



WEB OF SCIENCE



AQUA SOMMELIER—education to see the water through a new paradigm

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Abstract

Introduction. The role of hydration in the maintenance of health is increasingly recognized. Hydration requirements vary for each person, depending on physical activity, environmental conditions, dietary patterns, alcohol intake, health problems and age. Elderly individuals have higher risk of developing dehydration than adults. Diminution of liquid intake and increase in liquid losses are both involved in causing dehydration in the elderly. The water used for drinking is provided through regular public water supply and the official sanitary controls ensure their quality and hygiene, granting a range of variation for most of its physical and chemical characteristics, being sometimes these differences, though apparently small, responsible for some disorders in sensitive individuals. Hence the advantages of using bottled water, either natural mineral water or spring water, which are required by law to specify their composition, their major components and other specific parameters. It is essential to take this into account to understand the diversity of indications and favourable effects on health that certain waters can offer.

Results and discussion. Anyone can improve their sensory skills. This is done primarily through conscious tastings of various mineral water brands or reference substances. When tasting, one should practice analysing and describing the smell and taste repeatedly. It is only through direct experience that sensory skills are properly trained, and professional tasters have acquired their expertise only through continuous practice and training seminars.

The training programmes cover the following topics:

- » water diversity
- » definitions and legal terms
- » mineral composition and nutritional physiology
- » marketing and sales
- » mineral water testing
- » mineral and curative water sensory assessments
- » water and wine
- » excursions to mineral source operations

Persons who aspire to the title "Water Sommelier" and do not have the time to attend the nine-day water sommelier course at Doemens Savour Academy can also obtain this coveted title in a three-part, modular programme. Organising mineral water or water/wine tastings for interested guests is also an essential task of the Water Sommelier in restaurants and hotels.

Conclusions. In order for the consumer to be able to find out about the sensory diversity of mineral water and health-related properties of curative water, experts are needed to taste, enlighten, explain and advise on the compelling aspects of this valuable beverages. Water Sommeliers or Aqua Sommeliers are well-trained, competent advisors that add value to *natural mineral waters* and *natural curative waters*. In restaurants, a Water/Aqua Sommelier is a valuable asset who can enlighten guests about the advantages and variety of mineral waters as a suitable accompaniment for certain dishes, with wines and coffee. He/she is also responsible for presenting this quality beverage at the table. In addition, the Water Sommelier is the restaurant's agent, responsible for the selection and purchase of mineral waters as well as the creation of a mineral water menu.

Keywords: *water, Aqua sommelier, education, water culture*