

Improve Your Wine knowledge with The Wandering Wine School

Wine, whilst we may all drink it – perhaps, a glass of rose at the nearest beach club on a day off? A glass of red in a cozy bar after a wintery dark day in the yard? Or a fine white at a dock BBQ after a hard day's work? – There's a lot that crew should know about wine. We had the opportunity to interview Rebecca, founder of [The Wandering Wine school](#) to ask her about the flexible and accessible WSET training courses she runs for the yachting industry.



It is a great idea for the interior team to take a wine course, particularly those on service. Even the basics can give you the confidence you need, whether on your next provisioning trip, recommending a pairing at a table full of charter guests or simply for your pleasure.

Having struggled with fitting in her personal training courses, Rebecca wanted to create a flexible solution for other yacht crew to help them gain their WSET certificate, without waiting for time off.

How and why did you start the

wandering wine school?

R: I have completed WSET Levels 1-3 and am currently studying for the WSET Diploma, so I really enjoy learning all things wine and love the WSET course structure. As a chief stewardess, my role naturally involves training onboard with the interior department. After a little investigation and thought, I decided that becoming an official WSET educator-where yacht crew can walk away with recognised certificates and a sense of achievement whilst onboard, was something I wanted to pursue.

How are your training methods different to traditional wine course providers?

R: The biggest difference between The Wandering Wine School and traditional schools is the structure and timing of the courses. It's nearly impossible for yacht crew to commit to 9-5 courses weeks in advance, so I'm running the courses with flexibility being one of the biggest priorities. Whether you have weekends off, only available after work or during crossings, I will organise a time that fits into the crew's un-traditional yachting lifestyle. Being yacht crew myself is helpful; I understand how the industry works and realise that flexibility is needed as plans constantly change. Both in-person and also online. Online training doesn't sound as exciting as in-class learning, but I run the courses the same way I would in class. Tasting samples and workbooks are sent out to the crews' locations, and all learning is done online via Zoom, so you don't miss out on the good stuff!



What are your top tips for stewards starting on their wine knowledge journey?

R: Don't be intimidated by the wine industry and wine study in general. It can be daunting going to the supermarket and getting so overwhelmed looking at a wall of labels and having no idea what any of them mean, so the thought of committing to a wine course can seem scary. Once you break through that fear, learning about what is in your (or your guests') glass can be so interesting and exciting.

Why do you believe wine courses are important for stewards onboard?

R: I believe it's extremely important for the interior crew to have wine knowledge; even a basic understanding is better than none. The WSET Level 1 course is perfect for green stewards with little or no knowledge as we cover the main grape varieties of

the world, food and wine pairing and the basics of how wine is made. It also gives stewards more confidence during service, which is extremely important onboard superyachts, as we never know who we could be serving!

When purchasing wine for guests, what are the main qualities stewards should look for?

R: Know your guests and what they like to drink. If you don't know what they like to drink, even their food preferences can help. Do they like rich foods with many different flavours, or are they more into plain, simple food? Their tastes in food will likely be similar to wine. For example, if they love rich, intense, and flavoursome food, they will likely enjoy full-bodied complex wines with lots going on and vice versa with plain and simple wines. This information can be valuable when purchasing wine for guests.

And, as we know, crew aren't on the same budget as guests, so what would be your recommendations for crew wine?

R: Don't be afraid to try new wines from regions that aren't necessarily the "go-to's" on yachts. Regions like Portugal, Chile, Argentina and Germany have some really exciting wines that won't break the bank.

If you are in Europe, a great white wine during summer is Vinho Verde (Green wine) from the North-west of Portugal- and no, the wine isn't green. Light, fresh and zesty, it's a great easy-drinking wine, perfect for those crew BBQs on the dock in the sun.

I'm a big lover of new world wine and love trying different grape varieties- Zinfandel from Napa has always been a hit with the crew that don't drink red wine that often or just starting to delve into the world of reds. It's a great option if you are Stateside.

Food pairing with wine is important for many Superyacht guests; what would you say the most usual and unusual pairings are that work?

R: Foie Gras and Sauternes have always been a favourite amongst guests onboard and, of course, Champagne and oysters. Other hits with guests have also been fried chicken and Champagne (especially popular with a younger crowd) and Sushi and Provence Rose for a sundeck lunch.

In your opinion, what is the world's best region for wine?

R: South Africa- Western Cape (Stellenbosch area). I'm a big lover of Chenin Blanc and Pinotage, so from the grape variety aspect, it ticks the boxes for me. Not only that, but the quality of the grapes and winemaking methods are top. More and more wine estates are choosing to use sustainable, natural methods both in the vineyard and throughout the winemaking process. Then there's the location- sea, vines and mountains as your backdrop at some of the most beautiful (in my opinion!) wine estates with Cape Dutch buildings- you can't beat the atmosphere and setting. It's been one of my favourite wine regions since I first visited.



If you could only drink one wine for the rest of your life, what would it be!?

R: Ooo, this is a hard one; I have so many favourites! However, I would have to choose German Riesling- it's super versatile and an interesting grape variety, from dry (trocken) wines to lusciously sweet wines made in different styles and everything in between. I think it would be very hard to tire of these wines quickly.

Follow the [@thewanderingwineschool](#) on IG, or contact Rebecca for information on her winery courses, [here.](#)

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