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## EASTERN OREGON MARKETPLACE



WINE GUIDE | THE PROS

# Working with a Sommelier

A sommelier is a wine professional who's trained and knowledgeable in wine.

They normally work in fine restaurants and specialize in wine service and food pairings. A sommelier is responsible for wine lists, delivery of wine service, training staff, pairing food and alcoholic beverages, and works with restaurant patrons to pick a wine to their liking and that fits their budget.

### EDUCATION

There are many certifications a sommelier can get. One is from the Court of Master Sommeliers. There are 182 master sommeliers in the Americas and 274 worldwide. A master sommelier with this certification from CMS has taken courses and passed a master sommelier diploma exam.

#### WHAT TO ASK A SOMMELIER

Working with a restaurant's sommelier means asking the right questions. Here are a few to get you started.

• I had a great pinot noir from (winery). Can you recommend something similar under \$30?

• I like sweet white wines and my favorite is (winery, varietal). What do you have that's similar?

• What wines would you



recommend with the fish? We like red wines more than white.

• We're having the steak and feeling adventurous. We like Australian shiraz but want to try something different. What do you recommend?

Respect the sommelier's

expert opinion and value it more than a score. You've hopefully just had a conversation about your likes and dislikes, and the expert in front of you probably knows more than a critic's score. If your sommelier does a great job and you want to tip them,

your best bet is to pass them cash yourself.

#### WHAT IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE WINE?

Once the sommelier has opened the wine, it's yours. He or she pours you a taste not to see if you like the bottle, but to make sure the bottle isn't contaminated by cork or damaged by excessive heat. If it doesn't have any faults, it's yours. If you feel like the wine tastes off, tell the sommelier, but tread lightly. Expensive bottles are tricky to return.

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