

Career Profile

Jessica Mataseje, Grape and Wine Technology

At the beginning of her fourth year of studies in biology and chemistry at WLU in 2005, Jessica Mataseje took direct control of her career path by beginning to investigate how she could ultimately translate her interests and science education into a rewarding career. Through active career planning efforts, Jessica discovered the exciting field of oenology and viticulture. Oenology refers to the science of winemaking and viticulture to the science of grape growing.

Jessica is currently completing her post-degree Certificate in the Grape and Wine Technology program at the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) located at Brock University, while simultaneously working as a Winery Assistant/Boutique Associate at Niagara Cellars. Jessica has many diverse tasks including monitoring the fermentation process and ensuring the equipment is constantly sterilized as well as conducting "pump-overs" to increase red wine colour extraction. Jessica also enjoys providing structural tastings to tourists visiting the vineyard, which includes explaining the influence of canopy management and microclimate on the ripening of grapes. "It is such a complex sensory science to really dissect a bottle of wine and pull out the different aromas. It is amazing to think that simple climate, soil and vineyard factors can affect the aroma profile that arises in a glass of wine."

Jessica discovered there were many aspects to the wine industry that were scientifically driven, including the role of Winemaker, Viticultural Consultant and many more. The industry demands proficient knowledge in wine chemistry, winery equipment, grapevine biology, wine and food etiquette along with sound knowledge of the Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) rules (Ontario's wine standards authority).

A large benefit of working in oenology and viticulture is the opportunity for travel. Given the global nature of the wine industry, Canada's emerging wine market is constantly striving to compete on the worldwide scale.

If you are interested in learning more about this exciting scientific career path, Jessica recommends you first visit the Niagara Region and go on an official tour, ask lot of questions and taste the wines!

Finally, visit the Brock University website (www.brocku.ca/ccovi) to gain more information about the CCOVI certificate program.

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