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## CASE STUDY

# Upgrading the wine hospitality training in Hungary

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**Abstracts** – The knowledge and skills required in wine evaluation, information, and serving vary depending on the nature of the profession where work with wine is involved. Although the waiter, the cook, and the chef, the bartender, and the sommelier have different approaches to wine due to their duties, there are many overlapping areas of knowledge and practical skills, which must be included in training programs. We suggest that in Hungary the Portuguese model should be followed as an education technique in the HORECA industry. Thus, theoretical and practical training should take place in regional centers, with student dormitories, and public restaurants. The vocational may be part-time, partly paid, and partly with state support.

**Keywords** – wine gastronomy, dual training, waiter, cook, specialist trainer, HORECA

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The culture of wine consumption has undergone significant development in Hungary during the past decades. In contrast to the faceless product, quality, uniqueness, and natural properties are preferred. Knowledge and skills in wines have become a matter of necessity, instead of excessive consumption, the principle of quality, looking for controlled products, 'rather less, but better' prevails (Angler, 2018). As a result of the aforementioned change in wine-paradigm and increased leisure time, exploring wine, visiting wine-related events and programs have become a popular family-friendly pastime, the demand for wine courses is greater than ever, emphasizing the cultural value and social character of the wine (Angler, 2017a). This undoubtedly positive change in customer expectations must also be addressed by the hospitality industry. The trend requires higher-level preparedness and information from hospitality professionals than before and requires a well trained and skilled workforce, posing new challenges to the providers of education and training in the HORECA (Hotels, Restaurants, and Cafes) industry. The job market also requires new skills from employees, and this also justifies the need for renewal/update of training (Angler et al., 2015).

The knowledge and skills required in wine evaluation, information, and serving vary depending on the nature of the

profession where work with wine is involved. Although the waiter, the cook and the chef, the bartender and the sommelier have different approaches to wine due to their duties, there are several overlapping areas of knowledge and practical skills, which must be included in training programs:

- (1) General knowledge about the basic biology of the grapevine and main grape varieties.
- (2) The concept of terroir, defined as the system of geological, pedological, climatological, biological, physical, and environmental factors, that determine the character and the quality of viticultural landscapes and the wine (Fanet, 2004; Némethy et.al. 2016).
- (3) The principles of wine production on the concept level (white, red, rosé, sparkling, champagne) including some special methods such as late harvest, passito, Aszú and Szamorodni of Tokaj, ice wine, Porto, cherry, Marsala, etc.
- (4) The geography and history of viticulture and enology both in Hungary and worldwide. It is not enough to teach students about wine geography, history, and business on a national level, they must have an international perspective.

(5) Wine tasting skills, the organoleptic properties of wines, wine evaluation, wine faults.

(6) Wine gastronomy: wine and food pairing and use of wine in food (wine-based sauces, stews, etc.); wine and cheese.

(7) Serving wine, service rules: appropriate wine glasses, serving temperature, proposing wines to dishes based on the taste and experience of the consumers; behavior, and serving etiquette (Angler, 2017b).

(8) Language skills: English must be compulsory, then at least one more language should be required, preferably German, French, Italian, Spanish, or Russian (or the languages of the V4 countries).

(9) Communication skills (particularly important in case of direct customer relations).

It is obvious, that the proportions of these subject areas differ in the different professions, for instance, a sommelier has a higher level of education with much deeper knowledge and skills about the organoleptic properties of wine, vinification processes and technologies, wine faults, and even wine and food pairing.

All of these justify the emphasis on wine-related knowledge in the training of the students of the HORECA sector, particularly regarding the terroir, grape varieties, winemaking processes, service rules, and the harmony of wines and gastronomy.

The current Educational Framework for Waiter Qualification in Hungary provides an unreasonably low number of hours for wine-related knowledge. During the three academic years, a total of 25 lessons on wine and wine-related areas are covered in different subjects. In the framework of the chef's professional curriculum, the general food science course provides a total of 16 hours for the processing of alcoholic beverages. The timeframe is therefore very limited, as the number of hours described above can only be increased at the expense of other content. The time is still scarce for the transfer of factual knowledge, and even less to develop appropriate skills and teach the future professionals how to use the acquired knowledge (Angler 2019)!

For vocational education and training VET trainers, the challenge of introducing dual training, which is the result of different physical and personal characteristics in practice, is another challenge. The opportunities for apprentices in vocational training, who are often disadvantaged, are largely determined by their sociocultural background in terms of practical placements. In many cases, the distance from the place of residence, the ease of access, is decisive for the choice of their practical place rather than their professional standard. Due to the quite poor, limited wine supply and the changing level of workplace training, "limited school education" is associated with a lack of practical experience!

Analyzing the awareness of VET teachers in wine education in the different school-based HORECA businesses in the country, it is clear that their knowledge was acquired years ago in vocational secondary schools and higher education, and the number of those who, in the meantime, deepened their knowledge in an autodidact or specialized course is almost negligible. It is also necessary to update and expand their theoretical and practical knowledge of wine, especially in the field of food and wine harmony and modern gastronomic trends. We have a great responsibility in the training of hospitality educators since we train the trainers of prospective professionals: they need to be provided with the appropriate professional knowledge, competencies, and educational methods.

The Portuguese model might be a solution also for the Hungarian system for the HORECA industry (Santos, 2008). The Portuguese authorities found out that the dual training model does not apply to the hospitality industry, so it has been withdrawn from the national vocational training model. The theoretical and practical training takes place in regional centers, with student dormitories, and public restaurants. The vocational training is part-time, partly paid, partly with state support. These structures have already restored the rank of these professions.

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