

Some of the students from the VENIT 2021/22 program shared with us their feedback on how VENIT contributed to changes in their career.

Lexi Nardoni, USA

What was your background before attending VENIT?

Before attending VENIT, I had received my undergrad in Environmental Science and Policy BS. I had no formal training or education in viticulture and enology. Most of my knowledge came from my upbringing in Southern California and the many visits to wineries and vineyards.

What was your occupation before attending VENIT?

Before VENIT I was a student at CSULB and was a full time student-athlete.

What is your current occupation?

I am currently Wine Operations Director at Mizel Estate, a boutique winery in Malibu, CA. I am helping build the winery and play a key role in developing the business.

How much did VENIT contribute to such a change?

VENIT gave me the knowledge and tools to pursue my career in viticulture and enology. Through their program I feel equipped to create a lasting career in the industry. I found the viticulture studies on the impact of climate change very interesting and a perfect pairing with my background in environmental science. I hope to apply these techniques in the future.

Jacob Grinsted, Denmark

What was your background before attending VENIT?

I have a B.Sc. + M.Sc. in Geography & Geo-Informatics from Copenhagen University. Besides that, I also obtained WSET L3

What was your occupation before attending VENIT?

My previous job was Project Manager at a global IT company.

What is your current occupation?

Currently I am working in a very small winery in Tuscany. Here there are no fancy titles, we all do whatever work needs to be done. It can be in the cantina or the vineyards, I like the job, for the moment I am very happy to be hands on and learning the work in the vineyards and in a small cantina better.

How much did VENIT contribute to such a change?

Before joining, my experiences were mainly tasting and visiting wineries, I had no hands-on experience. The VENIT helped me gain the theoretical foundation of the "winemaking" world. The internship part was further helpful and was a good opportunity to get more hands on. Network and personal connections. The VENIT program and the connections made here, made me land my first wine-job in Italy.

Madison Franklin, USA

What was your background before attending VENIT?

I had a biology/chemistry background and had worked on one small harvest. I was very familiar with the wine industry from restaurant work.

What was your occupation before attending VENIT?

I was a wine buyer for a restaurant group.

What is your current occupation?

Viticulture & Enology Coordinator for the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture/ Co-owner of an enoteca.

How much did VENIT contribute to such a change?

I learned a lot through the VENIT courses, but the people that I met through school and through my internship were the most beneficial part. All of the courses I took are relevant for my current job with emphasis on the enotourism class.

Alex Mc Donnell, USA

What was your background before attending VENIT?

Before starting VENIT, I had no background or experience in wine. It was something I was passionate about and would study in my free time. I have an undergraduate degree in International Relations & Italian and a Master's in International Business Administration.

What was your occupation before attending VENIT?

Before attending VENIT I was a cofounder at a startup company that specialized in developing and bringing to market a patented impact absorbing device used as padding in various types of helmets. I worked to build the company, transforming an idea into a reality.

What is your current occupation?

Currently, I am still working with my startup company, while simultaneously following my passion for wine. I am working towards creating an Italian style "enoteca" or wine bar in Miami, Florida. Additionally, on the side I have been holding events educating consumers about different wine varieties and wine making techniques.

How much did VENIT contribute to such a change?

VENIT allowed me to develop a strong foundation needed in the wine industry. The various courses ranging from viticulture, enology, and marketing, gave me a comprehensive understanding of how grapes are grown, wine is made, marketed, and distributed. My internship in wine marketing in Veneto allowed me to explore a new region of Italy, discover new wines, and experience hands-on how wine is marketed in Italy and distributed to various countries across the globe. Working on the business side of wine, these experiences allowed me to make amazing contacts with various people and wineries, discover new wines that I believe have huge potential in the US market, and give me the knowledge I needed to follow my dreams and dive into the wine industry.

