CHAINE DES ROTISSEURS
JEUNES SOMMELIERS COMPETITION
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND RULES
2027

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George Staikos – Grand Echanson

Email: george@theeducatedgrape.com

Welcome to the 2027 Chaîne Jeunes Sommeliers Competition!

The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs' Best Young Sommeliers Competition is entering its 26th year as the oldest such national competition in America. We have much to celebrate! Each year the competitors and the quality of the competition have improved. The knowledge and service skills available to American restaurant patrons in selecting the perfect wine to pair with their meal have never been greater.

A new season begins. On January 16, 2027, we will hold the first round of competition for the 2027 Best Jeunes Sommeliers title, to be awarded in Northern Virginia on March 18-20. **Young sommeliers from across the United States may sign up now, and this includes sommeliers in the Caribbean that reside in countries where the U.S. Chaîne has chapters.**

A competitor must be at least 21 (twenty-one) on January 16, 2027, and must not yet have reached his or her 30th birthday on the last day of [September] 2027.

Application to enroll….
If you're a sommelier, whether new to our competition or a veteran, look at the next few pages describing the competitive process and calendar, then click on the application on the competition page to sign up! Navigate using: http://www.chaineus.org/Members/Competitions/YoungSommeliersCompetition.aspx. There's no cost, and lots of professional benefit. The signup deadline is Dec 31, 2025.

If you know other sommeliers under 30 who are polishing their skills and looking for an educational challenge, tell them to visit the Chaîne Young Sommeliers Competition web site (www.ysommc.us) and enroll in this year's contest right away! And in case they need a nudge, send us an email with their name and contact information and we will follow up.

Sommeliers benefit by increasing their professional knowledge and skills through the competitive process, by enhancing their resumé through Chaîne recognition, and by meeting new people both in their profession and in the Chaîne who can help them succeed in the future. Of the 50 individuals who placed in the top three over the last 15 years, 18 have become Master Sommeliers—a success rate of 36%.

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There are benefits/prizes for our regional and national winners (see below). Each regional winner will have his or her expenses paid to participate in our national competition and other events held for Chaîne members during the competition. The National Winner (if under the age of 28) will have an expense-paid trip in September 2027, to compete for the title of the Best Jeunes Sommelier in the world. Six of our competitors have won the international title and three of our competitors came in second since the international competition began in 2007.

On the following pages, you will find detailed information about the 2027 Jeunes Sommeliers Competition. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Vive La Chaîne and Mondiale!

George Staikos- Grand Echanson des Etats-Unis

george@theeducatedgrape.com

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Preface

Société Mondiale du Vin USA was created to promote the enjoyment, knowledge and understanding of fine wines and crafted beverages. The framework of the Mondiale provides for professional and amateur participation, with one of its goals being to provide help, encouragement and support for the young professionals who are to be the best sommeliers of the future. The Young Sommeliers Competition promotes the expertise of the young wine and spirit professional and encourages mastery of wine and spirit knowledge.

Eligibility

The 2027 Jeunes Sommeliers Competition is open to any qualified individual who:

- Is an American citizen (by birth or naturalization) or a citizen of one of the Bailliage des Etats-Unis countries or territories (USA, Bahamas, Barbados, Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St Lucia, Turks & Caicos; other islands please contact us) AND has demonstrated an active interest in the wine and crafted beverage industry

- OR is a legal resident of one of the Bailliage des Etats-Unis countries, holding a valid work permit in that country, AND is actively employed in that country as a sommelier on the date of each stage of the competition in which the individual seeks to compete.

- Is at least 21 (twenty-one) on January 16, 2027 and has not yet reached his or her 30th birthday on September 30, 2027.

- Is sponsored by a member of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs (if you don't yet have a sponsor, don't worry – we'll arrange that for you).

To attain the distinction of being selected as the Best Jeunes Sommelier of the year at the National Finals, the candidate must successfully progress through three stages: a first-round national written test administered online, a second-round test held in person in two of our 10 regions, and the national finals to be held on March 18-20, 2027 in Northern Virginia.

The winner of the National Jeunes Sommeliers Competition is not eligible to compete again. An individual may compete up to three times at a regional competition, and no more than two times at the National Finals, and must complete the entire qualification and eligibility process each time. Master Sommeliers and Masters of Wine are not eligible to compete. International rules may differ, which may affect who competes internationally after the national competition in which we select the Best Young Sommelier in the United States.

Still photographs and video images may be taken at any time during the competition, and they may be used by the US Chaîne in such manner and at such times as it deems appropriate and without any prior consent, including print, internet, press releases and other materials created by or for the US Chaîne.

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Chaîne Jeunes Sommeliers Competition Overview

Sat, Jan 16, 2027: The first-round written test will be administered electronically. Candidates whose applications have been previously accepted may log into a testing web site and complete the one-hour exam from any computer with internet access. This is a closed-book test. **The test will be given at a single time (11am EST) on this day ONLY**. No other dates or times are possible for taking this test. The results of the first-round exam will determine the competitors invited to advance to the regional tests. The initial written test result may also be a component of the regional testing score.

Feb–March, 2027 Those that qualify for the regional competitions will be assigned a region based on their geographical location. Two super regional competitions (2-3 regions combined) will be held in two cities around the US on a Monday.
This regional competition will feature the top- scoring candidates from the first-round test. The second-round test comprises an oral wine knowledge test, a wine service test and a blind tasting test of six wines, and a wine list correction test at the regional level. Regional competitions will generally have 6-8 competitors each. The top 3 finishers from each super regional will be invited to the national competition.

March 18-20, 2027 The national finals will be held in Northern Virginia, featuring the top performing candidates from the super regionals. The test will occur over 2 days with a 1 hour written test, a blind tasting test, and multiple service tests. After these tests, the top 3 sommeliers will compete to determine the winner in a final set of challenges, in front of an audience. Judges include MW's, MS's, previous national winners, and a small number of Chaîne members with extensive wine knowledge. The day is capped with an awards ceremony and Champagne toast.

There is no cost to the young sommeliers to participate at any level of the competition. Selected travel and meal expenses for the second (regional) and third (national) stages of the competition are covered by the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs and for a competitor selected after the national competition to represent the Chaine U.S. at the International Competition.

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The Application

Applicants must have an interest in the wine and crafted beverage industry. The applicant must be sponsored by a Chaîne/Mondiale member (which we can help applicants to arrange) and must file an online application which is linked online via http://www.chaineus.org/Members/Competitions/YoungSommeliersCompetition.aspx. A description of the Competition rules is reached by clicking on the "Rules" link on that page. An on-line application can also be found there. Click the link to complete and submit the application. Misrepresentations on the application are grounds for disqualification before or after an award, without appeal. A completed application is mandatory. The application and a government-issued photo ID verifying date of birth must be presented to the competition chair at or before the time of testing.

An Equal Opportunity Organization

The Chaîne is an equal opportunity organization and does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, religion, sex, handicap, marital status, sexual orientation or status as a disabled veteran. Information provided on the application will not be used for any discriminatory purpose.

Conduct

Candidates are expected to always conduct themselves professionally and politely during and after any and all stages of the competition, at all levels. This expectation extends to personal interactions, mode of dress, use of appropriate language, intoxication, honesty and truthfulness, and any other issue that may reflect upon the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs. The Chaîne may disqualify a candidate at any stage of the competition, including after an award has been made, if the candidate's conduct does not meet a high standard of honesty, professionalism, respect for others, and polite social interaction consistent with the traditions of the Chaîne as well as the Sommelier profession. Disqualified competitors may not represent themselves as having been competitors or winners at any stage of the competition, and may not compete in any subsequent year. In the event of a disqualification, the Chaîne may name an eligible competitor next in performance order to receive any award or recognition previously given to the disqualified competitor. Decisions of the Chaîne Grand Echanson or Bailli Délégué des Etats-Unis, Consul Délégué Société Mondiale du Vin are final and not subject to appeal.

First Round Written Test

The first-round test consists of a multiple-choice exam. Knowledge in all areas of wine and wine production, laws, viticulture, and vinification, as well as spirits, beers, ales, ciders, port and sherry may be tested. The written exam will not exceed one hour. The first-round test will be conducted electronically at noon eastern time (and the corresponding hour in other time zones, except Hawaii) on Saturday, January 16, 2027 and is open to all qualified candidates who successfully complete the application process as outlined above. This is **the ONLY date and time** at which the test will be available. This is closed book test.

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Second Round Regional Competitions

Each candidate who takes the first-round written test on January 16 will be assigned to one of the US Chaîne's 10 regions based on their place of employment or residence. The highest-scoring candidates in each Chaîne region on the written test (above a minimum score) will be invited to participate in the regional competition. The final selection of candidates who advance to the regional competitions will be made by the Grand Echanson.

The regional competitions will be held within the regions between February and March, 2027. Specific dates and locations for each regional competition may be decided only after the first-round test, based upon the locations of the sommeliers who advance to the region level. Travel to the regional competition by invited competitors will be at the Chaîne's expense.

The time required for the regional competition will be a full day. Invited competitors who are unable to participate in their regional competition at the designated day, time, and place will forfeit their place, and the Chaîne may invite the next-highest scoring competitor in the region to compete instead.

Each regional test will consist of a blind tasting evaluation of six wines (three whites and three reds) described orally to the judges in 25 minutes, and a service test requiring the opening of a sparkling wine, the decanting of a red wine, and a tableside wine pairing exercise. The regional competition will also include an oral examination of the candidates wine knowledge. There is no written test at the regional competition; the results of the first-round written test may be used as a factor in the regional competition outcome.

Judges for each regional exam will be drawn from a combination of industry wine professionals and experienced Chaîne members with strong wine knowledge. All regional judges must be approved in advance by the Grand Echanson responsible for the competition. There will be a Master Sommelier or judge with similar qualifications at each regional competition.

The first-place winner of each regional competition will be invited to participate in the National Competition on March 18-20 in Northern Virginia. Selection will be based on scores from both the first and second-round tests.

Third Round National Competition

The format of the National Competition is like the International Chaîne Young Sommeliers Competition and is conducted by a panel of Judges selected by the national Vice Echanson. Judges are a mix of Masters of Wine, Master Sommeliers, other recognized, accomplished sommeliers, previous winners of the Chaîne Young Sommeliers competition, and Chaîne members with extensive wine knowledge and prior judging experience. The format features three areas of examination. These areas are Theory (written), Service, and Blind Tasting. The exam format may be modified as deemed necessary by the Chaîne.

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Written (theory) Test

The national written test is one hour, covering the same areas of knowledge as the first-round test but at a higher level of difficulty. Questions will test competitors' knowledge especially of wine regions, wine grapes, wine labels, wines styles, vintages, wineries, wine companies, wine laws, and key people in the world of wine, but will also address wine growing and winemaking, vine diseases, and the history of wine, as well as beers, spirits, and other crafted beverages including tea service. There will not be any cigar questions.

Service Skills Testing

The Practical Service Skills test is a station-based service performance exam that includes decanting, sparkling wine service, blind identification of spirits, sparkling wine pouring, and other real-world tasks conducted within a time limit. There is also an exercise to recommend wines for pairing with various meal choices. These tests require full restaurant service skills, composure, appropriate dress and personal sommelier equipment.

Blind Tasting

The Blind Tasting test is a timed (25-minute) double-blind tasting of six wines. Scoring will be done on the deductive tasting method. Scores will be assigned for assessment by sight, nose, and palate and by initial and final conclusions of each wine.

Final Three Competition

At the conclusion of the full set of testing components, the three highest-scoring competitors will be announced. These three will then face each other in an additional set of challenges including an oral knowledge quiz, blind tasting, and service. This final competition will be held in front of an audience. It may also be aired on the Internet as well.

Other Test Elements

In the spirit of keeping current with the evolving demands of a sommelier's job, the national exam may include new components from time to time that are not divulged in advance. In 2013, a wine-term pronunciation test was introduced. In 2014, cocktail service was added. In 2015, the final-three competition was new. Other innovations may be added without prior notice.

National Competition Location

The National Competition will be held on March 18-20, 2027 in Northern Virginia.

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Attire

Attire at both the region and national competitions for female contestants is business suit or after-five/evening attire appropriate for a professional sommelier. Attire for male contestants is a business suit or tuxedo (black tie) appropriate for a professional sommelier. Attire for the judges is business attire.

Results

The final results of the National Competition will remain unknown to anyone except the judges and the Grand Echanson until the awards ceremony on the evening of March 20, 2027. The determination of the judges, and decisions of the Chaîne Grand Echanson or Bailli Délégué des Etats-Unis, Consul Délégué Société Mondiale du Vin, are final and not subject to review or appeal. Appeals will not be considered. All competing sommeliers at the National Competition must attend the entire announcement and awards ceremony in order to be eligible to receive an award. The announcement of the results will be recognized with photographs and press releases. The Chargée de Presse National (or her representative) is responsible for all photographs and press releases to be included in the next issue of *Gastronome*.

Prizes

Competitors who are invited to advance to the regional competition will receive a bronze medal and certificate upon their completion of the regional competition, except the regional winner, who will receive a silver medal. At the national competition, the winner will be awarded the 1st Place *Gold Medal and Trophy and an educational trip to Champagne, France.*

The first-place winner's name will be engraved on the Sommelier Competition trophy, which is kept by the Chaîne National Office for display purposes.

Each regional winner will receive a membership in the Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs through December 31 of the year in which he or she competes. The national winner will receive five years of membership. The memberships awarded include both U.S. Chaîne and International Chaîne memberships for the periods stated.

Fourth Round International Competition

All participants in the National competition under 27 years of age must agree in advance, as a condition of their eligibility to compete, that if they are invited to advance to a higher level of the competition, they are committed to do so. A sommelier who has participated in the national competition and is subsequently invited to represent the US Chaîne to compete in the Chaîne International Jeunes Sommeliers competition (Concours International des Jeunes Sommeliers), agrees to do so. Expenses for the US winner to attend internationally are paid by the Chaîne. The 2027 International Competition will be held in September with location to be determined.

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