

2016 ENTRY FORM AND RULES

UK SOMMELIER OF THE YEAR



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



THE CATERER

Moët UK Sommelier of the Year 2016

The Moët UK Sommelier of the Year competition is the premier accolade in UK wine service. Each year, this prestigious award marks one person out as the UK's most skilful, knowledgeable and gifted sommelier. The competition is open to professional sommeliers and waiting staff working in the UK. Past winners include such luminaries as Gerard Basset, Ronan Sayburn and Xavier Rousset.

The Moët UK Sommelier of the Year competition has been organised by the Academy of Food & Wine Service (AFWS) since 1980, and is internationally recognised by the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI). This year, the Academy will partner for the fifth time with Champagne Moët & Chandon, and for the second time organise the competition in partnership with the UK's leading hospitality media group, *The Caterer*.

The search for the 2016 Moët UK Sommelier of the Year will culminate in a finals day and drinks reception at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park on 16 May.



"This is the competition for all sommeliers in the country. Standards are improving all the time as restaurants put more emphasis on wines and their sommeliers are expected to know far more than ever before. This competition tests all areas of sommellerie and the vast knowledge they must possess. Its winners go on to become role models for young people in the food and beverage industry."

Gerard Basset, OBE, MW, MS, World Champion Sommelier and chief judge

Sponsors



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Matthew Clark

winterhalter

The partner

“Our four years of working with AFWS for this competition has shown us that the UK has some of the highest standards of sommellerie of anywhere in the world. Our mission is to enhance the learnings and experience that every entrant - no matter which stage of the competition they reach - takes away with them, and we’re very pleased to be able to do this again for the fifth year.”



Julie Nollet, Marketing and Communication Director, Moët Hennessy UK

Tanguy Martin, 2015’s winner



“The Sommelier of Year competition is a real experience. From the moment you enter it, the journey starts and doesn’t stop. When I competed for the first time in 2012, I have to admit that I was a little scared about it and lacked some confidence. However, after the first session, I really understood the concept; it’s not about being the best which matters, but giving the best you can.

“When you are preparing for the competition, you are learning every day. You will be tasting new wines and products and discovering new regions. Take this opportunity to meet new people who will teach you, train you and support you. This will not only increase your knowledge, but also your passion for wine.

“Yes it’s a challenging competition and it requires dedication, but every moment is worth it!

“I encourage you to do it: push your limit and give the best of your personality!”

Tanguy Martin, Moët UK Sommelier of the Year winner 2015

The prizes

All national finalists in the Moët UK Sommelier of the Year 2016 will win a trip to Maison Moët & Chandon in Épernay on 28th and 29th April, for an in-depth tour and technical tasting with the Moët & Chandon winemaking team.

- The winner will benefit from a “money can’t buy” mentoring programme with the UK’s top sommeliers and managers. The AFWS and *The Caterer* will facilitate a series of educational sessions featuring the UK’s top sommeliers.
- The Matthew Clark bursary for this year’s winner will include an all-expenses-paid study visit to a wine region.
- The six finalists will be given a year’s complimentary membership of the Wine Guild of the United Kingdom and will be invited to attend its annual winter banquet at Vintners’ Hall, the historic home of the UK wine trade, as guests of the guild.

How to enter

Please complete the online entry form. Please note: you need to be nominated by your employer or manager to enter the competition.

The first round questionnaire

Once we receive your nomination, we will send you a questionnaire designed to test your knowledge. The deadline to return your completed questionnaire is 26 February 2016.

The regional finals

Monday 14 March 2016

Successful candidates will be invited to attend one of the following regional finals on Monday 14 March 2016. Candidates will have to complete a written paper, a blind tasting and practical service tasks.

The regional finals will take place in Edinburgh, Manchester, Bristol and London.

Épernay trip

28th and 29th April 2016

Moët & Chandon is pleased to offer the opportunity for an overnight visit to the Moët & Chandon cellars and vineyards, a unique experience which will give sommeliers the chance to learn more about the Champagne region and Moët & Chandon Champagnes through a series of tastings. A graded element of the final will be marked in Épernay, therefore attendance is **COMPULSORY** for all finalists. Please consult with your manager and book the time off from work as soon as possible.

The semi-final and the final

Monday 16 May 2016

Two successful sommeliers from each regional final will be invited to attend the semi-finals and finals day in London on Monday 16 May 2016. Candidates will be judged on a written questionnaire, a blind tasting and a practical skill. The top six will be asked to compete on stage for a place in the final. The top three will then compete in the final in the afternoon where, in front of a live audience, candidates will be tested both practically and orally on errors on a wine list, food and wine matching, service skills and a blind tasting.

Information

Daniel Moriss-Jeffery, events and membership manager, Academy of Food & Wine Service, Infor House, 1 Lakeside Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 6XP

Telephone 01276 417 896 **email** daniel@afws.co.uk **web** www.afws.co.uk or www.sommelieroftheyear.co.uk

Please note that all information on tasks, venues and dates may be subject to change. Please check with the AFWS office or website for any updates.

Entry form

To enter, go to

<http://thecaterer.com/sommelieroftheyear2016>

The closing date for entries is 26 February 2016

Further information can be found at www.afws.co.uk and www.sommelieroftheyear.co.uk

The rules

1 The competition is open to anybody in the United Kingdom who is involved in service of wine and spirits within the United Kingdom. On the date of the final the winner must hold evidence of a contract of employment that clearly demonstrates that they are employed in a full-time capacity in the hotel, restaurant or catering on-trade, and they must be able to demonstrate that they hold that position. Those sommeliers employed in the off-trade or wine trade may still enter the competition, but will not be eligible to win the competition. Should they reach the final, they will be relegated to a runner-up award, regardless of their score in the final. For example, the role would include: choosing and buying wines, setting up a cellar, stock maintenance, categorisation of a wine list, advising customers, and decanting and serving wines, liqueurs and spirits.

2 Winners of the title "UK Sommelier of the Year" will not be allowed to re-enter. Winners and candidates of any other national ASI-accredited competitions held in the same calendar year will be excluded from participating to the semi-final and final of the UK Sommelier of the Year competition.

3 Entry is by nomination only and each candidate may only be nominated by one sponsor, as stipulated on the previous page.

4 All entries must be registered before 26 February 2016. All legitimate entrants will be sent a first round written questionnaire, which must be completed and returned by 26 February 2016. A 75% pass mark must be achieved in order to be considered for the regional final.

5 Required knowledge: viticulture, vinification, grape varieties; compiling/categorising wine lists; English vineyards/wines; legislation relative to wines and spirits in UK; European wines and vineyards; well-known wines and vineyards worldwide; liqueurs and spirits; origin, methods of production; cellar organisation, management and stock rotation; wine vocabulary, description of basic sensations; organic and biodynamic wines.

6 Candidates must wear their smartest work uniform at all stages of the competition.

7 Attendance by regional finalists to experience Moët & Chandon in Épernay in April (date to be confirmed) is compulsory. The visit will include a series of tastings, a tour of the cellars and vineyards, as well as a dinner and overnight accommodation and travel. A graded element of the final will be marked in Épernay and therefore attendance is **COMPULSORY** for all finalists. Please consult with your manager and book the time off from work as soon as possible.

8 Throughout the finals, the judges will observe the appearance, performance, customer approach and commercial awareness of the candidates.

9 The finals will consist of the winners of the four regional finals and five of the highest-scoring runners-up across all regional finals.

Automatic buys for:

● The Moët UK Sommelier of the Year 2015 runner-up

● 2016 Chaîne de Rotisseurs winner

10 The judges for the regional finals, semi-final and final will be chosen by the chairman of the Academy of Food & Wine Service, and will include people from the hotel/restaurant/wine trade, as well as food and wine writers.

11 In the event of a tie in the semi-final, the results of the tasting paper will decide the result.

12 The final ranking will be based solely on the final scores. In the case of a tie, the marks of the semi-final tests will be taken into consideration.

13 The decision of the panel is final.

14 Entrants agree that if they are the winner of the Moët UK Sommelier of the Year competition, they will act as an ambassador for the Academy of Food & Wine Service for the period they hold the title.