

# L'Ordre Mondial International Young Sommelier Competition - Vaduz, Lichtenstein August 2016

*Seamus Dooley represented our Canadian Bailliage at the recent L'Ordre Mondial International Young Sommeliers Competition held in Vaduz, Lichtenstein on August 25-26, 2016 in conjunction with the Liechtenstein Grand Chapître. Seamus qualified with the highest score on the written test administered for the Canadian National Young Sommelier Contest conducted in February 2016. The following report by Michael Grimes, Echanson du Canada, covers Seamus' preparation, travels and comments on his experience leading up to and through the event itself.*



Sommelier at The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise in Banff Alberta, Seamus is now fully involved in opening a new restaurant: the Alpine Social, replacing the former Glacier Saloon at the resort.

His International Young Sommelier Competition experience began as he touched down at the airport in Venice, Italy and drove north towards Innsbruck Austria through Northern Italy and the Dolomite Mountains. Spending a couple of days in this Germanic-speaking area of Italy, the “crunchy acidity” of its whites and reds (as he put it) are a particular favourite of Seamus'. On arrival in Lichtenstein, Seamus met with the International Competitors group on the first day with the Europeans arriving on day two.

Each Competitor was assigned a chaperone, was provided with transit passes and was driven to events along with experiencing tremendous hospitality from the Chaîne members in attendance. One of the highlights for Seamus involved Royalty. *“The Princess of Lichtenstein was heavily involved in the festivities, participating in the events and speaking to us on a personal level. At the end of the competition, she was intronized into the Chaîne along with us as competitors. Quite a memorable highlight for me as part of the Intronization ceremonies.”*



The competition itself began on Day 3 and was based on the Court of Master Sommelier system. Here are Seamus' comments on the experience:

*“Let me begin by saying that all the other competitors were very friendly and we had a lot of fun together. The camaraderie was unbelievable. The competition itself was run by three Master Sommeliers and began with the Service component. I was in the first group, which was nerve-racking as I had no chance to really find out what it was like from other competitors going before me. However, I felt I did well in this section of the testing.*

*I was also happy with my performance on the tasting - which was primarily classic wines, but included some surprises. I would have liked more information on the wines at the end to “complete” this educational experience. While the competitors are told what the wines were, a more complete summary of expectations made and missed would help us all learn more.*

*On the completion of these two segments, three “finalists” were determined and these went on to compete for the Championship. While not being able to reach this pinnacle, I felt that I placed in the upper half of the field of 16. We were told the top 8 were very close but for the eventual winner (Martin Sheehan-Stross from the USA, San Francisco) was clearly the best competitor, although he ran over his time limit in the service category. He was also a phenomenal person as an individual and someone to look up to moving forward. The Runner-up was Romain Bourger from the Bailliage of Great Britain and in Third Place was Emmanuel Cadieu from Australia. The competitors who finished in the upper half of the competition were all studying with the Court of Master Sommelier (CMS), all had an advisor with them, and they were wearing the CMS pin.*

*All in all, a very challenging competition but I enjoyed every moment of it. The communication and networking were a great opportunity for us all and we continue to communicate today.”*



Vaduz.

## Seamus Dooley Biography

Seamus is a beverage industry professional with a passion for quality wine, regional spirits, classic cocktails and the interaction of food and drink. He joined the hotel industry in 2014, with previous experience in boutique and high-volume retail wine sales, bars, restaurants and event planning.

Seamus recently received the LQA (Leading Quality Assurance) Outstanding Employee Award recognizing him for his exceptional service. Leading Quality Assurance specializes in providing quality assurance audits, benchmarking analysis and training services to the luxury hospitality industry, enabling their clients to monitor and improve their operating performance.

Prior to joining The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise, he was Sommelier at Restaurant Le Beaujolais in Banff Alberta, organizing the wine list and training staff in wine and table service. Seamus has also served “on the front lines” in the retail aspect of the industry, serving at Crowfoot Wine & Spirits in Calgary, Alberta. As Wine Consultant, he was responsible for sales, new product selection and placement, hosting wine education and food & wine pairing events, and educating staff on wine and general product knowledge.

Seamus has an extensive educational background including his WSET Level 3, Wine Steward/Sommelier (Pass with Distinction); International Sommelier Guild Level 1 & 2, Wine Steward/Sommelier; and is currently enrolled in the Wine & Spirits Education Trust Level 4 Diploma program, Wine Steward/Sommelier. He believes that “professional growth is fueled by a desire to learn and the willingness to open your mind to different ideas and points of view.” He likes to self-educate by constantly tasting, discussing and reading to stay up to date on current trends in the beverage industry.

## About the Competition

The International Jeunes Sommeliers Competition, open to young professionals between the ages of 21 and 30 who have a pronounced interest and knowledge of wine and crafted beverages, is hosted each year by la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs. Competitors from around the world are chosen through selection competitions held in their respective countries. Each competitor is tested in three areas: theory, service and blind tasting.

The written theory portion tests deep knowledge in all areas of wine, wine production, laws, viticulture and vinification as well as spirits, beers, ales, ciders, ports and sherry. The service segment is designed to showcase a contestant's skill, including the decanting of red wine, glass preparation and tray use. Champagne service must display accomplished techniques involving the wine and controlled pouring as well as a gracious, gentle banter throughout with the judge as diner-consumer. Role-playing is introduced to show poise, competence and professionalism. Contestants are asked questions during the service portion, in which complex menu elements are revealed. Pairing suggestions offering both old and new world alternatives are required. Follow-up questions about grape varietals, vintages, appellations and characteristics demand the professionalism and focus that would be concurrent with fine dining establishments. Blind spirit identification of crafted beverages is another facet of the competition. Candidates are required to nose between six and twelve samples. The blind tasting itself requires assessment by sight, nose and palate of wine colour, age, alcohol content, country of origin and appellation of wines, spirits, beers, ales, ciders, ports and sherry provided by the judges.

The competition is scored in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Court of Master Sommelier. A panel of international judges, including Master Sommeliers, awards marks for each of the three areas. According to Joseph Girard, Chairman of the Jeunes Sommeliers Competition Committee, *“The steady composure that comes with self-confidence in the face of competitive situations can only happen when specialized knowledge is buttressed by passion and a love for the subject. One of the most revealing aspects about the Jeunes Sommeliers Competition was the dedication and skill that emanated from these contestants and witnessing how these young men and women displayed grace under pressure.”*

