

Membership Handbook

Boston Sommelier Society Membership Handbook

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***Please refer to the Resources tab on our website for the following:**

- Sample Blind Tasting Assessment Sheet**
- WSET Systematic Approach to Tasting – Advanced Level - Sample Blind Tasting Wine List**
- Membership Registration**

Mission Statement

The Boston Sommelier Society (BSS) is dedicated to promoting and developing the Boston wine and beverage community. A key focus is to provide educational opportunities to dedicated students of wine. The BSS will achieve this through:

- organizing educational blind tastings and seminars**
- providing a forum for discussion and debate on industry-related events either through actual meetings or a virtual forum**
- establishing scholarships, recognition and support for individuals committed to advancing their knowledge of wines and spirits and want to further pursue accreditation or certification programs**

- interacting with the public in a professional, respectful and humble manner to help promote the enjoyment of wine and spirits

Tasting Group Meetings

The Boston Sommelier Society holds regular meetings in the Boston area. These meetings are designed to be efficient and provide maximum educational benefit and they require the cooperation of all the members involved. The following is a guideline for how the meetings are organized and conducted. Copies of the sheets used for the Tasting Group meetings are included at the end of this handbook.

§ An email is sent out in advance of the tasting calling for members to RSVP if they can attend the upcoming meeting, clearly indicating the time, date and location.

§ Once a list of attending members is compiled, the organizer of the meeting will divide the members up into sub-groups (if numbers permit). Each sub-group will have a designated member that will assign wines to their group from the list of wines approved by the Educational Committee. The goal of the selections is to provide wines of accurate typicity of place and grape.

§ At the meeting time, each member will open their own wine in their assigned sub-group and complete the *Individual Assessment Sheet* for their assigned wine. Wines will be assessed for their sensory characteristics, varietal accuracy, and that the wine is sound. Wines in question of varietal typicity should be discussed with the group and replaced if necessary. Upon completion of the tasting event, the forms will be submitted to the group organizer.

§ The wines of sub-group 1 will be poured blind for sub-group 2 and vice-versa.

§ Each sub-group will assess each of the blind wines in a method to be determined, usually in a round-table or a timed, one-on-one format. Timed one-on-one formats will usually be announced in advance, as they are more intense and demanding of the tasters.

§ When both groups have completed their blind tasting, the group as a whole shall clean up the tasting area and return all used glassware, buckets, and equipment to a location designated appropriate by the group organizer or host location.

§ Group members are permitted to take wines home at the conclusion of the tasting. However the following courtesies are to be observed:

§ The person that brought the wine will receive the right of first refusal to take their wine home.

§ The host shall be left with some partial-bottles for staff training or end-of-shift tasting as dictated by the group organizer.

Tasting Group Common Courtesies

Proper attire is required at meetings of the Boston Sommelier Society and all of its sponsored events. Clothing bearing offensive slogans, images or other questionable material is prohibited. Open toe footwear and sandals are discouraged as broken glass and restaurant hazards may pose a risk of injury.

In a tasting environment, members are required to adhere to acceptable standards of hygiene and their presence should not serve

as a distraction to other members in attendance. A member wearing perfume or cologne will not be permitted to participate in a tasting session.

The Tasting Group is intended to be for educational purposes only. We ask that participants not solicit sales or promote their products.

The Tasting Group is for educational purposes. Members are expected to spit during tasting sessions as per professional standard.

The Tasting Group is designed for discussion and debate on wine varietals and is an extremely subjective practice. Intimidating and/or ridiculing other members for their opinions or perceptions will not be tolerated and will be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors.

The Tasting Group will not tolerate harassment of any kind, sexual, physical, emotional or otherwise.

Should an incident arise that is not included in these guidelines, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors for review and necessary action. Additions to the policies stated herein may be altered at any given time.

Membership and Dues

An individual will become a member by completing the Membership Registration form and submitting it to a Board Member as well as paying the first installment of membership dues. A member will remain in good standing as long as they continue to pay the membership dues on time and adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Membership Packet.

Dues are used to cover administrative costs, educational tastings and other opportunities for the group members when feasible.

Boston Sommelier Society Email Etiquette

If you have an event or opportunity that you would like to share with the group as a whole, please send an email to the Board of Directors with the content of the email and any pertinent information that you would like to mention to the group. Once the Board has approved the content of the email, the Board will pass along the information to the group. Remember, this email list contains many people's work emails that are inappropriate for non-work or industry related materials.

If a member receives unwanted or inappropriate emails, please bring it to the attention of the Board of Directors so appropriate action may be taken. The BSS is committed to protecting the privacy of its members and the email list will be regarded as confidential information, never to be distributed or solicited without explicit written consent of the Board of Directors.

Failure to adhere to this policy will result in disciplinary action being taken, up to, and including, expulsion of the offending member from the Boston Sommelier Society.

Examples of reasonable events or opportunities: Job Openings; Industry Tastings; Wine Dinners or Winemaker Events

Examples of unreasonable emails or events: Direct Selling/Advertising to Group Members; Non- Industry Related Events; Self-promoting events; Emails Containing Inappropriate or Offensive Language, Images or Symbolism.

All emails and content sent out under the banner of the Boston Sommelier Society to a member(s) of the Boston Sommelier Society are property of the Boston Sommelier Society.

Information contained therein may not be used in any form or fashion without expressed, written consent from the Board of Directors of the Boston Sommelier Society.

Boston Sommelier Society Website

In order to better organize tasting groups and other events associated with the Boston Sommelier Society, we have an online resource available to members of the group at www.bostonsommeliersociety.com. We will work to keep an up-to-date listing of our meeting places and times, special events, tasting sheets, and other pertinent news and information. We've also

included a list of links and books, magazines and other websites that have been useful in educational endeavors.

If anyone in the group would like to post something on the website, please contact a Board Member and they can pass along the information through the appropriate channel.

Tasting Group Penalties for No-Shows

The success of the Boston Sommelier Society, and more specifically the Tasting Group, depends upon member participation and honoring commitments of attendance. When the group relies upon a member's attendance and the member does not show up, it places strain upon the financial resources of the group as well as the

learning environment that the Society has worked hard to cultivate. Therefore, to cover the cost of the bottle that the absent member committed to bringing, there is a mandatory **\$20 reimbursement fee** to be paid through PayPal. If payment has already been made for an event, it is non-refundable. All fines must be paid in full before the member is permitted to participate in any future organized Boston Sommelier Society event.

The BSS recognizes that extenuating circumstances do arise and members wishing to appeal a penalty must contact a Board Member so that the issue may be discussed further.