

Honey Sommelier Training: Building a Global Language of Honey Quality

At the Apimondia Congress in Copenhagen 2025, the Global Honey Bar highlighted the growing role of honey sommelier training in strengthening quality assessment, and consumer engagement worldwide. Through structured sensory analysis, professionals and enthusiasts are learning to evaluate honey with confidence.



Carla Marina Marchese and Raffaele Dall'Olio at the Global Honey Bar during the 49th Apimondia Congress in Copenhagen

Developing Sensory Literacy

Carla Marina Marchese, founder of the American Honey Tasting Society and instructor for the National Register of Experts in the Sensory Analysis of Honey, explains that the training was initially developed in Bologna, Italy.

“It’s really a way to taste and evaluate honey using your senses,” she says.

Participants are trained to analyse colour, aroma, flavour, texture, and aftertaste, replacing generic descriptions with a shared technical vocabulary. This approach promotes “honey literacy,” enabling more informed communication between producers, professionals, and consumers.

Supporting Quality and Producers

Italian researcher and honey sommelier Raffaele Dall’Olio emphasises that the method is “first of all, an analytical tool.” It allows beekeepers to assess product quality, identify defects, and improve market standards before honey reaches consumers.

The training encourages the use of honey as a versatile ingredient in daily diets, expanding its role beyond that of a simple sweetener.

From Training to Practice

International courses, including those coordinated through the [Italian Register](#) and [BeeSources](#) now offer this methodology to English-speaking audiences. These programmes combine theory with guided tastings, enabling participants to compare botanical origins, regional characteristics, and production methods.

Fani Hatjina, Research Director at the Hellenic Agricultural Organization DEMETER and Chair of the Apimondia Bee Health Commission recently attended a training course in Greece and shared her experience:

“It was a very well-structured...course [and] an amazing experience to work on your personal performance of distinguishing odour, aroma, taste and texture! Imagination and ability together!“

At the Global Honey Bar, many of the honeys presented were selected by former students. For Dall’Olio, this reflects the long-term impact of education:

“This is the best reward for my education program. Now I see it in reality.”

A Platform for Continuous Learning

Participants consistently value the opportunity to taste diverse honeys from hundreds

of floral sources worldwide; honey tasting remains a “never-ending journey.”

Visitors demonstrated strong engagement, carefully comparing samples and seeking to understand differences in origin and style. The event fostered curiosity, concentration, and enthusiasm for further learning.

Honey as Culture, Nutrition, and Experience

Beyond technical evaluation, both experts emphasise honey’s cultural and nutritional importance. Dall’Olio describes it as “much more than a food,” while Marchese calls each harvest “a completely different surprise,” shaped by bees, landscapes, and beekeepers.

For them, honey represents both nourishment and a sensory narrative connecting nature and craftsmanship.



Honey jars and people at the Global Honey Bar *at the Global Honey Bar during the 49th Apimondia Congress in Copenhagen*

A Message to Consumers

Marchese and Dall’Olio encourage consumers to seek authentic, high-quality honey and to support local producers. Exploring different varieties can reveal unexpected flavour profiles, including floral, bitter, and savoury notes.

“There will be a honey for your breakfast, a honey for your salad, [and] a honey for your tea,” Marchese notes.

Strengthening the Global Honey Community

Through international training programmes and initiatives such as the Global Honey Bar, honey sommelier education is strengthening quality standards, particularly by raising consumers’ awareness, and building a shared global language for one of beekeeping’s most valuable products.

By connecting science, sensory skills, and cultural appreciation, these programmes are helping ensure that honey’s diversity and quality continue to be recognised and valued worldwide.