

Roderick Smith MW

Born in 1968, Rod came to wine, as so many people in the UK trade, through a Christmas vacation job with Oddbins. In Rod's case this was in 1987, whilst studying at Chelsea School of Art.

After completing his degree in illustration and graphic design at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee, Rod found himself with a part-time job working for Oddbins in London whilst establishing himself as a freelance illustrator. An increasing love of wine won the day, however, and he followed a career path from Oddbins branches via its head office marketing department to the then owner Seagram. Here he worked as Brand Manager for a variety of wines as part of the wine team.

After the sale of Seagram, Rod worked in various positions and established a consultancy business involving wine education and marketing. During this time he studied for and passed the Master of Wine examinations, and took part in many wine tours, tastings and challenges. Rod has been a senior judge for the Decanter World Wine Awards, a Panel Chair for the International Wine Challenge, and has also judged for the Moscow Wine Fair, the Shanghai International Wine Challenge, and The Balkans International Wine Challenge.

In 2005 Rod returned to full-time employment when he joined the fine wine importer, Mentzendorff, a company largely owned by Champagne Bollinger, as its French Wines Manager. At this time he completed his Master of Wine dissertation, taking as its subject 'Chenin Blanc in Anjou-Saumur', partly as a result of dealing with the wines of the area on a daily basis. He was awarded this, the world's most prestigious wine qualification, in November 2006, the 256th person to achieve it since 1953.

Rod moved to the South of France in 2007 to lead the wine team for Vins Sans Frontières, the leading supplier of wine to the superyacht industry. The idea for the Riviera Wine Academy was born when he started organising wine tastings, events and dinners for some of the most prestigious and discerning clients on earth as a result. Rod continues to enjoy living and working in the Côte d'Azur.

Rod is an enthusiastic and committed educator, marketer and public speaker on wine. His personal interests include cycling, running, travel, literature, card magic and film.

Short version

Rod Smith MW is a wine educator, marketer and salesman, based in the South of France. Currently with a client list that includes the world's wealthiest, most discerning and demanding customers, Rod is the director of the Riviera Wine Academy,

Prior to this, Rod worked for Vins Sans Frontières – the leading wine supplier to the superyacht industry in the South of France, and before that in the UK for a variety of fine wine importers and retailers, as well as being an established WSET educator and occasional journalist. A Master of Wine since 2006, Rod has been extensively involved in judging wine competitions in London, Sofia, Shanghai and Moscow.

Rod's personal interests include cycling, running, travel, literature, card magic and film.

