

July 2022

Champagne Academy – The Course of 2022: The Wine Industry’s Trip of a Lifetime?!

Discover who the Champagne Academy are, the weeklong course itself and how to apply

L'Academie du Champagne, or 'The Champagne Academy' was established in 1956 and over 65 years later remains a well-kept secret in the UK Wine Trade. With no physical course able to take place since 2019, the class of 2022 waited with bated breath for two long years, to finally attended the trip of their dreams.

Each year, sixteen lucky candidates are selected to attend a week of immersive education like no other in Champagne hosted by the sixteen contributing Grandes Marques Houses. Upon completing the tastings and exams based on the activities through the course, candidates are then invited to join the Academy and attend the dinners, functions, and educational events throughout the year. The week’s course itself and sponsorship of each selected student is funded by the contributing houses and culminates with a diploma in Champagne and lifetime of membership to the Academy based in the UK & Ireland.

On Sunday 12th of June 2022, this year’s sixteen students set off on an adventure of a lifetime to enjoy a rich itinerary of vineyard visits, cellar tours, tutored tastings, and daily examinations. Each day the Houses had the opportunity to showcase their history, wines, and values to the influential list of attendees and inspire future ambassadorship upon their return to the UK. Sharing glasses and dining with the current Managing Directors or family members of the houses is an important part of both the Course and the long commitment to the UK Wine Trade by each of the sixteen Houses. It is a truly unique and special occasion where all sixteen Maison come together, put competing commercial activity behind them and unite to promote the qualities and values of a true Grande Marque.

On the final day, the students were faced with a blind tasting having to pinpoint the grape percentage per wine, the style of wine (brut, demi sec etc), and if possible, a vintage, a vineyard or even a house. The papers from the week and the results of the blind tasting are compiled and the academician with the highest score is deemed the 'Silver Ice Bucket Winner'. This year’s worthy winner is Caroline Palma de Azevedo, who currently works for Davy's Wine Merchants of London. Caroline will soon be the happy owner of 16 Magnums of Grandes Marques Champagne.

Our list of esteemed UK wine professionals for the 2022 vintage were:

Caroline Palma de Azevedo - Business Development Manager, Davy’s Wine Merchant

Daniele Chelo - Head Sommelier, Pétrus by Gordon Ramsay

Phil Innes – Founder, Loki Wine

Michel Paszto – Sommelier, 67 Pall Mall

Sarah Everden – French wine buyer, Direct Wines

Jack Lucas - Senior Vendor Manager for Beers, Wines and Spirits at Amazon

Sebastien Morice - Head of Wine, Claridge's

Fergus Watson - Group Sommelier, Cail Bruich

Sonal Clare - Head Sommelier, Wilderness restaurant

Nick Zalinski – National Account Director, Matthew Clark

Klearhos Kanellakis - Head Sommelier, Trivet



William Tilling – Director, Firth & Co

Giovanni Ferlito - Head of Wine and Beverage, The Ritz London

Richard Masterson - Champagne and Wine buyer, Matthew Clark

Sophie Lord - Champagne Buyer, Virgin Wines

Karen O'Donoghue - Wine and Spirits buyer, Dunnes Stores

Applications are now open for the 2023 Course! To understand more about The Champagne Academy and to apply please visit www.champagneacademy.co.uk/course

Notes to the Editor

The Champagne Academy is a non-profit organisation who partners with charities chosen by the Chairman and committee where funds are raised at our tastings and dinners across the UK. Thank you to our members and guests who have dug deep to support our charitable contributions over the years.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic began, the Academy has decided to focus all fundraising activity with a partnership with the Drinks Trust. They work to combat issues such as financial hardship, loneliness, serious illness, and disability in our community, as well as providing practical, emotional and financial support to members of the trade when they need it most. During the pandemic we are so proud to have recently donated £25,000 to support educational development.

The Houses of L'Academie du Champagne are:

Champagne Taittinger, Champagne Bollinger, Ruinart, Champagne Charles Heidsieck, Veuve Clicquot, Krug, Champagne Lanson, Champagne Laurent-Perrier, Moët & Chandon, Champagne Monopole Heidsieck & Co, G.H.Mumm, Champagne Perrier-Jouët, Piper-Heidsieck, Champagne Pol Roger, Champagne Pommery & Louis Roederer.

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