

Catherine Fallis, MS

A successful wine and service professional, Catherine Fallis, a.k.a. grape goddess® is an approachable and entertaining wine expert who brings wine down to earth.

While studying Hotel Administration at Cornell University, Catherine Fallis set out to explore the service industry in Europe. She studied elaborate European hotels and was inspired by every detail of what made them exceptional. It was during these travels when she first experienced wine not as an elite beverage but as something interesting and accessible, and has maintained this approach to wine ever since.

Fallis returned to Cornell determined to learn as much as possible and to secure her spot at the top of the service field. Catherine became Chef's Apprentice at Chef Alain Sillhac's famed Le Cirque Restaurant and after graduation took a position with Leona Helmsley at the Helmsley Palace Hotel in New York City, where she managed the award-winning restaurant Villard House. Catherine still knew she could accomplish more and began brainstorming different specialties she could implement into her service repertoire. She came across an article about Kevin Zraly and his wine school Windows on the World and was inspired to focus on wine. Kevin became an important mentor to Catherine, instructing her to take certain wine courses and keeping a close eye on her progress. After much persistence, he confirmed she was ready and named her Wine School Coordinator and Cellar Master. Catherine's experience as a banquet waiter, server and bartender all contributed to her ability to learn quickly and helped her excel at the job. When she was first introduced to the Master Sommelier program after meeting Fred Dame, she took an immediate interest.

Catherine moved to Hawaii and joined a tasting group to continue her wine education. She met Master Sommelier Chuck Furuya, who encouraged her to join the local tasting group. Although she was working as a sommelier at a beachfront restaurant, a wine director at a wholesale beverage group, and part-time in a wine shop, she decided to continue pushing herself to be the best of the best in her field. She began pursuing the exclusive Court of Master Sommelier designation with passion. Her journey took her to California, where she worked as Los Angeles area manager for Seagram Classics, wine buyer at Beltramo's Wines & Spirits where she perfected her tasting skills, and later served as sommelier and wine director at Michael Mina's renowned restaurant Aqua in San Francisco.

Catherine passed the Masters exam in 1997 and became the fifth woman in the world to earn the title of Master Sommelier. At the same time, she joined the Master of Wine program and is now a second year Master of Wine candidate. She earned the title of Advanced Certified Wine Professional (ACWP) from the Culinary Institute of America in 2009 and is the only person in the world to be both a Master Sommelier and an ACWP. In 2011 she became a French Wine Scholar and instructor at the San Francisco Wine School.

Catherine is the Master Sommelier at Planet Grape® LLC (www.planetgrape.com), a wine consulting firm providing education, content, and sommelier services. She created her alter-ego, grape goddess®, to help bring wine down to earth for consumers as well as those

entering the wine industry. She is one of a handful of female professional sabreurs in the world – she opens a bottle of Champagne with a sword in a dazzling three-minute theatrical performance (www.saberingchampagne.com).

Fallis is the author of the *grape goddess*® *guides to good living* series, including WINE, CHAMPAGNE & SPARKLING WINE, and EROTIC FOODS, the creator of the SIX WEEK WINE EXPERT online education program, co-creator of the PORTABLE WINE TOUR card set, contributing author for OPUS VINO and 1000 GREAT WINES FOR EVERYDAY, Contributing Editor for *Sommelier Journal*, CNBC's Wine Portfolio, and Basil Magazine, and an avid blogger at planetgrape.com.

Her diverse wine background as a salesperson, sommelier, distributor, and supplier helped Catherine become the well-rounded and thorough expert she is today. She understands all facets of the wine business, and is a frequent speaker, event host and educator for corporations, consumers and the wine trade. She is a highly sought after wine expert and spokesperson for the wine industry.