

Press Release
Vienna, March 2017

Five Days With the Best Sommeliers of Europe – The European Sommelier Championship 2017 in Vienna

From May 8th to May 13th, 2017, the 41 best sommeliers from Europe and Africa will meet in Vienna – for a competition that offers insight into the skills of the exclusive top league of international sommeliers. Sommelier delegations from 59 nations are expected. The Austrian Sommelier Union is organising a diverse programme of wine tours and specialist commented tastings. The event is one that will not likely reoccur again soon – the last time Austria was the host venue for such a competition was in 1998. For visitors, a limited number of programme tickets, including those for single day attendance, will be available.

Strong Nerves and Diplomatic Skills

The jury is merciless: the competition candidates must be prepared to answer ad hoc questions about everything from grape varieties and vineyard sites to vine training and winemakers from the most exotic wine regions in the world. There will also be tricky questions about spirits, sake, coffee, tea, fruit juices, cheese and, generally, about the harmony of food and drinks. All of this will take place before the public, with the candidates under great time pressure. And, just to make sure that it's not too easy, the jury also will set a number of "traps" for the candidates. There will be real restaurant situations as well - for example, with the wrong white wine being chilled while the right one is sitting next to the refrigerator at room temperature; or, with unpolished glasses being set on the table. It could also happen that, after the opening of a wine bottle, the guests will suddenly be of the opinion that they had ordered a different wine. Here, in addition to the technical skills, strong nerves and diplomatic abilities are required. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that mental training for the sommeliers is part of their daily preparation for this type of competition.

Decision in Three Stages

On the first day of the European Sommelier Championship, the best 12 of the 41 competition candidates will be selected for the semi-finals. This part of the examination will take place behind closed doors – with the public excluded. The semi-finals will be held on May 10th in the beautiful palace, Schloss Esterhazy, and is thus part of the professional visitor programme. The big showdown will take place on stage on the evening of May 11th , as part of a gala dinner. Here, visitors will experience how the best three candidates vie for the title.

Austrian Wine Regions in Focus

For the non-competitive sommelier delegations, wine tours in the various wine regions of Austria will be organised. Annemarie Foidl, president of the Austrian Sommelier Union, is concentrated on presenting the Austrian wine country as broadly as possible. About 85 partner winemakers from Austria will be serving as co-hosts and will have, through numerous tastings and informal "Meet the Winemaker" gatherings, the opportunity to make direct contact with the international sommelier delegations (including representatives of specialist media).

Programme information:

<http://sommelierunion.at/em2017/>

For programme bookings:

(limited places available!)

<https://secure.ruefa.at/forms/sommelier-em-2017-international/>

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Contact

Annemarie Foidl

Präsidentin der Sommelierunion Austria

+43 664 3579109 | angereralm@aon.at

www.sommelierunion.at

Press Contact

Dagmar Gross | [grosswerk](http://grosswerk.com) public relations & art promotion

+43 1 236 26 64 | werk@grosswerk.com

www.grosswerk.com