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[Spanish For The Wine Industry](#)

"What we've got here is failure to communicate."

That was a funny and memorable line from *Cool Hand Luke*, but language barriers can be a serious issue in business. My recent conversation with Tyler Thomas of Star Lane Vineyards drove that point home. Tyler told me how crucial their new vineyard manager's command of the Spanish language was in training their labor crews. That's a big deal.

So how do Napa winemakers and vineyard managers help educate themselves in Spanish? One solution is to solicit the help of my guest this week, Ms. Josefina Adriance. Josefina started her "Spanish for the Wine Industry" program in 2003. Since then she's educated hundreds of students and created client relationships with many of Napa Valley's most iconic wineries. Listen in on our chat:



Josefina Adriance

*The Wine Write: Tell me a bit about yourself.*

*Josefina: I was born in Madrid, Spain. I came to the United States in 1985 after meeting a man from Napa and getting married. We're no longer married, but that's how I got here.*

*The Wine Write: You started working in education initially, correct?*

*Josefina: Right. When I started looking in Napa for a job, my best skill was the Spanish language, naturally. I began teaching Spanish in schools. But I didn't enjoy that so much. There are a lot of rules. And a lot of paperwork. I had my own ideas about how to teach, but I couldn't really do that. I also prefer to teach adults.*

*The Wine Write: How did the start of your business come about?*

*Josefina: I really liked the wine business. In Spain, my family had vineyards. My sister has a vineyard in Rioja. I thought in Napa I could find a way to teach Spanish for business. There was a need to teach Spanish to winery principals and restaurant owners who employed Spanish-speaking workers. Vineyard managers especially needed that skill.*

*The Wine Write: What shifted your focus specifically to the wine industry?*

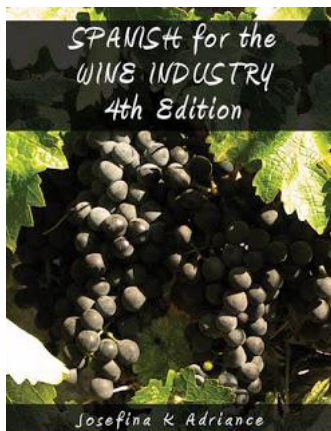
*Josefina: I quickly realized that 90% of my clients were connected to the wine business.*

*The Wine Write: What challenges did you face?*

*Josefina: Well, there were no textbooks to use! There were no books specifically written for the wine industry. So I decided to write some. By focusing on work done in the vineyard, the winery, and the tasting room, my books allowed me to teach relevant material to my students.*

*The Wine Write: Who can benefit from your training?*

*Josefina: Probably 70% of my students are involved in vineyard management. Viticulturists need to deal with field workers, for most of whom Spanish is a native language. Command of the Spanish language is almost always a required skill for vineyard managers. The rest of my students are winery employees, including cellar workers and tasting room employees.*



*The Wine Write: How do you keep current with changes in the wine industry and the nomenclature involved?*

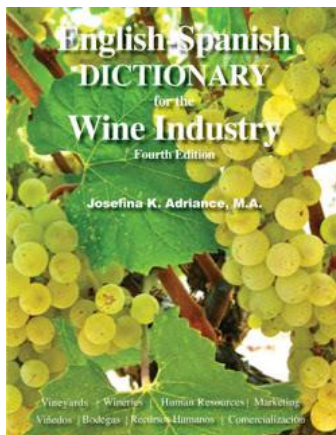
*Josefina: I read a lot about the wine business. I'm always on the look for new words I need to add to my books and dictionary. I also pick up things when doing translation work for winery customers. Some of the material I translate refers to machines that I know nothing about, so I do a lot of online research. I pick up new knowledge about the wine business there.*

*The Wine Write: Are most of your classes conducted face to face?*

*Josefina: Most of them are in person. I may teach them on location at a winery or elsewhere. I conduct small classes here in my office. I also teach online classes for VESTA (Viticulture Enology Science and Technology Alliance).*

*The Wine Write: From your perspective, what's been the biggest change in Napa's wine industry since you started back in 1992?*

*Josefina: There are a lot more wineries now. There seemed to be a lot more family wineries when I started; now there are a lot more corporate wineries. That change has made things more difficult for me. I only teach Spanish and translate English into Spanish. Potential corporate clients may demand services in many different languages, and want that from one company. I can't do that.*



*The Wine Write: Your business does a lot more than just wine industry education. Can you tell us about those efforts?*

*Josefina: I also do translation and do some interpreting. I much prefer translation to interpreting. Translations can be a lot of work, but they're fun and challenging. Teaching is still the most fun, though.*

*The Wine Write: Has this second career been as fulfilling as you would have hoped?*

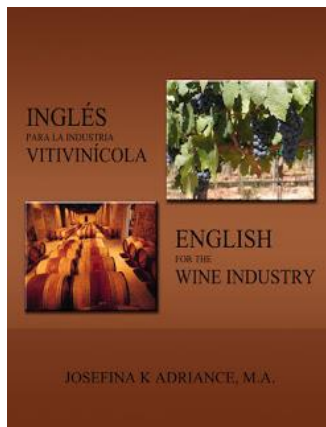
*Josefina: I enjoy my work. I've been around Napa for a long while now. It's fulfilling that I get most of my new business by word of mouth from former students and current clients.*

*The Wine Write: Do you enjoy wine?*

*Josefina: I do, too much! I'm in the right place.*

*The Wine Write: Any projects planned for the immediate future?*

*Josefina: I'm always working on my books, keeping them updated. I'm thinking about writing another book, something that could be useful for people making a wine trip to a Spanish speaking country. It would likely be focused on teaching Spanish that would be helpful in hospitality and tourism, along with wine. I'm still thinking about this one, but it could be an interesting project!*



Thanks to Josefina Adriance for joining us this week. It was a delight getting to know her. Each bottle of California wine we drink is the product of many human hands. Many of those hands belong to Spanish speaking vineyard workers. Josefina's work matters. Cheers to her and all the other unsung heroes of the wine industry!

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