



CY SOMMS
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CY SOMMS BESSERAT DE BELLEFON & PUNIN WINE BEST SOMMELIER CHAMPAGNE CONTEST

**04 NOVEMBER 2026-ALASIA HOTEL
LIMASSOL**

OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

1. CONTEST

The **CY SOMMS Besserat de Bellefon & Punin Wine Best Sommelier Contest 2026** is organised by **CY SOMMS**, in collaboration with **Besserat de Bellefon Champagne** and **Punin Wine**.

The contest is designed to recognise excellence in the professional skills, knowledge, service standards and commercial awareness of sommeliers on Champagne region and Besserat de Bellefon.

The Board and Technical Committee of CY SOMMS is responsible for the overall planning, organisation and efficient running of the contest, as well as ensuring the transparency and proper conduct of all tests.

2. ELIGIBILITY

The competition is open to members of CY SOMMS who:

- Have been practising the profession or performing the functions of a sommelier for at least one year.
- Are involved in professional sommelier activities, including the selection and purchase of wines, cellar management, stock maintenance, wine-list organisation and categorisation, advising customers, decanting and serving wines, spirits, water, coffee, tea and other beverages, and generally promoting wine through sales, education or the press.
- Are registered members of CY SOMMS by **1 October 2026**.
- Have fulfilled all financial obligations to CY SOMMS by the date of registration.
- Complete their registration for the contest no later than **19 October 2026**.

Candidates who do not meet these requirements will not be accepted for the contest.

3. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The official language of the contest is **English**.

The written examination will be conducted in English. The practical and oral tests, including blind tasting, Champagne service, decanting and the surprise test, will also be conducted in English.

4. REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The contest will cover the following areas:

Champagne

- History of the Champagne region and its wines
- Geography – climate – soil
- Viticulture
- Vinification - the traditional method of Champagne production
- AOC Champagne legislation and regulations
- Champagne classification and appellation
- Champagne styles, grapes and vintages
- Food and Champagne pairing
- Champagne-based cocktails
- Commercial and marketing aspects of Champagne
- Gastronomy and agricultural products of the Champagne region

Besserat de Bellefon

Candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of:

- The history of Besserat de Bellefon
- The House's philosophy and identity
- Viticulture and winemaking
- The House's range of wines and products
- Commercial and marketing positioning

Sommelier Profession and Service

Candidates may also be assessed on:

- Professional Champagne service
- Opening and serving Champagne
- Decanting and presentation
- Organisation and efficiency
- Dexterity
- Professional attitude and customer approach
- Sales and commercial skills
- Wine-list knowledge and accuracy
- Gastronomy and food pairing

5. CONTEST PROCEDURE

The competition will take place in **two stages**, depending on the number of registered candidates. The final format and number of candidates progressing to the final will be determined at the discretion of the Technical Committee.

Candidates will draw a competition number and **must keep it with them throughout the contest**.

The Technical Committee reserves the right to make reasonable last-minute amendments to the schedule and will inform candidates of any such changes.

6. MASTERCLASS

Punin Wines and CY SOMMS are organizing a Besserat de Bellefon masterclass. Moreover, general guidelines concerning the contest will be provided to all candidates during the masterclass.

Date: October 20th, 2026 / Time: 11.30 / Venue: Alasia Hotel Limassol

7. WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2026

Venue: Alasia Hotel, Limassol

08:30 — Gradual Arrival of the Board and Technical Committee

09:00 — Arrival of Candidates

All candidates must report to the Alasia Hotel by **09:00** and must be wearing their **full professional uniform**.

SEMIFINAL

10:00–11:30 — Written Examination

All candidates

The written examination will consist of questions covering subjects as described in **Part 4**:

11:45–12:00 — Blind Tasting

All candidates

Candidates will blind taste a **white or rosé or both Champagnes**, selected at random from the Besserat de Bellefon range, including different styles and vintages where applicable.

Candidates must provide an analytical tasting commentary in English, following the principles and structure of **ASI contest Blind Tasting guidelines (see ASI website)**.

12:15–13:30 — Commercial Essay

All candidates

Candidates will complete a written commercial essay focusing on:

- Champagne as a wine-producing region
- The positioning and identity of Besserat de Bellefon
- Commercial and marketing aspects of Champagne
- The role of the sommelier in promoting Champagne

13:30–14:30 — Lunch

Lunch will be provided at the Alasia Hotel by **Besserat de Bellefon and Punin Wine**.

THE FINAL

The final will be open to **CY SOMMS members, the press and the public**.

Reservation is essential.

Reservations should be made through the CY SOMMS General Secretary:

Eleni Efstathiou

Email: eefstathiou@outlook.com.gr

15:30 — Finalists to Be Present

All candidates must be present at the Alasia Hotel by **15:30**.

Candidates must be dressed in their **full professional uniform**.

16:00 — Announcement of the Top Three Finalists

16:15 — Final Competition

The three finalists will draw new competition numbers from **1 to 3**.

The final will include the following tests:

Aperitif / Cocktail Station

Candidates will be assessed on their knowledge, preparation, presentation and service of Champagne-based cocktails and aperitifs.

Blind Tasting Final

Candidates will blind taste Champagne and will be assessed on their analytical tasting ability, knowledge, and accuracy.

Food & Champagne Pairing

Candidates will be required to demonstrate their ability to select and recommend appropriate Champagne pairings for food.

Practical Champagne Service

Candidates will be assessed on professional Champagne service, including:

- Presentation
- Opening of the bottle
- Pouring technique
- Glassware
- Service etiquette
- Efficiency and dexterity
- Customer interaction

Champagne Wine-List Test

Candidates will be required to identify errors or inaccuracies in a Champagne wine list and demonstrate appropriate professional knowledge.

Surprise Test

Candidates will be presented with an unexpected practical or professional situation designed to assess their ability to react appropriately and professionally.

PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE

During the practical tests, a special jury will observe and assess each finalist's:

- Personal appearance
- Professional presentation
- Attitude
- Communication skills
- Customer approach
- Technical ability
- Knowledge of Champagne
- Service skills
- Commercial awareness
- Organisation and efficiency
- Professional judgement

The practical tests are designed to reflect situations encountered in the daily professional work of a sommelier.

The judges will therefore consider not only theoretical knowledge, but also the candidate's overall ability to perform as a professional sommelier.

Independent members of the audience may be appointed at short notice to observe and assess the candidates' professional attitude during the practical tests.

8. JURY

The Jury for the practical tests will consist of individuals selected by the Board and Technical Committee approved by CY SOMMS and Punin Wine. The Jury may include recognised personalities from:

- The wine trade
- The sommelier profession
- Oenology
- Restaurants and hotels
- Wine education
- Gastronomic and wine media

The Jury will be presided over by the representative of the Technical Committee to the Board of CY SOMMS, who will have overall responsibility for the proper conduct of the competition.

The Technical Committee reserves the right to change or replace members of the Jury, including immediately before or during the final, where necessary.

All decisions of the Jury are subject to the authority of the Board and Technical Committee. Once confirmed, the decisions of the Technical Committee are **final**.

9. RESULTS AND FINAL RANKING

The three finalists will be selected based on the accumulated results of the:

- Written Examination
- Commercial Essay
- Blind Tasting

The **final ranking of the three finalists will be based solely on the marks obtained during the live final competition** and will not include marks obtained during the morning qualification stage.

Following the Jury's deliberations at the conclusion of the final the official results will **be** announced before the prize-giving dinner at Alasia Beach Hotel Main Restaurant

The winner will receive the title:

CY SOMMS Besserat de Bellefon Champagne & Punin Wine Best Sommelier 2026

The winner will receive:

- The official title
- A special prize offered by Besserat de Bellefon and Punin Wine
- An official certificate

All three finalists will receive prizes from Punin Wine.

10. DISCIPLINE AND DISQUALIFICATION

The Board and Technical Committee reserves the right to disqualify or remove a candidate from the contest at any time before or during the competition in cases of misconduct, inappropriate behaviour, breach of the competition rules or for any other valid reason determined by the Technical Committee.

The decision of the Board and Technical Committee in such matters shall be final.

11. WINNER'S COMMITMENT

The winner agrees to make themselves available for at least **two working days** to support and promote Besserat de Bellefon, Punin Wine and the profession of sommeliers, at dates and under conditions to be agreed with the organisers.

13. ACCEPTANCE OF THE RULES

All candidates must read, approve and sign these Official Competition Rules before participating in the competition.

By signing the registration form, the candidate confirms that they:

1. Have read and understood the contest rules.
2. Meet the eligibility requirements.
3. Accept the competition procedures and conditions.
4. Agree to abide by the decisions of the Board and Technical Committee.
5. Accept that the decisions of the Board and Technical Committee are final.

14. REGISTRATION FORM

**CY SOMMS BESSERAT DE BELLEFON & PUNIN
WINE BEST SOMMELIER CONTEST 2026**

Date: 4 November 2026

Venue: Alasia Hotel, Limassol, Cyprus

Candidate's

Name: _____

CY SOMMS Membership Number: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Signature:

Date:

APPROVAL BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Iraklis Christophorou

Technical Committee

Signature: _____

Maria Massoura

WSET Diploma /Technical Committee

Signature: _____

REGISTRATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Completed registration forms must be submitted to:

Eleni Efstathiou

General Secretary, CY SOMMS

Email: eefstathiou@outlook.com.gr

Registration deadline: 19 October 2026

CY SOMMS

Besserat de Bellefon Champagne

Punin Wine

Official Competition Rules — 2026