



## Wine Service in Hotels & Restaurants during Covid-19

W.S.P.C. prepared a proposal of a Wine Service Protocol, addressed to restaurants, hotels, wine bars and winery tasting rooms.

This document is, as mentioned, a proposal, not an official document. Every business related to wine service has different needs and modes of operation. The aim of this document is to identify the most important points that may hide the biggest risks for both staff and clients.

This document will not expand on general procedures. All employees must conform to the official guidelines of the Government Bodies, as for example Hellenic Food Authority "EFET" that released a Guidebook regarding the restart of Foodservice. Finally, all recipients must stay up to date, since relevant authorities might revise the guidelines at anytime.

### **BEFORE THE WINE SERVICE**

#### **General Guidelines**

Although not the scope of this document, W.S.P.C. isolated the most important general guidelines:

- Continuous Training of staff regarding the personal hygiene procedures and precautionary measures, that all employees must abide by. (washing of hands, correct use of gloves and face masks, avoidance of crowding)
- Staff must be in a position to immediately recognize Covid-19 symptoms and ask for medical support.
- Every business must have access to sufficient amounts of medical face masks, gloves and hand disinfectant gel.
- All employees must wear disposable face masks and gloves.
- Sitting area must be outlined according to the relevant legislation, taking note of limitations for number of guests per table, distance between patrons and tables, etc.
- Safety distances must be maintained during service.
- Face masks, gloves etc. must be disposed in the allocated bins.
- POS is preferred for transactions. POS machines must be disinfected after every use, especially when clients keyed in the PIN. For cash transactions, using a small metal plate for handling the cash will limit contact with the client. The plate should be disinfected after every use.

### **Receiving Wine from Suppliers**

All health measures must be strictly obeyed from the receipt of the wines in the restaurant warehouse all the way down to wine service.

- Staff members that receive and stock wine deliveries should wear medical face masks and gloves.

- Contact with the supplier employees should be kept at a minimum and handshakes should be avoided.
- Warehouse Managers and Buyers should organize their stock so that ordering less frequently is possible. Deliveries from different suppliers, ideally, should be scheduled for different hours.
- In case an establishment follows a specific Protocol for handling wine bottles before service, this could be put on the first page of the wine list, for providing reassurance towards the end client. For example "from reception from our suppliers to your table, all wine bottles in our restaurant are being handled by our staff under strict precautionary hygienic measures".

### **Wine List**

The Wine List is one of the most contaminated surfaces in a restaurant, most likely to spread viruses and several bacteria, passed on to many clients without being disinfected. There are many solutions that can minimize clients' contact with any document (wine list or menu) that could be hazardous.

Note: Points listed below can be also applied to food menus.

- Develop and use a menu/order App. Clients can be notified to download it and be able to order via this App.
- The Wine List should be posted on website, so clients can read it before arrival but also during the dinner, instead of using a hard copy. Please note that the wine list on the website must always be kept updated.
- Upon reservation, the wine list could be emailed to the client. This email could also be used for promotional purposes, such as specific promos, highlighted producers or even a notification of rare wines available in single bottle quantities, techniques that can even guide sales.
- Concerning hotel restaurants, the menu and the wine list should be on the hotel TV channel, so the client can read it before arriving at the restaurant.
- If the restaurant has a hard copy menu, it should be laminated and disinfected after every use. A mobile UV Sanitizer seems to be the easiest solution.
- If the list is not very long, printing single use copies must be considered. Client could even take this list with them when leaving the restaurant. Even businesses with long wine lists could print a disposable copy of "Daily Selections".

### **DURING SERVICE**

The general underline principle is minimizing contact with the clients. The staff should approach the table the least times possible, even if this means that the experience might seem less luxurious for the client.

The number of waiters serving a specific table should be minimized to one if possible. This will certainly affect the structure and operation of the whole service team and staff will need to be trained accordingly, as there will be one waiter for all service.

procedures, from ordering to payment. Different positions within the waiter team will be less specific. Sommeliers should not be eliminated, but, in sharp contrast, all service staff must be able to act as a sommelier.

- When touching all clean utensils and tools (glasses, decanters, cork screws, trays, towels, aprons), disposable gloves must be worn at all times.
- Glasses could be placed on the table after clients arrive. Otherwise, the waiter could disinfect the table with a mobile UV Sanitizer in front of the patrons. This will reassure guests that every procedure is according to health and safety guidelines.
- An individual water bottle is the safest choice when it comes to water service.
- Tables should be cleaned and disinfected after every client. A safe and practical way is using disposable, paper tablecloths. In the case fabric tablecloths must be used, these should be replaced after each use.
- Hand disinfectant gels and clean towel must be carried by all waiters.
- The preferred disinfectant gel dries quickly, has no aroma and, after use, is not leaving hands greasy.
- The cork screw can be disinfected in a pot full of alcohol in front of the client.
- The Sommelier could disinfect hands and wine bottle in front of the client – possibly with a disinfectant wet tissue, before opening the bottle.
- Every wine bottle should be opened in front of the client. A Sommelier should remove capsule completely and disinfect the bottle before removing the cork. Ideally, each waiter should have a worktable to perform the whole procedure (opening the bottle, decanting etc.) and therefore avoid opening the bottle on the clients' table.
- The cork must be removed from the corkscrew by using a disposable small towel, which is properly sealed before use. Then, the cork is placed in a small plate and passed on to the client. The cork must not be smelled by the waiter. An alternative strategy is not passing the cork on to the client.
- Under current circumstances, tasting the wine in front of a client before serving for checking its condition is not advisable. Any measure taken to have a sommelier tasting the wine in a safe manner is likely to be time- and resource-consuming. Letting the client taste every bottle is the safest solution.
- If the client thinks that a bottle is faulty, the bottle should be taken away immediately and the client must be provided with the option of either trying a second bottle of the same wine or choose another label from the wine list. The Sommelier must verify the condition of a returned bottle only in the case of a rare / expensive bottle of wine.
- Concerning the service of wine by the glass, the ordered wine must be served in the glass in front of the client.
- Wine Lists should have a wider range of half bottles and more bottles sealed with screw-cap, so that clients can open the bottle by themselves. At present, there is a limited variety of labels meeting these criteria, but, should the demand exist, producers will have to increase wines, especially premium wines, that could meet such requests.
- The establishment should choose if the wine is served only by the waiter or by the client. It is understood that self-service may result in lower

consumption but it is possibly the safest way. In case of self-service there must be an individual wine cooler for every table. Table and wine-cooler must be set in a way that makes it easy for the client to serve.

- Drop-stops should not be used. It is difficult to disinfect them and in disinfectant corrupt them.
- The wine (or water) bottle must never touch the glass when serving.
- The serving tray and the wine list must be disinfected after every use.
- New disposable gloves must be worn after every table is cleaned or set up.
- Disposable gloves of different color for every process could be used, for example black gloves for serving, white gloves for cleaning the table and blue gloves for setting it. It is another way of making the client feel safe.

Please note that these are only suggestions for a situation that is uncharted waters for all businesses, while guidelines are subject to change, not only by law, but also by the addition of new data concerning the virus and its spread.

Many of these guidelines might seem even conflicting., since wine service refers to businesses with very different operation and needs.

W.S.P.C. aims in helping all businessmen finding what applies to their businesses and create their own Protocols. These Protocols should be clearly communicated to all staff and clients. Every employee must have access to this Protocol anytime and must understand all responsibilities and procedures that stem out of it.

- Attention! Stay updated and update relevant Protocols according to the current legislation and guidelines of the official Government Agencies. Call EODY (Hellenic National Public Health Organization): 1135 and (+30) 2105212000

