



COURT OF
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COURT OF MASTER SOMMELIERS WELCOMES SIX NEW MASTERS TO ITS PRESTIGIOUS RANKS

*Years of preparation finally pay off for the six newest members
of the Court of Master Sommeliers*

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IRVING, TX – Last Friday, the Court of Master Sommeliers welcomed six new members to the prestigious organization: Anthony Anselmi, Jason Heller, Jennifer Huether, Brian McClintic, Matthew Stamp, and Dustin Wilson. After years of preparation and a rigorous three-stage exam, these candidates proved they have what it takes to attain the highest level of standards of wine theory, beverage service and tasting ability. Held at the Four Seasons Resort and Club Dallas at Las Colinas and jointly sponsored by the Court of Master Sommeliers Americas and the Court of Master Sommeliers Europe, the by-invitation exam was attempted by over thirty individuals, each of whom has dedicated years of study to this pursuit of excellence. At the end of the exam, only six were left standing, joining just 106 others who have earned the title of Master Sommelier since the Americas chapter inception.

“This was an extraordinary exam and we are all thrilled with the results,” stated Jay Fletcher, Chairman of the Court of Master Sommeliers Americas. “Master Sommeliers represent the pinnacle of wine expertise, tasting ability, and exemplary service and we know that all six of these new Masters will significantly contribute to our organization and the industry as a whole.”

The six newest Master Sommeliers hail from California and Canada, and have spent a collective thirty-five years preparing for the exam. Anthony Anselmi of Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant in Venice, California, who began studying four years ago after passing the organization’s Advanced Exam, is relieved to have reached this important milestone. “In the two months leading up to the exam, I

did a blind tasting every day to hone my skills,” said Anselmi. “When I learned that my exam was scheduled for 9:00am in Texas, I had to change my studying schedule accordingly. I woke up at 5:00am in California so that I could begin my practice tasting sessions at 7:00am sharp, so I would be properly prepared for the exam itself.” Anselmi, like his colleagues, credited the mentorship of other Master Sommeliers and the camaraderie of tasting groups as a key to his success.

“Being a part of a tasting group was a critical part of my path to success,” said Dustin Wilson of RN74 in San Francisco, California. “My colleagues and mentors helped expose me to wines that I wouldn’t have otherwise experienced, preparing me for the ultimate challenge posed by the Masters Examination. I knew when I walked out of that room that, pass or fail, I had done the best I possibly could have.”

Jason Heller of Bond Estates in Oakville, California and Matthew Stamp of The French Laundry in neighboring Yountville, California were both members of the same tasting group, preparing for – and passing – the exam together. “I cannot emphasize enough the necessity of surrounding oneself with like-minded, driven individuals,” said Stamp. “My tasting group has had a tremendous impact on my success and has really been an inspiration.” Heller agreed, noting, “I could not have come half as far without the support of my friends and study partners. Their encouragement and support helped me along this journey and I am thrilled that both Matt and I passed this difficult exam together.”

The intensity and stress of the verbal-only exam required each participant to have nerves of steel. Jennifer Huether, Head Sommelier at Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment in Toronto, Canada, noted that, “You have to be able to perform all the required tasks under pressure, so understanding how to keep that in check was crucial for me.” Huether, who is the third Canadian and seventeenth female Master Sommelier, went on to credit her mentors for her successful exam results. “The Master Sommeliers who mentored me through this process were invaluable in giving me advice about how to develop my own skills and deal with the anxiety of the exam itself,” said Huether.

Mentorship is a key component of the Court of Master Sommeliers, and is the facet of the organization that the new Masters are most looking forward to experiencing. Brian McClintic of Treasury Wine Estates in Napa, California remarked that, “You can’t watch those around you sacrifice so much of their time for your betterment without wanting to pay it forward. I am eager for an opportunity to give back to others who are just embarking on their own journey.” But for now, McClintic and his colleagues are relishing in their new title, relieved

to have finally reached this pinnacle after so much hard work and dedication.

“It is my privilege to welcome the newest Masters to our organization,” said Frederick Dame, President of the Guild of Sommeliers Education Foundation. “The Master Sommeliers Diploma Examination is an incredibly difficult challenge, and while we offer our congratulations to those who passed, we also applaud all of the sommeliers who sat for the exam.”

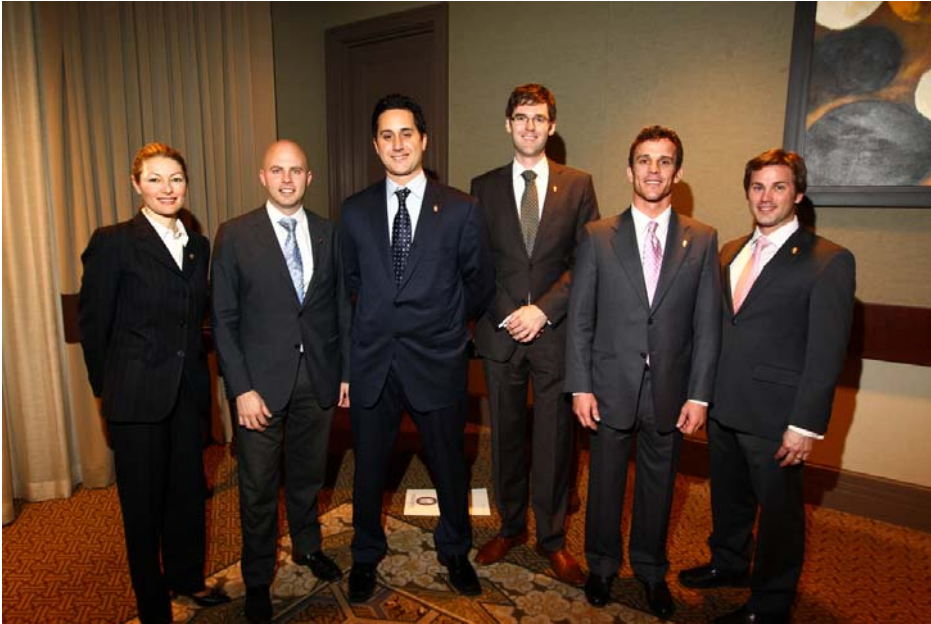
The Master Sommelier Diploma is considered the highest distinction a professional can attain in the fine wine and beverage industry, and to achieve the title of Master Sommelier is no easy feat. Candidates must have successfully passed the other three stages of the Court’s educational programs: the Introductory, Certified and Advanced Exams. As the final stage, the Master Sommelier Diploma Exam consists of three sections, including a theory examination, blind tasting and practical service component, and candidates must receive passing scores in each category in order to earn the highly coveted title of Master Sommelier. For more information, please visit www.mastersommeliers.org.

About the Court of Master Sommeliers

The Court of Master Sommeliers was established in England in 1977 to encourage improved standards of beverage knowledge and service in hotels and restaurants. The first Master Sommelier Diploma Exam to be held in the United States was in 1987. The title Master Sommelier marks the highest recognition of wine and spirits knowledge, beverage service abilities, and professionalism in the hospitality trade. Education was then, and remains today, the Court’s charter. There are four stages involved in attaining the top qualifications of Master Sommelier: 1) Introductory Sommelier Course; 2) Certified Sommelier Exam; 3) Advanced Sommelier Course; and 4) Master Sommelier Diploma.

There are 112 professionals who have earned the title of Master Sommelier as part of the Americas chapter since the organization’s inception. Of those, 95 are men and 17 are women. There are 180 professionals worldwide who have received the title of Master Sommelier since the first Master Sommelier Diploma Exam.

Images from the Master Sommelier Diploma Examination on February 11, 2011



The newest members of the Court of Master Sommeliers, from left to right: Jennifer Huether, Dustin Wilson, Brian McClintic, Matthew Stamp, Anthony Anselmi, and Jason Heller. *Photo credit: Courtney Perry.*



Jennifer Huether, the first female Canadian member of the Court of Master Sommeliers, receives her Master Sommelier Diploma from Master Dimitri Mesnard, Chairman of the Court of Master Sommeliers Europe (left) and Master Jay Fletcher, Chairman of the Court of Master Sommeliers Americas (right).

Photo credit: Courtney Perry.

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