

Employee Training

Learning Objectives

01. General Selling & Greeting Customers
02. Wine Sampling Procedures
03. Info on Our Wines and Wines in General

01. General Selling and Greeting Customers

Why This Matters

The first 60–90 seconds with a guest decides whether they relax, open their wallet, and come back. A great greeting + one smart recommendation routinely adds \$10–\$25 to the average check.

Every guest is a potential lifelong customer and brand ambassador.

You're the host, this is your home, they're your guests.

Greeting

Make sure guests feel welcomed the moment they walk in. A customer shouldn't go more than 10 seconds without being greeted. People may be unsure or intimidated when they walk in, make them feel welcomed. Greet them before they reach the bar!

Use open ended questions - ask if this is their first visit, if they've tried our wines before.

Quick Read & Qualify

Ask one or two quick questions while you're handing them a tasting menu. Determine budget, taste, and intent. Find out who they are and what kinds of wine they are looking for.

- Example questions:
- "Have you visited us before?"

- "Do you prefer something sweeter or drier? Red or white?"
- "Have you had our wines before? Any favorite wines of ours?"

Personal Recommendation

Try to avoid asking "What would you like to try?" (You can if you need to though)

Try to lead them based on info from questions above, for example:

- "Perfect — let me start you with our Riesling that everyone's talking about this summer."
- "Since you love reds, you'll like our Cabernet."

Pairing and Upsell

Usually, if they find something they like there is a complimentary or similar wine to try.

For example, if they like Pomegranate, they might like another sweet red like Concord (which actually uses the same juice).

If they like Hoe, maybe try Tramp as well. Start thinking about the next recommendation and suggest another they may like.

Ask for the Sale

You don't have to be pushy, but at the end of the tasting ask something like "Is there anything I can get for you to take home today?" Or mention sales, "You can actually get 10% if you purchase any 6 bottles today."

02. Wine Sampling Procedures

The Steps

1. Present the bottle (label toward guest)
2. Introduce the wine: "Starting you with our Vidal — super crisp and light, just bottled in March."
3. Pour
4. One-sentence tasting note (keep it simple): "Look for grapefruit, lime zest, and a little fresh-cut grass on the finish."
5. Engage (ask, don't lecture): "What do you think about that one?"

Legal & Safety Must-Dos

Card EVERYONE who looks under 30. No ID = no pour (even if they're with parents).

Maximum 4 oz total per guest (state law).

We pour 1 oz per taste, max 3 tastes if busy.

If someone appears intoxicated → politely stop pouring, offer water or food, call a manager.

Standard Pour Size & Style

1 oz.

Hold bottle label-out, wipe neck after every pour.

Tasting Order That Works Every Time

- Dry whites → lighter, sweeter whites
- Light reds → bigger reds
- Sparkling (if we have it open)
- Fruit wines, sweeter, unique (Red Hot Diamond)

03. Our Wines and Wines in General

Wine Basics in Plain English (60-second crash course)

White wines are fermented without skins, which means lighter color, crisper.

Red wines are fermented with skins, which gives color + tannin (that dry, grippy feeling).

Rosé = red grapes, but skins removed early → pink, usually dry.

We use stainless steel tanks. Keeps fruit bright and fresh, no oak flavor.

If we want oak, we add oak wood chips. Adds vanilla, "woody" taste, softer mouthfeel.

Alcohol %: We shoot for 12.5% alcohol by volume on our wines. Each batch varies, but we try to stay close to that number.

We keep sulfites (preservatives) low. We don't add any on our end, just what our grower in Erie adds to keep the wine stable.

Where Do We Get Our Wines

Most of our juice comes from Mobilia Fruit Farms in Northeast PA (Erie).

Some wines come from California (Cabernet Reserved).

We do use concentrate for our fruit wines.

The wines are not organic.

The Skinny Hoe n' the Garden uses artificial sweetener instead of sugar.

A certain percentage of our wines MUST come from juice grown in PA. We also cannot sell alcohol (beer or spirits) that was made outside of PA.

Top 10 Guest Questions

1. "**What's the driest white?**" → Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio
2. "**What's the sweetest?**" → Diamond (Light) or Niagara and Concord (Full grape flavor). Fruit wines.
3. "**Which wines are oaked?**" → Chardonnay, Cabernet and Merlot Reserved. Greenhouse Red is also made up several reds, some oaked.
4. "**What's a good red that's not too heavy?**" → Chambourcin (Native PA grape). Or Dan Good Wine if they are okay with sweetness (right in the middle between sweet and dry).
5. "**Which one sells the most?**" → Hoe n' the Garden is by far our best-seller. Dan Good, April Showers, Tramp n' the Weeds are close behind.
6. "**What's food-friendly?**" → Riesling or Vidal pair well with chicken, fish, (lighter courses). Cabernet, Merlot, Greenhouse Red, and Chambourcin are good with red meat.
7. "**Do you have sparkling wine?**" → Niagara Celebration
8. "**What fruit wines do you have?**" → Year round we have Pomegranate. We have seasonal ones such as Cranberry, Cherry, Blueberry, Blackberry, Elderberry, Peach, Strawberry.
9. "**What's the most unique wine?**" → Has to be the Red Hot Diamond. Super sweet light white wine with a Cayenne pepper in each bottle for the heat.
10. "**What are native PA grapes?**" → Niagara, Fredonia, Chambourcin.

Wine Reference Guide

Dry Reds

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
Merlot Reserved	Dry	Heavy	Oak, raisin, leathery	Lake county California grapes. Heavy, full body oak flavor
Cabernet Reserve	Dry	Heavy	Oak, raisin, leathery	2018 West coast grapes, aged in French oak
Greenhouse Red	Dry	Medium	Strawberry, watermelon	A complex blend of 8 different premium wines. Our Dry Red House Blend
Zinfandel	Dry	Medium - Light	Cherry, rose petal, mushroom	Fruity with rich & light earthy notes
Chambourcin	Semi-Dry	Light	Fruit flavor, no oak	A native PA grape w/soft fruit notes. Lighter than Merlot and Cab
Pinot Noir	Semi-Dry	Light	Lighter fruit, hint of sweet	Lighter finish with a small hint of sweet

Semi-Dry Reds

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
I Want to be Rich	Semi-Dry	Light	Blueberry, gooseberry	Light oak with blueberry and gooseberry notes. Blend of a white and red
Dan Good Wine	Semi-Dry	Light	Cherry, black currant	Right in the middle of sweet and dry. Dark cherry & current notes, no oak
The Lost Vintage	Semi-Dry	Medium	Brandy-like, aged	Brandy-like red wine 2007 vintage

Dry Whites

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
Chardonnay	Dry	Medium	Light oak, buttery	Dry with light oak and a buttery finish
Pinot Grigio	Dry	Light	Sharp, crisp, dry	Light Crisp with a sharp dry finish
Vidal	Dry	Light	Citrus, lime	Light citrus flavor with a lime finish
Greenhouse White	Dry	Light	Chablis-style	Light bodied, Chablis style dry white

Semi-Dry Whites

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
Riesling	Semi-Dry	Light	Citrus flavors	A drier Riesling with citrus flavors
Frascati	Semi-Dry	Light	Spearmint, basil	Italian grape with spearmint & basil flavors

Semi-Sweet Reds

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
Skinny Hoe'n the Garden	Semi-Sweet	Light	Zero sugar	Your favorite wine now with zero sugar!
Hoe'n the Garden	Semi-Sweet	Light	Grape blend	Our Bestseller! Grape blend

Tramp'n the Weeds	Semi-Sweet	Light	Tropical fruit, grape	Light tropical fruit and grape flavors
Fredonia	Semi-Sweet	Medium	Semi-sweet grape	Semi-sweet grape/makes a great sangria

Semi-Sweet Whites

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
April Shower	Semi-Sweet	Light	White blend	Popular white blend, similar to Moscato

Sweet Whites

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
Diamond	Sweet	Light	Grape finish	Sweet start with a grape finish
Niagara	Sweet	Light	Native PA sweet grape	Native PA sweet white grape

Sweet Reds

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
Concord	Sweet	Medium	Grape juice with kick	Like Welch's grape juice with a kick
Pomegranate	Sweet	Medium	Pomegranate	Year-round fruit wine

Specialty Wines

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
Niagara Celebration	Sweet	Light	Carbonated, sparkling	Carbonated Niagara, Great for mimosas!
Red-Hot Diamond	Sweet	Light	Spicy, cayenne	Sweet wine aged with a cayenne pepper

Seasonal Wines

Wine	Dry or Sweet	Body	2-3 Word Flavor	One Cool Story / Fun Fact
Roll in the Hay	Sweet	Medium	Sangria-style	Sweet Sangria wine, cherry, grape and blueberry blend
Harvest Moon	Sweet	Medium	Spiced apple	Spiced apple blend. Enjoy cold or hot!
Pink Catawba	Semi-Sweet	Light	Pink, rosé-style	Native PA grape in rosé style
Mango Tango	Sweet	Light	Mango	Sweet mango
Sauced	Sweet	Medium	Cranberry	Sweet Cranberry Wine

Quick Reference Information

Grape Sources

All of our grapes are from Erie, PA (Mobilia Fruit Farms)

- EXCEPT FOR:
- Frascati - Italian
- Merlot - California
- Cabernet Reserve - West Coast

- Pinot Grigio - New York

Native PA Grapes

Catawba, Niagara, Fredonia, Concord, Chambourcin

Common Wine Comparisons

When customers ask for popular wines, recommend these alternatives:

- **Moscato** → Recommend: April Showers
- **Sauvignon Blanc** → Recommend: Vidal
- **Rosé** → Recommend: Tramp
- **White Zinfandel** → Recommend: Tramp or Pink Catawba