

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME : Jeffrey Benson

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NATIONALITY : British

DATE OF BIRTH : 1st September 1937

MARITAL STATUS : Married, 4 Children

EDUCATION / QUALIFICATIONS

- Kidlington Junior School
- Scholarship to Avigdor High School
- Matriculated to South West Essex College - Qualified Bachelor of Science
- London School of Business Studies – Accountancy and Company Law
- Wine & Spirit Education Trust: Certificate, Higher Certificate, Diploma, 1 & 2
- Master of Wine course completed
- Prudhomme in the Jurade de St Emilion
- Commandeur in the Compagnons du Bontemp de Sauternes et Barsac
- International Wine and Food Society Bronze Medal
- Member of the International Circle of Wine Writers
- Wine and Spirit Education Trust approved programme provider and internal assessor
- Associate member of the Institute of Wines and Spirits (AIWS)
- Chairman of the International Wine and Food Society (London Branch)

1996 to Date : INTERNATIONAL WINE CONSULTANT

My long experience in the field of buying, selling and marketing wine and spirits has enabled me to act for various organizations in selecting a well structured and balanced wine portfolio with the correct selection of products at all price levels for the wine list, incorporating sensible descriptions, reflecting moving trends and public tastes, advising on costing and margins, plus a full in house DVD training programme on product knowledge and phonetic pronunciation DVD's, wine and food pairing. In addition I am empowered to provide and adjudicate a range of internationally recognised Wine and Spirit Education Trust examinations.

Compass Group Plc – UK – until 2002

Selecting and sourcing all their wines and spirits to provide updated and upgraded products, whilst substantially improving profitability throughout all their divisions in the on and off trade. Prior to the sale this included their hotel division, Le Meridien, Post House, Heritage, Cumberland, Regent Palace, and Strand Palace.

Six Senses Group

Soneva and Six Senses Laamu Resorts - Maldives. Evason Resorts – Thailand. Ana Mandara Resorts - Vietnam

Advising and sourcing a selected range of wines and spirits to enable them to have one of the finest wine lists available at all levels backed up with a full WSET staff training programme. Their Soneva Fushi and Soneva Gili resorts in the Maldives were voted the finest resort in the world by Traveller Magazine, and all Soneva resorts are frequently complimented on their wine list

Taj Exotica – Maldives

Advising and sourcing a selective range of exclusive wines of the world at all price levels.

Dhonakulhi Island Hideway – Maldives

Advising and sourcing a full range of wines and specialist spirits, backed up with a full staff-training programme.

Alidhoo Island Resort – Maldives

Advising and sourcing a full range of wines and specialist spirits, backed up with a full staff-training programme

Thalassa Resort – Paphos, Cyprus

Advising and sourcing all their wines and specialist spirits, to enable them to achieve the finest, and most comprehensive wine list in Cyprus.

Jetwing Hotel Group – Sri Lanka

Advising and sourcing the wines for their fifteen five star hotels throughout Sri Lanka, backed up with a full staff training programme

Fregate Island – Seychelles

Advising and sourcing a range of exclusive wines and spirits of the world

- 1990 to 1996** : **GROUP BUYING DIRECTOR - Michael Druitt Agencies.**
Responsibilities: Developing a highly successful wine agency portfolio for the major retail and on trade markets.
 This involved traveling to all the major wine producing countries of the world on a regular basis, tasting, buying, wine making and blending wines to suit customer requirements, negotiating agency agreements, pricing, marketing strategies, and developing new export wine markets
- 1987 to 1990** : **MANAGING DIRECTOR - Quintet Wines Ltd**
 Company taken over by the holding group of Michael Druitt Agencies.
Responsibilities : Identifying niche sectors of the market yet to be fully developed. In particular wines from the new world and building a successful and profitable company based on innovative wines
- 1985 to 1987** : **GROUP SALES / MARKETING DIRECTOR - Rawlings Voigt Group.**
 Companies sold to Belhaven Plc
Responsibilities : Managing a team of 15 sales representatives, selling and selecting a well balanced agency portfolio to the retail / multiple / duty free and the on trade sector of the wine trade throughout the UK
- 1975 to 1985** : **MANAGING DIRECTOR - Jeffrey Benson Wines Ltd - Mackie Yule Ltd**
 Wholesale and Retail. Companies taken over by the holding group of Rawlings Voigt Group.
Responsibilities : Building and developing a successful wholesale and retail wine company which supplied the London restaurant / Hotel and City corporate trade.
- 1972 to 1975** : **DIRECTOR / BUYER WINE DIVISION / WINE BARS**
 Louis Gordon & Sons Plc
 Company taken over by Domecq S.A. who sold the wine division
Responsibilities : Acquiring and running 14 new wine bars opened in two years; planning, building, licensing, staff training, wine buying.
- 1959 to 1972** : **MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT/ DIRECTOR - T.S.G. Ltd**
 Specialising in the Wine and Food Industry
 Company taken over by Pentland Industries Plc
Responsibilities : Co-ordinating acquisitions and running the restaurant and wine division.

INTERESTS :Wine writing and lecturing, writing music, playing and teaching jazz saxophone (two CD's released), cooking, skiing, antiques.

8 books published:

1979 : Sauternes

1982 : St Emilion / Pomerol

1990 : The Great Sweet Wines of Bordeaux

2001 : The Global Encyclopedia of Wine

2003 : The Right Wine with the Right Food

2004 : The Definitive Cocktail Book

2005 : One More for the Road – A life in wine food and travel

2005 : Avortit and Rooney – A children's book

ACHIEVEMENTS

Canada

1990 – 1995 Involved in the formation of Wines of Canada, an organisation set up in conjunction with the government to develop and introduce for the first time, a wide range of Canadian wines for the export market

Numerous visits ensured the agency signing of the top fifteen wineries in Ontario and British Columbia

Selection and blending with these wineries, products for the UK market.

I was honored to be chosen as the only non North American judge ever to join the tasting panel in British Columbia, for three days evaluating over 200 wines to decide the medal winners.

Zimbabwe

1993 –1994 I was instrumental in forming the Zimbabwe Vintners Alliance, which put together the then three wineries in Zimbabwe enabling them, for the first time to export to the UK.

After four years of negotiating with the E.U. commission in Brussels, registering Zimbabwe as a wine producing country detailing the regions of production and permitted grape varieties, I eventually obtained the appropriate legislation enabling them to export their wines.

Numerous visits enabled me to advise the wine makers on the correct blends required for export. Sadly due to current political climate this is now on hold.

India

I have traveled to India on a regular basis over the past 20 years on various wine, spirit and beer consultancy activities and have an in depth knowledge of the present and future market in all these areas

Wine Appreciation and Education

I ran the annual evening wine school for the International Wine and Food Society for 12 years and continue to lecture on a regular basis in London and various countries of the world, the subjects ranging from wine appreciation, how to taste, matching food and wine, wine maker dinners, to a series of in depth lectures and tutored tastings on the wine growing regions of the world.

These being tailor made courses can be adapted to suit the general public, or the food and beverage staff at hotels and restaurants including full product training and service.

I have written and contributed to eight books and continue to write many articles on food wine and travel and have been featured on BBC radio and on radio and television in various other countries.

Using over 30 years experience in wine, traveling to all the major wine growing countries of the world, meeting many producers in my capacity as a wine buyer and wine maker, I have the ability to convey this wide knowledge through my lectures and staff training.

In addition, to enable retailers, hotels and resorts to have a point of difference, it is important to have a full and continuing programme of staff training and wine product knowledge and to stimulate client/guest interest by way of promotions such as: wines of the month that can also be featured with matching food, wine maker dinners with visiting chateau owners, to wine tastings for guests to attend on a regular basis.

As an approved programme provider and internal assessor for the Wine and Spirit Education Trust I am empowered to offer and adjudicate a range of examinations, which enable staff to attain an internationally recognised wine qualification

