Nine new Master Sommeliers set record and expand global diversity in elite wine profession

Historic achievements include first Master Sommeliers from Poland, Cyprus, Sweden, and Spain as total reaches 291 worldwide

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Nine new Master Sommeliers have joined the ranks of the world's top wine professionals, following a rigorous two-day examination held at Vienna's Grand Hotel Wien on June 22. The Court of Master Sommeliers (CMS) announced the results, which mark a record number of successful candidates in a single sitting and bring the total number of Master Sommeliers worldwide to 291.

This year’s group includes several historic firsts for the organization. Agnieszka Swiecka became the first female Master Sommelier from Poland. Sotiris Neophytidis is the first from Cyprus, Andreas Rosendal is the first from Sweden, and Roberto Duran is the first from Spain to earn the title. The other new Master Sommeliers are Jan Van Heesvelde from Belgium, Tony Lécuroux and Fabien Mène from Switzerland, Jonathan Gouveia from Denmark, and Stephen Towler from the United Kingdom.

The exam process is known for its difficulty and prestige. Candidates must pass three separate components: a one-hour oral theory exam, a 45-minute practical service test, and a blind tasting of six wines in 25 minutes. Each section requires a minimum score of 75 out of 100 to pass. Many candidates attempt the exam multiple times before succeeding.

Ronan Sayburn, CEO of the Court of Master Sommeliers, commented on this year’s results, saying, “We have never witnessed such a remarkable result—nine successful candidates marks a new record.” He emphasized that each new Master Sommelier had faced setbacks in previous attempts but ultimately overcame the final hurdle through perseverance and dedication.

The Court of Master Sommeliers was established in 1977 by Bryan Julyan and now operates in 18 countries across 26 cities. The organization offers four levels of certification for sommeliers and hospitality professionals, starting with the Introductory Sommelier Certificate and culminating in the Master Sommelier Diploma. The CMS aims to set an international standard for wine knowledge and service excellence.

Since its founding, fewer than 300 individuals have achieved the title of Master Sommelier. The diploma is recognized as the highest level of professional achievement in wine service. Master Sommeliers work in top restaurants, hotels, private clubs, and wine bars around the world.

The addition of these nine new members reflects both growing global interest in wine education and increasing diversity within the profession. With representatives now from countries such as Poland, Cyprus, Sweden, and Spain, the Court continues to expand its reach and influence across Europe and beyond.

The latest exam took place at one of Vienna’s most prestigious hotels, drawing candidates from across Europe who had spent years preparing for this moment. The announcement was met with celebration among industry professionals and marked an important milestone for wine service worldwide.