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Quinta da Plansel brings WSET wine courses to the Algarve in November

The program at Vila Vita Parc offers English-language Level 1 and Level 2 classes for hospitality workers, tourism staff and enthusiasts.

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Quinta da Plansel will bring Wine & Spirit Education Trust, or WSET, training to Portugal's Algarve region next month, offering two English-language courses aimed at hospitality workers, tourism staff and wine enthusiasts.

The sessions will be held from Nov. 12 through Nov. 15 at the Vila Vita Parc hotel in Porches, under the Plansel International Wine School, the company said in a statement released this month. The program will include WSET Level 1 on Nov. 12 and WSET Level 2 on Nov. 13, 14 and 15.

WSET is one of the best-known international systems for wine education and certification. The courses announced for the Algarve will cover wine, spirits and sake and will be taught in English by Pedro Ramos, a sommelier with experience in wine production, wine sales and marketing, according to the organizer.

The one-day Level 1 course is designed for beginners and will focus on the basics of wine styles, service, storage and food pairing. The three-day Level 2 course will go further, covering grape varieties, wine regions, production techniques, styles and wine characteristics. In both courses, the school said, students will combine classroom instruction with practical sensory exercises involving sight, smell and taste.

The company said no previous knowledge is required for either course, although participants in alcohol tastings must meet the legal minimum drinking age. Tuition is set at €275 for Level 1 and €700 for Level 2.

The Algarve program reflects an effort by Quinta da Plansel to reach a broader audience in one of Portugal's most international tourism markets. In the statement, Dorina Lindemann, chief executive of Quinta da Plansel, said the school chose the region because of its strong wine-consuming public and because the company believes better knowledge of wine helps consumers make more confident choices.

"The training combines knowledge and tasting and allows participants to develop a more conscious relationship with wine and discover aromas, flavors and styles that might otherwise go unnoticed," Lindemann said. She added that learning about grape varieties and wine profiles can encourage people to move beyond familiar labels and choose wines that better fit their taste and the occasion.

The courses are aimed not only at consumers but also at workers in hotels, restaurants, tourism, sales and customer-facing roles, where wine knowledge can have commercial value. In a region where international visitors play a large role in the local economy, English-language certification may also appeal to professionals who want training that is recognized beyond Portugal.

Plansel International Wine School is based in Montemor-o-Novo, in the Alentejo, and offers specialized wine education along with official WSET certification courses. The school says it combines the WSET curriculum with Quinta da Plansel’s experience in Portuguese viticulture, including work with grape varieties and planting material.

Quinta da Plansel traces its roots to German founder Jörg Böhm, whose sailing boat was shipwrecked in Cascais in 1961, leading him to spend time in Portugal and later invest in Alentejo vineyards. The company said he bought his first land for vineyard development in 1975 and created Viveiros Plansel. Today, according to the winery, it produces about 400,000 liters a year across five wine ranges and is especially known for work with Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca and Tinta Barroca.

Registration for both Algarve courses is being handled through the Plansel International Wine School.