For the past nine years at the University of Melbourne (UoM) over 4000 young wine consumers have completed a unique teaching program that makes them into more discerning and involved consumers. The Wine Breadth program run by the Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences at UoM runs three subjects at 1st, 2nd and 3rd year levels for students from every Faculty across the University. These are not budding winemakers, but budding consumers eager to learn, and increasingly made up of international students (predominantly Chinese).

The teaching method is deliberate “total immersion” where students live, breath, and taste wine for an intensive live-in week. Over five days they go from wine-zero to wine-hero, completing theory and sensory evaluation examinations, where they make comprehensive notes on masked wines and go as far as varietal identification and notes on climate, oak and food pairing.

While sometimes producing young people who see a career in wine, it undoubtedly makes for young drinkers who want to upgrade their wine selection, have a respect for the product and want to continue to learn more. Just the consumers the Australian wine industry needs, both here and in new markets such as China.

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The only undergraduate university wine education program aimed at non-wine professionals & taught in an intensive 5 day mode. Over it’s decade history it has produced over 4000 discerning wine consumers from all over the world. Student feedback; “I’ll never drink “Goon” again”, “The most interesting subject I’ve done at Uni” & “I now enjoy engaging with my parents over a glass of wine at dinner”. Although aimed as an elective students have gone on from these subjects to become winemakers, viticulturalists & wine marketers, working in France, Germany, Kenya, Austria, Italy, US & New Zealand.