

Wine Education in Czech Republic

Šárka Dušková

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Abstract

Motivation for choosing this topic

I have founded Prague Wine Academy, the educational institution, offering wine education in Prague, Czech Republic, together with my husband in 2009. It was found as an educational project of Víno Revue magazine, which we publish since 2002. In 2010 we started a partnership with Austrian Wine Academy and since 2011 we offer together every year in February/March in Prague Advanced Course – Wines and Spirits International in English language, tutored by Austrian Wine Academy lecturers. From 56 graduates of Advanced course during 4 years 23 students continue with Diploma and 6 of them have even finished it. I had a strong feeling that I need to know well what is the current status of wine education in Czech Republic, who are our competitors, what they offer – which orientation of the education, what are their prices. I also felt that I need to know better what are the opinions and preferences of target groups and what are the challenges and opportunities in wine education in Czech Republic. All these information should help us to fit the Prague Wine Academy educational programme better to the needs of the potential students.

Problem/objective

Wine education is important for people, dealing with wine, in wine trade, gastronomy and hotel industry. It is also a trend among wine lovers to have some wine education. There are many institutions offering different kinds of wine education in Czech Republic and different target groups have different requirements.

The objective of this thesis was to analyze the current status of wine education in Czech Republic and to research requirements for wine education of different target groups and challenges and opportunities in wine education in Czech Republic.

Methodology

I have collected information about all secondary schools, universities and other educational institutions, offering wine education in Czech Republic, about their education programmes and prices. I have reached this information not only from their promotional materials and websites of these institutions, but also by personal of phone interviews with key persons from these institutions. As I am working for 10 years as an Editor-in Chief of Víno Revue magazine, I have good contacts and they have provided me information very helpfully.

Then I have prepared the survey mapping the level of wine education in Czech Republic and requirements, opinions and preferences of target groups. I have asked 42 respondents. People from restaurants, hotels, wine trade and wine production were owners or managers, so I could ask them questions about their employees. Separately I have asked them also questions concerning wine education of them. Most of the interviews I did personally, some by e-mail. To obtain the results valid for the recommendation for Prague Wine Academy, the

composition of the respondents group by branches was similar as the composition of the group of Prague Wine Academy graduates by branches.

Based on the results of the survey, but also by the information obtained during mapping the institutions offering wine education in Czech Republic and the experience from 5 years running of Prague Wine Academy, I have examined the challenges and opportunities in wine education in Czech Republic and formulated recommendations for Prague Wine Academy to use the opportunities and to suit better the requirements of different target groups.

Content

At Section 1 – Introduction I have formulated the objective and problems and indicated how they can be solved.

In Section 2 I have collected the information about wine education institutions in Czech Republic (secondary schools, universities and other wine education institutions and courses) and their education programmes including prices. I have introduced Prague Wine Academy as one of these institutions.

In Section 3 I have presented the results of the survey mapping the level of wine education in Czech Republic and requirements, opinions and preferences of target groups (restaurants, hotels, wine trade, wine production and wine lovers).

In Section 4 I have summarized and analyzed the survey results and I have examined the challenges and opportunities at wine education in Czech Republic and formulated the recommendations for Prague Wine Academy to suit better the needs of potential students.

At Section 5 – Conclusion I have briefly summarized the research findings, challenges and opportunities at wine education in Czech Republic and recommendations for Prague Wine Academy.

Conclusion

Wine education level in Czech Republic is still low and there is a big potential. The research of wine education institutions in Czech Republic showed that most of them offer viticulture, winemaking or sommelier education. There is a lack of business/marketing oriented wine education. As the wine trade is a developing branch in Czech Republic, it is a challenge to offer and promote business/marketing oriented wine education what Prague Wine Academy study programme in cooperation with Austrian Wine Academy definitely is. It is necessary to explain a difference between sommeliers education and Austrian Wine Academy education system. There are some challenges like e-learning which might help to fit the needs of the potential students better. The testimonials of the graduates of Prague Wine Academy courses can be useful for promotion. As the buying power in Czech Republic is not as high as in Austria and there are not many graduates of this educational system yet, the promotion should be focused to managers and owners of restaurants, hotels, wine trade and wineries, who can decide about the money both for the wine education of their employees and the wine education of themselves. The survey showed that there are people among them who might be potential Diploma or MW students. The employers in restaurants, hotels, wine trade and wine production branches are quite ready to support the education of their employees financially; the willingness to leave of absence is limited. That is why it is necessary to fit the needs of the potential students especially regarding week and day time of the courses. The survey showed strong preference of daytime and working days, and showed also that the English language is a limiting factor.