

WSET[®] Diploma in Wine & Spirits

Candidate assignment brief – academic year 2009/10

ASSIGNMENT 3:

The rise of Sauvignon Blanc

CONTENT, SUGGESTED APPROACH AND SECTIONS IN THE REPORT:

1. Context

The world's thirst for Sauvignon Blanc seems to be insatiable. One could argue that if the 1990s was the Chardonnay decade, then the current decade is devoted to Sauvignon Blanc. There is plenty of evidence for the expansion of Sauvignon Blanc in the vineyard and marketplace, as well as reasons behind its commercial success. Some may question whether the grape's rise to fame has been desirable for the wine industry and whether its current success is sustainable.

2. Strategy and required sections

a) Presentation and structure:

Assignments should include a declared word count and a bibliography correctly referenced throughout the body of the text.

b) Introduction:

The candidate should give a brief overview of Sauvignon Blanc's rise to world fame over the last thirty years.

c) Evidence of the success of Sauvignon Blanc:

The candidate should present evidence of increasing:

- plantings and/or production
- sales

Plantings / production data should be shown for at least two different countries. Sales evidence should be shown from at least two different countries (which may or may not be the same as the countries chosen for the plantings / production data). Evidence from specified regions, companies or vineyards would also be acceptable.

If the candidate finds evidence of wine regions or markets where Sauvignon Blanc has not succeeded then they should feel free to present this data. However, in these circumstances they should ensure that the "bad news story" is balanced by at least one "good news story".

d) Reasons for the success of Sauvignon Blanc:

The candidate should try to discover what factors seem to have led to the commercial success of Sauvignon Blanc. These factors may originate in Sauvignon Blanc's:

- organoleptic properties
- behaviour in the vineyard
- handling in the winery
- opportunity for marketeers
- image and reputation with salesmen, buyers, retailers, sommeliers, consumers and the media

As well as the usual sources of trade opinion, the candidate is encouraged to talk to consumers who drink Sauvignon Blanc about why they do so.

e) Conclusion and personal commentary:

The candidate should explain whether the rise of Sauvignon Blanc has been a desirable development for the wine industry. The candidate should also consider whether Sauvignon Blanc's success is sustainable.

MARKING

Structure:

The report should be of between 1500 and 2000 words in length (not including appendices, tables or diagrams) with a declared word count and bibliography which is correctly referenced throughout the body of the assignment. Appendices are for the exclusive inclusion of charts, diagrams, tables etc. Allocation of marks will be as follows:

Section a) – including structure and style (coherence, flair, fluency, use of examples), bibliography showing diversity of evidence of research which is used appropriately and correctly referenced, presentation (spelling, grammar, legibility) 20%

Section b) – Introduction 10%

Section c) – Evidence of the success of Sauvignon Blanc 15%

Section d) – Reasons for the success of Sauvignon Blanc 45%

Section e) – Conclusion and personal commentary 10%

Examiners will be looking for

- Explicit evidence within the body of the assignment of careful and thoughtful study of the course materials plus additional evidence of diverse and relevant research.
- Evidence that information for the assignment has been drawn from both the trade press and other industry sources.
- Examples and information to justify arguments made in the assignment

- Evidence that the information and examples uncovered by research have been the subject of careful study, analysis and reworking before being deployed in the assignment
- Good presentation and clear thinking. This includes good layout, contents lists and references.
- Evidence of original and reflective thought.
- Candidates must address all required sections and gain an overall minimum mark of 55% to qualify for a pass grade.