

Ilya Zabolotnov

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Summary

More than 12 years of experience in various aspects of wine retail, including working on the shop floor, staff training, wine writing, sales and marketing personalization, developing and implementing custom CRM software, extracting behavior patterns, conveying value to customers in different ways. Proficient in data analysis (Python, pandas, scipy; sklearn for machine learning). WSET 3 with distinction; currently a DipWSET student.

Key competences and experiences

Wine sales and staff training. Very experienced in communication with customers on the shop floor; developed and implemented guidelines for shop floor communication, implemented a staff training program for wine sales (both in *Vinifera retail store* and *Prime Minister Wine and Spirits*).

Sales personalization in wine retail. Developed (Python/Django) a CRM system for arbitrary segmentation of audience for specific selling propositions based on the variety of criteria. The CRM also provided an opportunity to quantify customer relations by introducing various KPIs.

Assortment management in a wine store. Implemented a policy for the consistent use of wine ratings. Developed and implemented software for the management of shelftalkers and wine ratings in retail. Created guidelines for assortment selection based on the consistent use of wine ratings, value to price ratio, obscure varieties and appellations—every bottle should have its unique selling proposition.

Wine writing. Published a number of articles on wine since 2014 on the website *grozdi.ru* in Russian (under a pen name V. Aristov). In the circumstances of Russia's alcohol advertising ban, the social media and email marketing for *Vinifera* were also extremely demanding for informative yet entertaining tasting notes and captivating narratives. In wine writing tries to convey the value by providing tangible details from the enological perspective as well as vivid yet accurate metaphors—without vague platitudes and senseless clichés.

Conducting wine tastings. Since 2014 led about one hundred wine tastings for different audiences at various venues. Also conducted multiple wine tasting in English in Stanford Wine Society.

Wine evaluation. Using the experience of tasting wines with known reputable ratings and tasting notes as a reference, described and rated wines at technical tastings of samples for possible procurement, at wine exhibitions and industry events. Took part in the jury of the UVWR Cup 2018, the red wines section.

Technical skills

Full stack web development, primarily Python/Django for back end, Bootstrap and jQuery for front end, basic system administration on Ubuntu — mainly used as supplementary skills in wine retail automation. Numpy, pandas, matplotlib, scipy, sklearn for data analysis.

Work experience

Vinifera wine store, Kaliningrad, Russia, 2017 — 2023

Owner

Started my own wine retail store with a distinctive vision: the extensive use of reputable wine ratings, the ubiquity of shelftalkers with ratings and tasting notes (made by an own proprietary software), adherence to the value to price ratio in every category, personalization of sales via a proprietary CRM, competent sales personnel.

Prime Minister Wine and Spirits retail, Kaliningrad, Russia, 2011 — 2017

Managing Director, 2016 — 2017

Marketing Manager, 2011 — 2016

Came to the company with the idea of using wine ratings for procurement and marketing activities (BTL and social media); implemented a training program for retail personnel; then was promoted to a managing director by the business owner, with primary duties of operational management and managerial accounting.

Security Focus Publishers, remote, 2007 — 2008, 2009 — 2014

Associate editor

Mirada Software, Moscow, Russia, 2008 — 2009

Back end web developer, PHP; team leader

Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, 2004 — 2007

Back end web developer, PHP

Education

Nashe Vino winemaking courses, Gelendzhik, Russia, 2015

Although being not a winemaker, but a wine retailer and wine writer, I was admitted to the Nashe Vino advanced training courses for professional winemakers, and dramatically improved my knowledge in wine chemistry, viticulture and winemaking practices.

Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, Kaliningrad, Russia, 2007 — 2009

Master of Technology, Telecommunications

Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, Kaliningrad, Russia, 2003 — 2007

Bachelor of Technology, Telecommunications

Test scores

WSET 3 with Distinction

San Francisco Wine School

April 2023

IELTS Academic

Score: 8.0 in November 2013

Listening — 8

Reading — 8

Writing — 7.5

Speaking — 7.5

Overall — 8