to lead the UNLV Sommelier Academy based on his thorough knowledge of wine, his comprehensive understanding of the Las Vegas food and beverage industry, and his reputation as a dynamic educator. He has taught wine education courses at UNLV Continuing Education since 2007.

Hiudt is currently a sommelier with The ONE Group in Las Vegas. As a sommelier at the Cosmopolitan’s popular STK restaurant, his responsibilities include wine list selections and costs, staff training, and providing wine service to the dining guest. Hiudt worked for the Nine Group in Las Vegas from 2003 to 2012, first as a wine captain and then as a sommelier.

Hiudt draws on extensive beverage industry connections to augment courses with guest speakers and field trips.

What local industry leaders and former students have to say:

“The (curriculum) outline appears quite extensive, and no doubt informative. I would think that anyone completing this program would be more than qualified for work within the industry as a sommelier.”

- Mark Amirr, Morton’s Steakhouse Sommelier

“I’m sure this program will be well received given [Hiudt’s] remarkable acumen in wine fundamentals and advanced concepts. The passion he has for the subject matter definitely shows through his instruction. I’m confident other students will not only benefit from Heath’s vast knowledge but will also enjoy the class as I did.”

- Sean Knapik, former student

“Very detailed & informative. Enjoyed going through each region in depth, plan on attending the next course.”

- Jerry Stamalodes, former student
Classroom Facilities
There is no better place to study the intricacies of wine than among well-stocked racks of vintages from around the globe. Total Wine and More has a dedicated classroom space and its aisles are a great place to study labels and pricing. Field trips to local warehouses and restaurants provide additional practical learning environments.

Enroll in an Upcoming Session
Sessions of Vine to Wine and The Advanced Sommelier are offered throughout the year. View upcoming course schedules and enroll online at continuing.education.unlv.edu/sommelier. Students may also enroll by phone at 702-895-3394 or in person at UNLV Paradise Campus located at 851 E. Tropicana, Las Vegas, NV 89119. Please note discounts must be processed by phone or in person.

Complete registration policies are available online for your review.

Contact Us
We are happy to answer your questions about the UNLV Sommelier Academy. Reach Continuing Education by phone at 702-895-3394 or email at continuing.education@unlv.edu.

Weekly tastings are an integral aspect of your training. Sommeliers must be able to identify subtle differences in body, bouquet, and flavor nuances as they evaluate wines.

"Wine is a living thing. It is made, not only of grapes and yeasts, but of skill and patience. When drinking it remember that to the making of that wine has gone, not only the labor and care of years, but the experience of centuries."
