

THE SOMM JOURNAL

FAR FROM OVER

DESPITE TEMPORARY
RESPIRE, THE THREAT OF
TARIFFS ON EUROPEAN
WINES STILL LOOMS LARGE





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— WINES —



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A Message to Our Friends and Colleagues

The *SOMM Journal* and *The Tasting Panel* exist as platforms for wine and spirits producers, distributors, importers, retailers, and hospitality professionals. Whether we are covering new and established brands; profiling winemakers, distillers, sommeliers, and bartenders; or identifying emergent on- and off-premise trends, our underlying goal is always the same—to serve, promote, and celebrate the beverage industry as a whole.

As our world changes before our eyes, we would like to extend a heartfelt message of support—and determination. Rest assured we will continue to operate as a forum for your ideas and products as faithfully today and tomorrow as we did yesterday. We will also continue to serve as your messenger; as our magazines will still be delivered into the hands of the beverage professionals that you may not be able to visit with in person during this time.

We will emerge stronger, and this distancing may actually bring us all that much closer. We wish everyone good health and raise a glass to a brighter future.

In solidarity,

Meridith May,
Publisher



PHOTO: DAVID CANE

The late Rachel Cane, co-host of James Beard Award-winning radio program *A Matter of Taste*.

Remembering Rachel Cane

IN FEBRUARY, WE LOST a good friend in Rachel Cane. She was a creative, strong, and incomparable artist and talent who explored so many mediums with passion, from her early days as a New York TV commercial producer and her time spent serving as producer/co-host of the James Beard Award-winning radio program *A Matter of Taste* to her spectacular art creations and development of Art Hus, an artist cooperative she founded in California.

Rachel and her devoted husband and business partner, David Michael Cane, traveled the world interviewing celebrities in all areas of food, wine, and lifestyle. David continues to contribute regularly to *The Tasting Panel* and *The SOMM Journal*.

Rachel touched the lives of so many people and is deeply missed. After a 16-month battle with pancreatic cancer, she could fight no more. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Rachel's favorite charity, The Baja Animal Sanctuary, at bajanimalsanctuary.org. 

OO Wine proprietors Christopher and Kathryn Hermann.

GOING
*Full
Circle*

WITH NEW PROJECTS EMERGING FROM FRANCE, THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY'S **OO WINES** SEEKS TO "PUSH CHARDONNAY TO ITS CAPACITY"



Chardonnay grapes for OO Wines grow in the Willamette Valley.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF OO WINES

first press



by Michelle Metter



As part of its Chardonnay-focused production, OO Wines oversees projects in Oregon, the Côte-d'Or, and Le Mesnil-sur-Oger that follow the same winemaking methods and philosophies.

Oregon's Willamette Valley is arguably one of the world's most prolific producers of Pinot Noir. For the better part of 60 years, growers have taken advantage of the region's

maritime climate with mild winters and long springs to nurture this remarkable variety—which comprises 70% of the valley's vines—as well as other cool-climate grapes like Chardonnay and Pinot Gris.

Thanks to the efforts of winemaker Wynne Peterson-Nedry and OO (Double Zero) Wine proprietors Christopher and Kathryn Hermann, the Willamette Valley may very well be rising further in the ranks. Their shared passion for Pinot Noir has led this relatively new company to rack up an impressive list of accolades as it establishes itself among the top producers of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in both Oregon and France.

In naming the winery that they co-

founded in 2015, Christopher and his father, world-renowned plant geneticist Dr. Richard Hermann, were inspired by numerology. Seeing zero as “the number of potential,” they decided to double up, using one to symbolize the potential of Chardonnay and the other of Pinot Noir. Their family-owned venture had simple and somewhat secretive beginnings, sourcing a small allocation of grapes to produce an amphora-fermented Willamette Valley Pinot Noir in partnership with Beaux Frères winemaker Mike Etzel. The result was nothing short of spectacular, yielding a soft but structured wine that set the team on a course to produce Old World-style Pinot Noir and Chardonnay with traditional techniques.

To master the latter grape, they recruited famed Burgundian winemaker Pierre Millemann of Millemann Consulting in Nuits-Saint-Georges. Millemann introduced the family to a rare method known as Black Chardonnay production, and with the

subsequent release of the 2016 vintage, the winery's VGW (Very Good White), EGW (Extremely Good White), and Single Vineyard Bunker Hill Chardonnays garnered acclaim from critics and collectors alike and soon became cult favorites.

Christopher believes that their approach in the winery is perhaps one of the region's most assertive, with a goal of yielding wines with structure and ageworthiness. To produce the aforementioned Black Chardonnay, he says, “we extract the maximum phenolics out of the skins to imprint the essence of terroir and vintage on each lot. Our team stomps the fruit as soon as it arrives at the winery, and we leave the juice on the skins overnight.” A “heavy press cycle” follows the next day, with no sulfur dioxide added to the pressed juice before it ferments with native yeast in a combination of traditional Damy, Chassin, and François Frères French oak barrels (228 liters) and 500-liter puncheons. (“Adding sulfur dioxide at this



Famed Burgundian winemaker Pierre Millemann consults for OO Wines.

stage would significantly mask the unique flavors and aromas of the fruit that our growers work so hard to create in the vineyard," Christopher explains.) Then, after resting for a year, the wine is racked into large tanks to finish on the lees for an additional six months.

"It's an incredible dance between human ideas and nature's gifts," Christopher says. "For us, this is about pushing Chardonnay to its capacity [and] producing distinctively textured and aromatic wines in a relentless pursuit of the extraordinary."

While Peterson-Nedry—a second-generation winemaker from one of the Willamette Valley's pioneering wine families—oversees day-to-day operations in Oregon, her French counterparts are ushering in OO Wines' newest slate of projects, set for release this year.

In collaboration with Millemann, OO Wines will soon unveil 25 cases of its 2017 Corton-Charlemagne; the winery's first release from the region, it exhibits

bright acidity, concentrated flavors, considerable structure, and a long finish. OO Wines has also teamed up with another revolutionary French vigneron, Julien Lanois, for a special release of its debut Le Mesnil-sur-Oger Blanc de Blancs Grower Champagne, produced from a single barrel of vin clair. (It also makes 25 cases annually of Extra Brut NV Grower Champagne.)

What unfolds in the winery may be serious business, but Kathryn Hermann has taken a lighter approach with OO Wines' marketing through her catchy label monikers as she steers the branding into more approachable territory. But that doesn't mean that OO is finished with breaking boundaries; in that respect, they're well aware that they're in good company in the Willamette Valley. "Since the time of the first pioneers, Oregon has always been a place where people are free to pursue their dreams," Christopher says. And for this five-year-old producer, it seems no dream is too lofty to chase. *sj*

Tasting Notes by Editor-in-Chief

Meredith May

OO Wines 2017 VGW Chardonnay, Willamette Valley (\$75)

A true luxury, with aromas of lemon oil, pineapple, and salted melon. Floral notes join honey on a palate saturated with lemon-lime, making a delicate impression on the tongue. A melted-caramel effect surpasses expectations on the finish. **95**

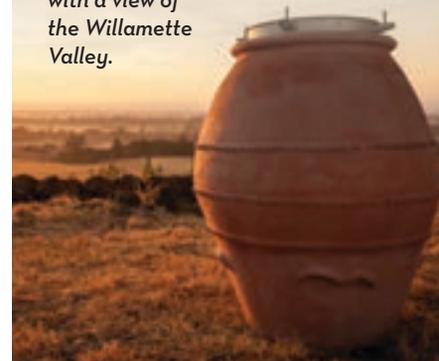
OO Wines 2017 Shea Pinot Noir, Yamhill-Carlton (\$95)

Fermented in clay amphorae, this petal-soft Pinot Noir blooms in the glass with rose, jasmine, and cranberry. Woodsy heather, cherry pie filling, and cinnamon take hold on the generous mouthfeel before sea-salt caramel dissolves on the finish. It's a complex wine without an edge. **96**

OO Wines 2017 EGW Chardonnay, Willamette Valley (\$95)

Grapes from old vines aged 12 months in 20% new French oak followed by six months on the lees in stainless steel. The perfumed nose comprises white tea, honey nougat, chamomile, and lemongrass. Unctuous and round-bodied, lithe and luxurious, the wine has a rich nature balanced by a streak of acidity that clings to lively notes of linen and lemon. **96**

An amphora sits atop a hill with a view of the Willamette Valley.



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HIGHER GROUND

Winemaker Cecilia Leoneschi
Illustrates the Magic of the Castiglion
del Bosco Estate in Brunello

*A row of vines within the estate vineyards of
Castiglion del Bosco in Montalcino.*

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Martini and Talbott Vineyards Have to Offer*

SPECIAL REPORT

**PROVENCE STUDY GUIDE INSERT,
VOLUME 1**

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Collection

THE SOMM JOURNAL

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Master Sommeliers Fred Dame and Michael Jordan at The Winery Restaurant in Newport Beach, CA, during the "Battle of the Somms" dinner.

PHOTO: TODD WESTPHAL

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8 CONSECUTIVE
90+
SCORES

2009 – 2016 NAPA VALLEY
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

WINE ENTHUSIAST
& JAMES SUCKLING

5 CONSECUTIVE
92+
SCORES

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Tasting Through the Years

THE “SOUTHWOLD ON THAMES” TRADITION CONTINUES
WITH A RETROSPECTIVE OF THE 2010 VINTAGE

FOR MORE THAN three decades, a group of U.K. wine professionals have gathered to assess a given Bordeaux vintage using expressions from a range of participating châteaux. The tradition began in 1989 with the 1985 bottlings, courtesy of Simon Loftus of renowned brewery/wine merchant Adnams, in Southwold. Three years ago, we transferred to the fine offices of Farr Vintners in London, so the tastings are now referred to as “Southwold on Thames.”

Over the years, two bottles of each wine have been collected from each château, with one set aside for the “10 Years On” retrospective tastings that assess a vintage a decade after it was bottled. Over the course of two days in February, we tasted a total of 180 wines, concentrating on classified growths and their respective second labels. We also set out to compare the 2010 examples with representatives from the finest vintages of the past two decades—2005, 2009, and 2016—for additional perspective. Here’s how two tasters responded when asked to divulge which vintage deserved the top spot.

Stephen Browett, Chairman of Farr Vintners: “I think that most of us probably agree that 2016 has the potential to be the best year. . . . The wines are nicely balanced with reasonable alcohol levels and rounded tannins.”

Mark Savage, MW, owner of Savage Selection: “My view is that 2010 falls more into the exotic camp rather than the classic one. The highs are very high indeed, but there is a lack of consistency lower down. It is a vintage of excess rather than moderation. I am inclined to give my top rating to 2005 out of respect for its pure classicism, its precision, and its perfect balance. Below that I would go for 2016,

as it is so good from top to bottom, then, almost on a par; the 2009 and 2010, with a preference for the overall generosity of the former.”

For what it’s worth, my ranking in descending order would be 2016, 2005, and 2009 followed by 2010.

The wines are tasted blind and ranked on a 20-point scale; the marks from each taster are then compiled to produce an average ranking. Below are eight 2010 wines from each appellation in order of overall ranking, followed by my own score.

Saint-Émilion

- Château Pavie: 17.78/18
- Château Angelus: 17.69/17.5
- Château Cheval Blanc: 17.64/17
- Château Figeac: 17.61/17
- Château Ausone: 17.50/18.5
- Château Canon: 17.39/17.5
- Château Valandraud: 16.53/17
- Château La Mondotte: 16.19/16.5

Pomerol

- Château L’Église-Clinet: 18.25/17.5
- Château Lafleur: 18.17/18.5
- Château Le Pin: 18.11/18.5
- Vieux Château Certan: 18.03/18
- Château La Violette: 17.81/17
- Château Pétrus: 17.69/17.5
- Château La Conseillante: 16.82/17
- Château Clos l’Église: 16.62/17

Margaux

- Château Margaux: 17.82/18
- Château Rauzan-Ségla: 17.82/18.5
- Ségla (screwcap): 16.92/18
- Château Palmer: 16.75/17
- Ségla (cork): 16.69/18
- Château Brane Cantenac: 16.28/18
- Château d’Issan: 16.28/17.5
- Château Lascombes: 16.17/16.5

Saint-Julien

- Château Ducru-Beaucaillou: 17.45/17.5
- Château Leoville-Poyferre: 17.16/17.5

- Château Langoa-Barton: 17.16/18
- Château Saint-Pierre: 16.84/18.5
- Château Lagrange: 16.82/17.5
- Château Gloria: 16.58/17
- Château Beychevelle: 16.55/16.5
- Château Branaire-Ducru: 16.45/17

Pauillac

- Château Latour: 18.89/18.5
- Château Mouton-Rothschild: 18.45/17.5
- Château Lynch-Bages: 18.32/18.5
- Château Grand Puy Lacoste: 18.03/18
- Château Pichon Baron: 17.97/17
- Château Lafite-Rothschild: 17.71/18.5
- Château Forts de Latour: 17.45/17.5
- Château Petit Mouton: 17.29/17

Saint-Estèphe

- Château Montrose: 17.05/17.5
- Château Cos d’Estournel: 16.97/17.5
- Château Phelan Segur: 16.45/16
- Château Lafon Rochet: 16.16/17
- Château Calon Segur: 16.11/16.5
- Château Tronquoy-Lalande: 16.11/16.5
- Château Les Ormes de Pez: 15.89/16.5
- Château Pagodes de Cos: 15.84/16

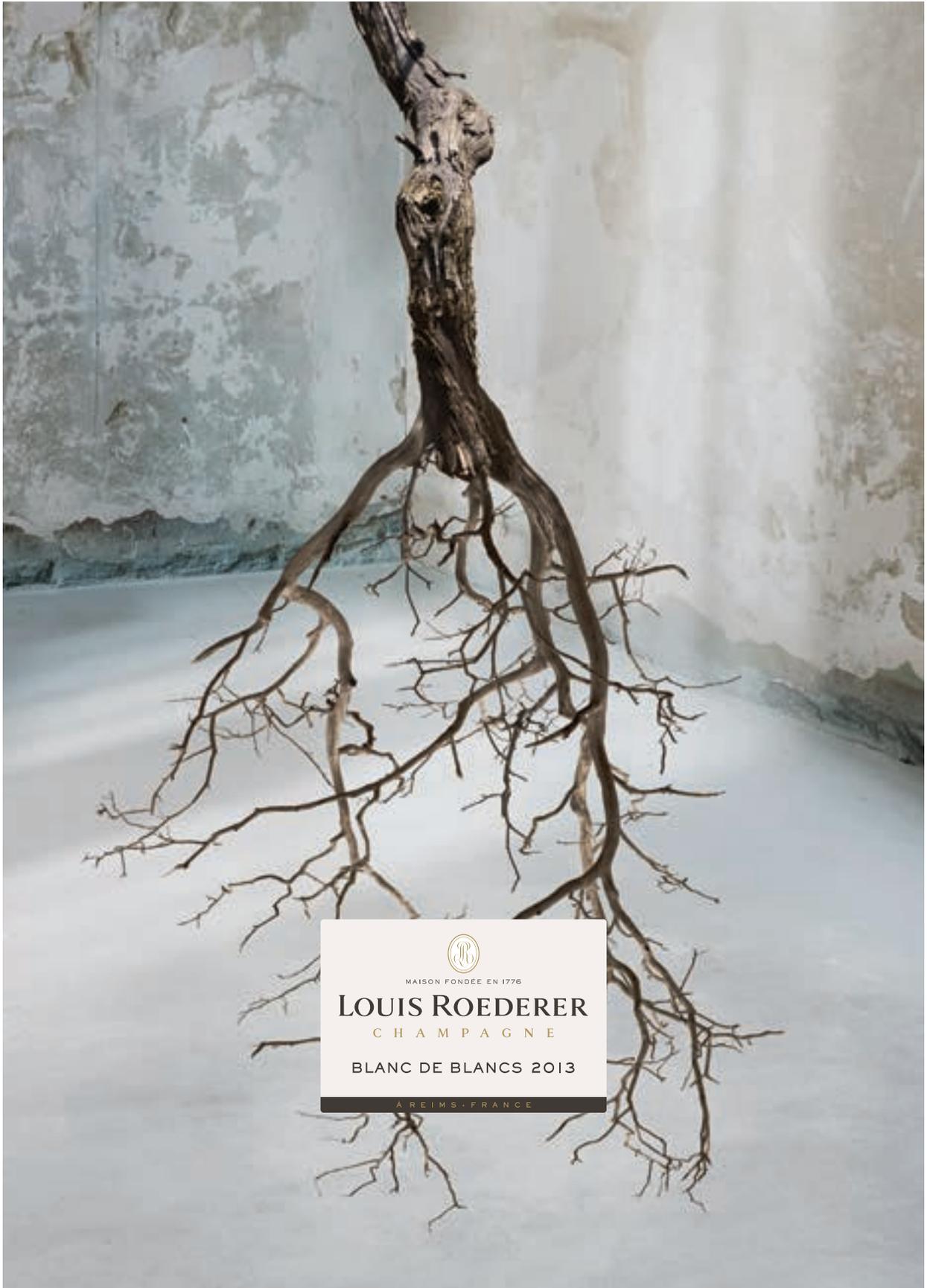
Pessac-Léognan

- Château La Mission Haut Brion: 17.79/17.5
- Château Haut Brion: 17.66/18
- Château Smith Haut-Lafitte: 17.03/18
- Château La Tour Martillac: 16.67/18
- Château de Fieuzal: 16.50/17.5
- La Chapelle de la Mission: 16.31/17
- Château Pape-Clement: 16.28/17.5
- Château Malartic-Lagravière: 16.28/17

Sauternes

- Château de Fargues: 17.38/18
- Château La Tour Blanche: 17.32/18
- Château d’Yquem: 17.29/17.5
- Château Suduiraut: 17.18/18
- Château Guiraud: 16.82/17
- Château Climens: 16.79/17
- Château Rieussec: 16.71/18.5
- Château Doisy-Daëne: 16.62/17.5

An aerial view of the city of Bordeaux.



MAISON FONDÉE EN 1776

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HAND IN HAND WITH NATURE



PHOTO: SUSAN WONG

A few of Karen MacNeil's favorite "Super Sauvignons."

California Soaring

SUPER SAUVIGNONS ARE THE WINES OF THE MOMENT

WHAT'S BEEN, in my view, the most exciting evolution in California wine in the last five years? The emergence of "Super Sauvignons"—my name for a whole new class of nuanced and sophisticated Sauvignon Blancs that are bright, mineral, and, in some cases, in possession of a ravishing raciness and richness. They aren't "green," vegetal, or simple; in fact, from their viticulture to their winemaking, they have almost nothing in common with most Sauvignon Blancs produced just ten years ago. And fortunately for us, spring is the time to relish these wines—even (or perhaps especially) when one is confined at home due to COVID-19.

Besides being made with fruit that's farmed meticulously on more optimal sites (sometimes those that historically would have been reserved for Cabernet Sauvignon), Super Sauvignons also typically follow a more painstaking process in the winery: Most comprise multiple lots that were fermented and/or aged separately

in various types of vessels—concrete eggs, used and new oak barrels, and small stainless-steel drums—and then blended. These Sauvignons also undergo a lot of lees stirring, which imparts that aforementioned richness, and are aged far longer.

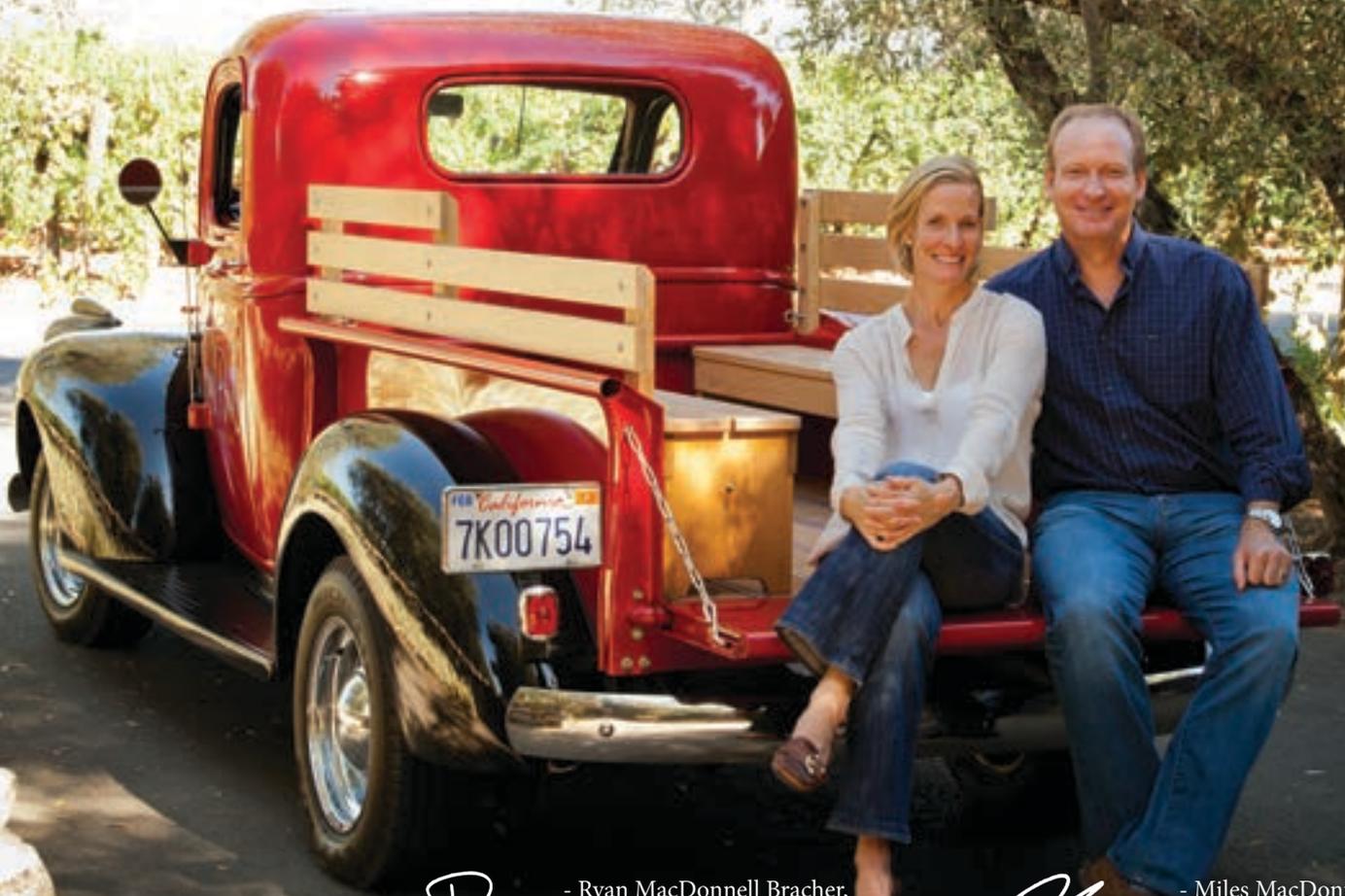
Furthering their complexity, many Super Sauvignons feature small amounts of other varieties (notably Sémillon), color mutations (Sauvignon Gris), or clonal selections. One of the best examples of the latter is a particularly aromatic version of Sauvignon Blanc called Sauvignon Musque, also known as Sauvignon Blanc Clone 27.

These wines, most of which are made in Napa Valley, are representative of a transformation that's unfolding within American wine culture. Maybe the uncertainty of contemporary life has infused us all with a passion for things that seem vital and alive—and what is Sauvignon Blanc if not energetic? Or perhaps we've come to realize that a great Sauvignon Blanc's fresh, citrusy, botanical palate and crisp

acidity are wildly flexible when it comes to food pairings. Or maybe it's because the top Super Sauvignons are fascinatingly counterintuitive: Their character is plush yet precise and their flavors exact and vivid—like the sound of a church bell ringing in the mountains.

Undoubtedly, of course, more than one of these reasons may apply. But for me, no domestic white wine is more inspiring than a Super Sauvignon. I have a slew of favorites, but on my short list are those made by Accendo Cellars, ADAMVS, Eisele Vineyard, Lail Vineyards, Merry Edwards Winery, Rudd Estate, Spottswoode Winery, and Turnbull Wine Cellars. These wines possess terrific personalities that provide a much-needed spark in these tumultuous times. *sj*

Karen MacNeil is the author of The Wine Bible and the editor of the digital wine newsletter WineSpeed.



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This Year's Takeaways From Vinexpo New York



The 2018 Enigma Chardonnay from Ecuadorian producer Dos Hemisferios.



The 2019 Tacama Selección Especial Carménère.

IN EARLY MARCH, the France-based Vinexpo traveling roadshow once again passed through New York City in its most recent attempt at making a splash in the U.S. Its first stateside endeavor arrived in Chicago in 2005 with mixed results, so it took a decade or so off to regroup before returning a few years ago to try again. I've never been to its European or Asian shows, which I hear are quite well attended, but the day I went, attendance was relatively low—though that probably had a lot to do with the escalating spread of COVID-19. The same week, Pro-Wein and Vinality announced that they would postpone their events to a later date.

As I strolled the floor and tasted some wonderful wines from places like Czechoslovakia, Georgia, and Serbia, I came across a pair of South American bottlings that would make an intriguing addition to your wine list or store shelf. (Both are currently imported by New York–based Doen Zhumir Importers.) The first, from Ecuador, is the Dos Hemisferios 2018 Enigma Chardonnay (\$35); with its refreshing citrus notes and good acidity and body, this wine possesses all the necessary elements to stand up to Chardonnay from almost anywhere.

As for the other expression, while many consumers know about Peruvian pisco production, South America's oldest grape-growing country also has a pretty robust wine industry in the Ica Valley. Proof positive is the deeply colored and medium-bodied Tacama 2019 Selección Especial Carménère (\$17), which is abundant in ripe dark fruit and acidity. I may even like it better than its Chilean counterparts!

Despite the challenges the event faced, those who attended Vinexpo NYC were undeniably treated to exciting discoveries from wineries and countries they may not have had a chance to try previously. Some are imported, some are not, but considering that a big part of Vinexpo's mission is to connect brokers, buyers, and importers with searching producers, there's hope that the wines not yet on our shores soon will be. (It also bears mentioning that even with those low attendance numbers, every seminar and panel discussion was standing room only.) Here's hoping that Vinexpo NYC lives to pour another year. *SRJ*

Despite the challenges the event faced, those who attended Vinexpo NYC were undeniably treated to exciting discoveries from wineries and countries they may not have had a chance to try previously.





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Seeking the Sweet Spot

HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS AFFECTING THE WATER NEEDS OF NORTH AMERICA'S WINEGROWING REGIONS

story and photo by Mark Stock

Young vines navigate large rocks and irrigation lines in Oregon's Dundee Hills AVA.



AT TIMES, THE STATE of the American West in the summer of 2018 seemed apocalyptic. California battled its biggest wildfire in state history as countless other blazes ravaged the region. The growing season unfolded beneath an orange sky and relentless layers of smoke.

As the climate continues to warm and growing conditions become more challenging, where does that leave thirsty vineyards? Can wineries that prefer employing dry farming or minimal irrigation maintain their status quo?

In the Willamette Valley, producers have arrived at a crossroads. The acclaimed appellation is still known for its precipitation and water-retaining soils, but it's also endured warm to hot vintages every year from 2012 on. As a result, winegrowers are rethinking their water needs and seeking the services of companies like the McMinnville-based Results Partners, which manages scores of Willamette Valley sites.

"The abnormally dry spring of 2018 was concerning for me, because even in a year with a hot summer, the winter and spring always had plenty of moisture," says Director of Vineyard Operations Evan Bellingar. "If we have more springs like that, that assumption is called into question."

To help adjust to this shift, Results Partners now irrigates more of its new vineyards than it did previously. "In young vines, we irrigate to reduce vine mortality, to increase uniformity, and to get more growth out of the vines in their second year—and thus more yield potential in their third year," Bellingar explains.

The decision to water an older vineyard, meanwhile, can be influenced by many factors, Bellingar says. Among them are the onset of high temperatures that reach the mid-90s and noticeable vineyard stress, which can appear in the form of dropped tendrils, stalled growth, and hot, droopy leaves.

More and more vineyards, meanwhile, are being established in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley at a rate similar to that seen in Oregon. The need for water in this semi-arid region is palpable, but unlike in the States, there's little competition for the stuff: Water rights are shared and managed by local municipalities.

"Sustainability is a big focus here in the Okanagan," says Rebecca Mikulic, Vice President of vineyard-management firm Earlco Vineyards. Her team is currently working with water-saving technologies like soil-moisture monitors and rain meters, which sync with irrigation systems to minimize water waste. Mikulic also credits Regulated Deficit Irrigation (RDI)—a relatively new player in the grape-growing industry—for stressing minimal irrigation prior to the ripening period. It directly opposes the Old World practice of stressing vines just before harvest, but it's offering positive results in studies by institutions like the University of California, Davis, and Washington State University.

Back in the Willamette Valley, there's room for optimism. Bellingar paints a positive picture of the region 50 years from now: one with higher yields, earlier harvests, and cool-climate varieties planted higher up in the foothills of nearby mountain ranges. "In the 1980s, we were considered to be on the marginal northern edge of viticulture," he says. "So as the climate warms, perhaps we move more into the viticultural sweet spot." ❧



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by Randy Caparoso

PHOTO: HVOENOK VIA ADOBE STOCK

Preparation Is Key

THE WINE INDUSTRY MUST ADAPT TO THE CHANGING ECONOMY

A NIELSEN REPORT from July 2019 showed that wine sales in the U.S. had increased by just 0.9% over the previous year, and according to SipSource depletion data, on-premise wine sales declined by 2.3% between September 2018 and September 2019. Why should statistics like this matter? Clearly, it appears that the wine industry as a whole is experiencing an inexorable shift, and for restaurant wine buyers, it only makes sense to plan for the future accordingly.

In his 2020 “State of the U.S. Wine Industry” report, Rob McMillan, the founder and Executive Vice President of the Silicon Valley Bank Wine Division, makes this overarching statement about restaurant wine sales: “Retiring baby boomers are slowing down their spending and alcohol consumption as they age.” Keep in mind that the median boomer is slated to reach the standard retirement age of 66 in 2021 and that their generation possesses 70% of the disposable income and more than 50% of the wealth in the United States. Every high-end restaurant’s bread-and-butter customer base will inevitably start to melt away.

In the past, of course, new generations have taken the place of the aging ones—

but things are different this time around: Millennials are currently spending far less on consumer goods than Gen Xers and boomers did at the same age. Explains McMillan, “Frugal hedonism has overtaken our younger drinking cohort, and they don’t want to pay restaurant markups. They know they can buy a bottle of wine at a store for less.” Furthermore, based on statistical analysis, McMillan surmises that “restaurant trends are reinforcing that wine is behind the curve in adapting to the new customer” compared to other alcoholic beverage categories, noting that premium-tier wine “is priced so far above cocktails today that [its producers] lose pours to spirits” as well as craft beer.

As restaurateurs, we really don’t look to the retail market for cues, but here’s a big one anyway: The Charles Shaw wine famously known as “Two-Buck Chuck” recently returned to Trader Joe’s stores in California. The last time we saw an actual \$2 price on a wider scale was during the post-9/11 downturn, when the American wine industry was in a state of acute oversupply—as it is now. This means that all retail consumers, not just millennials, will once again become accustomed to rock-bottom prices on far more products than

just Two-Buck Chuck—and those expectations will extend to restaurants as well.

Here are some brief suggestions on how to prepare for the implications of this rapidly changing economic climate:

- By-the-glass sales are higher than ever, but this is not the time to increase markups on glasses in order to make up for sinking bottle sales. To compete with other restaurants, it makes sense to find unique and appealing glass selections and mark them lower, rather than higher, than before.
- Recent economic reports show that women control more than 50% of the personal wealth in the U.S. That number is projected to increase in the coming decades, so think seriously about how the growing purchasing power of women—regardless of their age—should affect decisions related to your merchandising and selections.
- Adopt a new mantra for your business that you can instill in your employees. One example you’re welcome to borrow is “fair and friendly”—that is, if you believe in reader-friendly wine lists with fair prices. But whatever you decide, don’t find yourself left behind! **SJ**

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Here Comes the Neighborhood

DENVERITES ARE DRINKING BETTER THAN EVER AT LOW-KEY LOCAL HAUNTS

WHAT DEFINES A world-class drinking town? In my view, it's one where exceptional beverage programs can be found not just in upscale establishments but on every corner at every price point, supported by locals with a breadth of knowledge and a depth of enthusiasm for adventure. From internationally renowned cocktail bars to beloved dives with staggering whiskey collections to the taprooms of some 150 craft breweries, Denver has long qualified for the title in many respects. Its one weakness has been a humdrum wine scene that limited enophiles to high-end dining destinations with lists as expensive as they were extensive. But over the past few years, that's finally begun to change, thanks to the post-recession rise of the neighborhood place.

With young creatives moving here in droves from the cost-prohibitive coasts, the nationwide downshift taken by the hospitality industry toward smaller, more casual venues in underserved (read: cheaper) parts of town turned out to be a good thing for Mile High City restaurateurs. Between their lower overhead and a growing audience of grateful neighbors, they had more freedom to experiment while carving a niche for themselves—and the result is a citywide trove of hidden gems with wine lists as exciting as their beer and cocktail selections.

I've featured some of them in past columns, but just to name a few I haven't, there's The Plimoth, a contemporary bistro where you might score a Chardonnay-Turbiana blend from Lugana or a Swiss Pinot Noir to accompany your rabbit roulade or lamb crépinettes. There's 12 @ Madison, where you could follow a mezcal, aquavit, and smoked-kumquat "Margarita" with a bottle of pét-nat Trouseau from Ballard Canyon and a plate of buckwheat "breakfast ravioli" with bacon, jam, and a quail egg in orange beurre blanc. And Somebody People, a funky vegan hot spot with a passion for low-intervention producers like the Veneto's Le Vigne de Alice and Rioja's Tentenublo as well as a wink-wink penchant for retro quenchers like the Screwdriver and the Greyhound.

One of the newest notables is Restaurant Olivia. Like his partners, Heather Morrison and executive chef Ty Leon, co-owner Austin Carson is an alumnus of longtime New French favorite Mizuna, where he earned a reputation for experimental mixology. Now, at their cozy Italian spot in Washington Park, he's pouring the likes of tomato-, basil-, and balsamic-flavored Caprese Negronis and a wild twist on limoncello that's made with Meyer lemon pulp as well as zest; combined with pistachio- and vanilla-infused fino Sherry; and finally milk washed and strained to remarkably elegant effect. Wine Director Rocco McKeel, meanwhile, has assembled a lovely Old World-centric list that includes everything from Gusborne Brut by the glass to a vertical of Fontanafredda Riserva. Not too shabby for a corner joint. **ST**



PHOTO: JONI SCHRANTZ

Restaurant Olivia chef-owner Ty Leon's focaccia and veal Milanese.

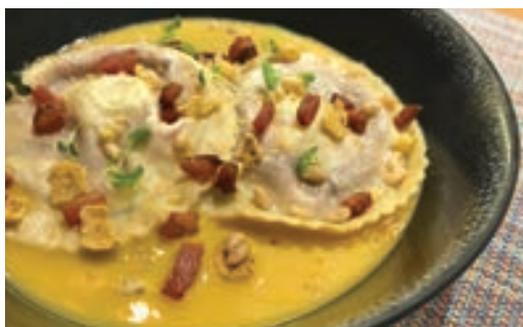


PHOTO: RUTH TOBIAS

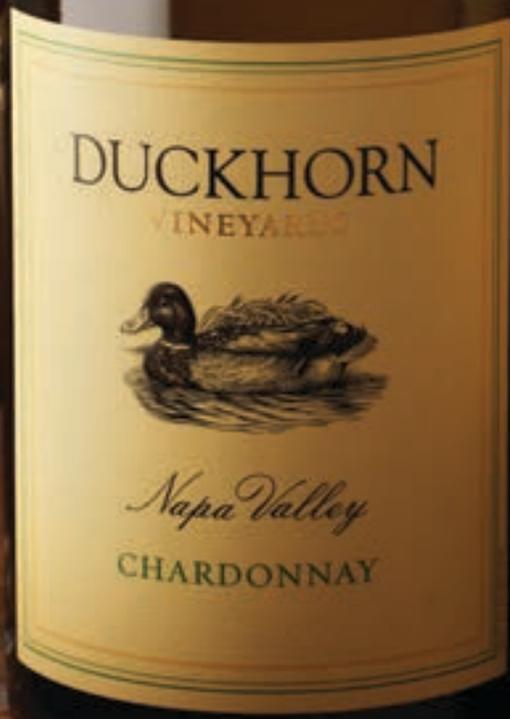
The "breakfast ravioli" (as it's unofficially known) at 12 @ Madison incorporates buckwheat dough, bacon lardons, a quail egg, and stone-fruit jam.



Restaurant Olivia's signature Caprese Negroni is infused with tomato, basil, and aged balsamic.

PHOTO: THE DENVER DISH

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Michael Spycher is the master cheesemaker for Gourmino Gruyère.



PHOTOS: TOM TRASCHELL

A Salute to the Swiss

ARE THE SWISS the world's best cheesemakers? I can't prove it, but I've certainly thought it. While the range of products is narrower than what's made in France and Italy, the quality of what Switzerland exports is consistently high. Many of the cheeses are still made with raw milk, and the practice of transhumance—taking livestock up into the mountains during spring and summer to graze on fresh pasture—persists.

Switzerland's cheesemaking prowess has long been on display at the internationally respected World Champion Cheese Contest, where a Swiss victor has been named in five of the past eight competitions. (Gourmino Gruyère has won twice.) The country's success extends to domestic cheese counters, where demand for its products is booming: Specialty distributors now offer a mind-boggling array of fine Swiss cheeses, many of which didn't exist two decades ago.

The turning point arrived in 1999, when

the collapse of the government-sanctioned Swiss Cheese Union—which for decades controlled what cheesemakers could produce, resulting largely in Emmentaler, Gruyère, and Sbrinz—launched a revolution. After it folded, innovation was no longer discouraged, effectively releasing cheesemakers from their chains. The resulting creativity has been something to watch.

If you still think of Swiss cheese as the grainy slice on your deli sandwich, here are four selections that will change your mind forever. On a cheese board, they offer abundant possibilities in terms of wine pairings, from Riesling to Madeira.

Heublumen (raw cow's milk): After they're coated with hay and grasses, these young wheels mature for four months—a treatment that lends an herbaceous, alfalfa-like scent to the golden interior. Look for notes of buttered biscuit and toasted almond as well as a seductive finish of sweet cream.

Moser Screamer (cow's milk): An unusual style for Switzerland, this 5-ounce triple-cream disk has a thin, bloomy rind and an interior akin to whipped salted butter. Aromas of mushroom and crème fraîche make this little guy more compelling than most members of this popular niche.

Vallée Brebidoux (raw sheep's milk): Made with the milk of Basque sheep recently introduced to the Swiss Alps, this stunning 7-pound wheel is like a small, super-luscious Raclette. The silky, supple interior smells like roasted peanuts and melts on the tongue.

L'Etivaz (raw cow's milk): Switzerland's first AOC (appellation-controlled) cheese is a large wheel—up to 80 pounds—made only between May 10 and October 10, when the cows are on alpine pastures. It resembles Gruyère, but with more Brazil-nut aroma, more intensity, and more length. **SJ**

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*The vinhas velhas (old vines) of
Cima Corgo in the Douro region.*

As Below, So Above

AN ATTEMPT TO DEMYSTIFY THE LORE OF **OLD VINES**

story and photos by Shane McGoey

THE FOLLOWING IS an oft-regurgitated axiom in the world of wine: “Old vines yield fewer grapes, but the grapes they do yield have more concentrated flavors.” Again and again we see vine age cited as a determining factor of a given wine’s quality, yet the reasoning behind this theory can at times seem largely speculative and anecdotal.

For more perspective on the matter, I sought the input of an enologist, a geologist, three winemakers, and a biochemist. Their responses invited a whole lot more discussion than I’d bargained for, taking the form of, among other things, academic empiricism and meditations on vinification and viticulture that were shaped in part by experience and personality.

The inquiry began with Scott McLean, a winemaker and WSET diploma holder who most recently served as cellar master for Gramercy Cellars in Washington. He spent the first half of last year’s harvest in Portugal with Douro Valley producer Niepoort, scaling the precipitously steep vineyards and collecting a smattering of grapes from old vines (known as *vinhas velhas*) ranging from 40 to 100 years old. “Why in the world would anyone plant anything [there]?” McLean mused. “The amount of effort that went into constructing the terraces and planting the vineyards . . . is mind-boggling.”

Having long been exposed to the evenly spaced vertical-shoot positioning that dominates New World vineyards, McLean summarized what he’d encountered in the Douro—lack of trellising, random vine training, intermixing of grape varieties—as “anarchy,” albeit anarchy with purpose. “I think for any winery working with old

vines, which grape varieties make up the vineyard is sort of beside the point,” McLean says. “The vineyard location, vine age, and other physical characteristics are more important.”

The region’s soil is notoriously rocky, which is good for drainage and, ultimately, for the vines, as their root systems are forced to venture deeper in search of water. These conditions induce each plant to produce its choicest fruit . . . or do they?

I posed that question to Dr. Barry Cameron, a Canadian geologist and an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He lectures on terroir, which he defines as “the complete physical environment of the grapevine, including bedrock geology, soils, climate, [and the] slope and aspect of the terrain.” Based partly on his own Italian expeditions from Tuscany to Mount Etna and the findings of researchers like Diego Tomasi, director of the Viticulture Research Center (VIT) in Conegliano, Cameron believes that wines with “the most interesting characteristics [come from] root systems that are dense and distributed throughout the soil profile.”

Quality can indeed be attributed to whether the vines are “water-stressed,” Cameron told me, as “limited water supply to the vines will restrict shoot and berry growth, which in turn leads to a desired grape composition in the production of high-quality red wines.” He does, however, dispute the lower-yield aspect of the aforementioned axiom, citing recent research that suggests that the wider trunk circumference of older vines can actually increase production, as the vines are able to deliver



Cameron Winery owner/winemaker and Deep Roots Coalition co-founder John Paul with his cat, Guido, in Oregon’s Willamette Valley.

more nutrients to the grapes.

John Paul, owner/winemaker at Cameron Winery in Oregon’s Willamette Valley, concurred that “one of the most basic parts of terroir is precipitation—when it comes, how much there is.” Paul has a background in microbial and plant biochemistry and is also the co-founder of the Deep Roots Coalition, a collective of winemakers and growers who promote dry farming. By manipulating the conditions, “irrigation wipes out that very important signature of terroir” in the finished wine, Paul explained. **sj**

To read the full version of this story, visit sommjournal.com. For more on wines from the Douro Valley, see our Geographical Digest section on page 100.



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Malama Ka 'Aina

SHARING “RESPECT FOR THE LAND” AT WINE SPEAK PASO ROBLES

by Randy Caparoso

Randy Caparoso with Wine Speak Paso Robles co-founder Chuck Furuya, MS, partner of Hawaii's DK Restaurants.



MEMORIES OF THE third annual Wine Speak Paso Robles conference, held January 14–16, linger like the scented residue of a great wine drained from a glass.

According to co-founder Amanda Wittstrom-Higgins (who is also VP of Operations at Paso Robles' Ancient Peaks Winery), roughly 750 trade professionals and consumers attended the 2020 event, which featured wines from not just California but also select regions around the world.

One of the attendees was the owner of Santa Barbara's Two Wolves Wine, Alecia Moore—better known to music lovers around the world as Pink. Here's just a snippet from Moore's follow-up Instagram post, rhapsodizing on meeting guest speaker Madeline Triffon, MS: “[She] was the very first female Master Sommelier in the United States and for many a decade has been changing the game and making the world more beautiful. . . . I listened to these women speak today about their

mothers and grandmothers and how they were raised to be kind and to work hard and to pay it forward. I will leave you with [one] of Madeline's quotes from today's seminar . . . ‘Forget about everybody else, just be loyal to your best self, and what you know you are capable of.’”

For Wine Speak co-founder Chuck Furuya, MS, partner of Hawaii's DK Restaurants, one of the event's best moments was “seeing the sense of wonderment and pure joy on the face of a young assistant winemaker when tasting a Domaine Faury Condrieu, and then meeting [owner/grower/winemaker] Lionel Faury in person.” For another of the many young, talented sommeliers in attendance, Ariana Tsuchiya of Honolulu's Royal Hawaiian Hotel, it was “realizing that what you learn at Wine Speak isn't just about seminars, it's about what happens in between—like seeing Stephan Asseo [of L'Aventure Winery] and Emmanuel Kemiji [MS, of Miura Vineyards]

meet and form an instant bond right before our eyes [or] watching Lionel Faury break out of his shell and truly laugh while talking to sommelier Sang Hyun Mun [of Honolulu's Pacific Club] at the end of the night. . . . It's all these little moments that made me realize there is so much to be learned in the feeling of camaraderie.”

Zack Musick, head sommelier at Merriam's Hawaii, recalls standing in Epoch Estate Wines' historic Paderewski Vineyard and listening to winemaker Jordan Fiorentini explain, “We don't really care about the certifications—we are just doing what's right for the earth and for the vine.” Noting that it was a prime example of the Hawaiian concept of *malama ka 'aina* (“respect for the land”) at its best, he adds, “Just then I knew how relevant a wine region Paso Robles really is, and how special it was to be there!” ⁵¹

For another perspective on Wine Speak Paso Robles, see page 80.

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Don't Sell Wine: Make Connections

FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS AND REVENUE WILL FOLLOW

A PERVERSIVE MISCONCEPTION of sommeliers is that their job is to sell wine. Though it's true that their expertise can lead to high-value transactions, selling is really the last thing that they should be doing. If your goal is to sell, then your guests will sense that: Nobody wants to be seen as a walking caricature of a moneybag à la 1950s-era cartoons, and they instinctively reject the notion of being "sold to."

Our product is hospitality and, by extension, service. Though the concepts are related and often considered interchangeable, remember the significant distinction between the two. You've no doubt heard this quote from hospitality leaders such as Master Sommelier Bobby Stuckey: "Service is what you provide to a guest; hospitality is how you make them feel."

To foster positivity, remember: The dollars don't count, the relationships do. Sure, selling an expensive bottle is financially

rewarding and good for the ego; I myself have strutted around a restaurant cradling a big-ticket wine on occasion. However, you could be doing your business as well as your guests a gross disservice. Causing them to spend more than they intended, even unintentionally, is a surefire way to make them feel uncomfortable and alienated—which could result in the loss of potential return visits. In case you haven't noticed, people talk, and the word-of-mouth damage that spreads after a poor experience can be considerable. Conversely, exceptional hospitality could generate thousands of dollars in the equivalent of positive marketing, as people are eager to share the details of a stellar meal spent in your capable hands.

There is a beautiful elegance to forgetting the transaction and instead creating a meaningful connection. The most common question sommeliers are asked is: "What

do you recommend?" Any sommelier who immediately starts listing the names of wines clearly doesn't understand hospitality. This approach frustrates the heck out of me. Aside from the fact that I recommend the whole list—that's why I painstakingly selected every wine on it—my response will depend on what the guest likes. The best answer to the question, then, is to counter with your own query: Ask them about their preferences. Make them feel comfortable and assure them that they don't need to use complicated terminology to express their opinions. Once you have an idea of what they are interested in, then, and only then, can you provide appropriate recommendations.

In short, be their matchmaker—their wine yenta, if you will. If done correctly, the end result is a happy guest who has spent more, tipped better, and can't wait to shout about their great experience from the rooftops. **||**

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The Turbid Staple

LENDING SOME CLARIFICATION ON **HAZY IPAS** by Jessie Birschbach

ONCE UPON A TIME, actually not too long ago, beers that displayed any sort of cloudiness—with the exception of traditionally turbid wheat beers, saisons, hefeweizens, lambics, and witbiers—were considered a sure sign of laziness on the part of the brewer. Today, however, the hazy IPA (aka the juicy IPA, Vermont IPA, or New England IPA) has become a staple in taprooms that's celebrated for its murky appearance.

The style is said to have originated with The Alchemist's Heady Topper beer, which debuted in 2003. Brewer John Kimmich made the conscious decision to not filter or pasteurize the beer (what a rule breaker you are, John!), and the rest is clouded history.

Today, the Brewers Association's beer style guidelines define the hazy pale ale and hazy strong pale ale as having a high degree of cloudiness, medium-high to high hop aromas, low to medium perceived bitterness, low to medium malt aroma and flavor, and a silky or full mouthfeel.

So how does this pillowy and aromatic style achieve the haze that's caused such a craze? Well, that brings us to the science-y part of "Beer'd Science." There are a variety of different ingredients and methods that a brewer can use. Here are a few:

- The use of active protein, i.e. high-protein grist (ground malt or cereal) like oats, spelt, and wheat, to soften the mouthfeel and impart a hazy character
- A technique known as dry hopping, in which hop polyphenols and proteins combine to form what's

known as "colloidal haze" (hazy IPAs are often double dry hopped)

■ The use of medium- to low-flocculating yeast strains (flocculation refers to yeast cells' tendency to clump together). Lower-flocculating yeast is more likely to stay in suspension, and suspended yeast makes the beer appear hazy.

■ A lack of filtering in the brewing process, which makes a beer appear cloudier

I was lucky enough to connect with two incredibly talented Los Angeles-based brewers on a variety of topics, including their opinions on the hazy style. In fact, I was so jazzed by our conversations that we're featuring a full Q&A online. Go to sommjournal.com for the unabridged version, but meanwhile, here are two telling quotes:

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMPERIAL WESTERN



DEVON RANDALL

Brewmaster, *Imperial Western Beer Company* and *Arts District Brewing Company*

"I'm surprised you want to talk to me about them, because we don't treat hazies like the golden gods others do. I do recognize the hazy as a style, but what I have a problem with

is [when it starts to dominate brewers' attention at the expense of other styles]. I don't mind making it, but it's not my everyday beer."



PHOTO COURTESY OF THREE WEAVERS

ALEXANDRA NOWELL

Brewmaster, *Three Weavers Brewing Company*

"We just released a hazy IPA called Cloud City. I was curious about the trend and wondered if it would hold on, but it has, and I think that's because there's so much variety within the style itself. It's really helped to emphasize how delicate beer is too. That being said, not everyone is doing it right. . . . A lot of people chalk [that] up to lazy brewing, but there's actually a lot more intent that goes into producing a hazy IPA than, for instance, a West Coast IPA, because there's this concept of stable haze [meaning a beer maintains a consistently cloudy appearance]. . . . Brewing tradition has led us to believe that clear beer is better, [but] consumers have pulled us in the opposite direction based on what they're buying." *SI*

Jessie Birschbach is a Certified Cicerone and substandard homebrewer. She's also still learning, so if you have a suggestion or comment, please contact her at jabs@sommjournal.com.

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FIVE MINUTES WITH ...

Angela Gargano

WINE & SPIRITS DIRECTOR AT TRIPLE CREEK RANCH, DARBY, MT

by Michelle Metter

I MET ANGELA GARGANO last November at SommCon San Diego, where she challenged me to strive for more diversity within not only the ranks of our educators but those we feature in our content as well. She is not shy with her feedback, and those around her—including me—are better for it. We recently touched base to chat about her move to Montana, her approach to leadership, and more.

Q: You've worked in many facets within the industry: as a sommelier, as an entrepreneur, and in management positions such as your current role as Wine & Spirits Director for Triple Creek Ranch. Tell me a bit about the path that led you to Montana.

After selling my business of over a decade, I decided it was time for a new adventure. I'd fallen in love with Montana a few years earlier, and when I visited Triple Creek Ranch, it felt like home. It's a place that's filled with natural beauty, gorgeous art, and wildlife. We're in a very remote location on the border of the largest wilderness area in the Lower 48, which only added to the adventure. Plus, I have two horses and they have lots of space to roam!

Q: What is your approach to curating the type of wine and spirits list that's expected of a Relais & Châteaux property?

I think it's all about relationships. It's my goal to curate a list that rivals any in larger markets, and that can be challenging given our remote location. I find that we often aren't taken as seriously as wine programs in those markets. I travel frequently and take time to meet the winemakers whose



wines I admire in order to cultivate the kind of lasting relationships necessary for being in the loop when allocated wines become available. Having worked several harvests, I think that there's nothing more valuable to building relationships than getting my hands on the soil and seeing the winemaking firsthand.

Q: Tell me about your leadership style.

I believe in empowerment. I try to hire smart, hard-working people who have a sense of hospitality and then try to get out of their way. I believe that you can teach wine but that genuine hospitality is something you're born with. I'll always choose the authentic person whose wine knowledge may not be as strong over the wine geek who doesn't understand gracious hospitality.

Q: What do you hope to contribute as a new advisor to SommCon?

I hope to be an advocate for greater diversity in the world of wine and at SommCon. Specifically, I'd like to help contribute to SommCon's ongoing efforts to raise up the voices of women and people of color in wine. I think it's imperative that we see more representation in all facets of the industry.

Q: You have ten minutes and one glass of wine. What are you drinking and who are you with?

I'm with my big (and sometimes loud) Sicilian family and drinking a glass of Bedrock Wine Co.'s Evangelho Heritage field blend: It's delicious, made by good people, and comes from a historic vineyard that I care about preserving.

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If you would like to be considered for an upcoming Q&A, contact Michelle Metter at metter@fastforwardevents.com.

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A NEW SYSTEM CONCEIVED IN OREGON'S ROCKS DISTRICT
AIMS TO ADDRESS THE STRESS OF EXTREME WEATHER

story and photo by Mark Stock

EXTREME CONDITIONS CAN produce breathtaking wines. Testimony comes from all over the globe, from Listán Negro grown on ever-windy Lanzarote—the easternmost of the Canary Islands—to vibrant Sauvignon Blanc grown in the high-altitude vineyards of Bolivia.

In The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater AVA on the Oregon side of the Walla Walla Valley, winegrowing is often a dramatic affair: Intense summers with daytime highs often reaching the triple digits give way to merciless winters with lows dipping well into the negatives. It's an unforgiving environment, but the results—expressed most often through one-of-a-kind takes on classic Rhône varieties—are well worth the struggle.

SJR Vineyard was established in 2007 by Steve Robertson and his family, and in its relatively short lifespan, the site has produced some remarkable wines. Planted mostly to Syrah amid the appellation's signature cobble-strewn soil, SJR is harvested by the family's own label, Delmas, as well as esteemed fellow Rocks producers like Force Majeure. (Wine critic Jeb Dunnuck recently awarded Force Majeure's 2016 SJR Vineyard Syrah a perfect 100 points.)

Such results, however, don't come easily. "We have had to cut down the entirety of the vineyard due to freeze three times," says Steve's daughter Brooke, who serves as Director of Viticulture at Delmas. She's also a viticulturist for Les Collines Vineyard on the Washington side of the appellation.

The brutal winter of 2016–2017 presented Robertson with an opportunity of sorts. An estimated 70% of the vineyard's buds perished due to extreme cold, and according to Brooke, "out of tragedy came this idea." Initially, several Rocks growers had buried their vine canes to protect them from the potentially lethal weather,

but Brooke ruled this approach unsustainable; not only was it costly and labor intensive, it proved somewhat inconsistent in terms of fruit quality.

She instead sought a method that would

we can bury the entire head plus the first two to three buds on each shoot, thereby ensuring complete safety."

In the summer, she relies on strategies like 9-foot row spacing and careful spur



The Mini-Head-Trained System keeps this head-trained Syrah vine low to the ground while providing a trellis for support.

balance the insulation gained from vines being set low—and buried in the winter—with the support of a trellis system. (The latter is especially crucial for Syrah, a variety known to slouch.) The result is something Brooke calls the Mini-Head-Trained (MHT) System, which she says "can basically be summed up as a head-trained vine with a trellis."

"We build the head of the vine as low as we can go; this way, we eliminate the use of burial canes altogether," she explains. "By keeping the vine head low,

positioning; these allow for vital shade and ventilation as well as balanced sunlight, resulting in uncrowded, sunburn-free clusters. "All of these things lead to less passes in the vineyard, less canopy management, less fruit-thinning needs, and less manipulation of the vine on the whole," she says.

After the MHT System proved successful in trials, fellow growers have followed suit in adopting it. "It's my personal goal that the vines currently planted at SJR will outlive me," Brooke adds. "The MHT may just get us there." ❧

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Smoothed Edges

TASTING SAUVIGNON BLANC FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD AT **CONCOURS MONDIAL DU SAUVIGNON**

THERE IS NO better time to gauge the quality and stylistic range of Sauvignon Blanc than during the only international wine competition devoted solely to the variety: the Concours Mondial du Sauvignon, which unfolded in Touraine, France, in early March. While the lion's share of the wines hail from France, Austria, and Italy, 21 other countries are also represented at the Concours, making it a one-stop shop for Sauvignon Blanc from lesser-known regions as well as world-famous ones.

For example, California made a strong showing, as did Central and Eastern Europe with wines from Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia—a small number of which received awards. All in all, entries from 15 countries merited recognition from myself and 73 fellow jury members.

Successfully identifying the origin of a Sauvignon Blanc requires relying on a full arsenal of sensory information related to

aroma, flavor, texture, temperature, and structure. The terpenes and thiols that the grape contains as a result of picking and winemaking decisions make for very distinct, pronounced aromas. But as Nick Jackson, MW, points out in his recently released reference guide *Beyond Flavour: The Indispensable Handbook to Blind Wine Tasting*, a blind taster must look beyond the obvious to succeed in making the right call.

Jackson characterizes Sauvignon Blanc by its acidity, describing it as spiky or jagged so as to seemingly prick the inside of the mouth. He makes one exception for high-quality Loire Valley wines, which represented almost 40% of the 1,110 expressions that appeared at the Concours. “Top-quality Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé with limited yields tend to smooth out the rough edges of this rather aggressive acidity and make the wine more mellow,” he writes.

In addressing the wines of the Loire

Valley, Bordeaux, New Zealand, Chile, and the U.S., Jackson notes that it's becoming increasingly difficult to generalize about style; climate change and copycat winemaking are blurring the distinctions of what were once regional benchmarks, forcing bodies like the Institute of Masters of Wine to re-evaluate their blind-tasting exams. That said, wines from the Loire still receive praise for being chalky and flinty, while Bordeaux is described as “becoming a little ‘sweaty’-smelling quite easily.” His characterization of Chilean Sauvignon Blanc was plainly demonstrated in a flight I tasted during the competition: The wines showed hard acids, overt pyrazines, and restrained citrus.

At the top of my own list of Sauvignon Blanc—producing regions, meanwhile, is Südsteiermark, Austria. With luscious ripe fruit, mineral expressiveness, and finesse, its wines are not to be missed. **SI**

PHOTO: PRZEMISLAW ICIAK VIA ADOBE STOCK

A view of vineyards in South Styria (Südsteiermark), Austria. The author is a fan of the region's Sauvignon Blanc.

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Back to School

AN ALL-STAR PANEL MAKES THE CASE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION AT A NAPA EVENT HOSTED BY NONPROFIT **WINE WOMEN**

story and photos by Deborah Parker Wong

WHEN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

Wine Women recently brought together a group of female wine professionals for a no-holds-barred discussion on the opportunities, challenges, and costs of continuing wine education, the goal was to serve up inspiration on tap. I served as moderator for the panel, which was held at Naked Wines in Napa and featured bottlings—many of which were made by women—from owner Ryan O’Connell’s portfolio.

Wine Women Education Director Olga Mosina assembled a dynamic group of speakers who hold certifications and degrees from the world’s most prestigious wine programs. In addition to sharing the requirements and expenses related to their continuing education, the panelists unanimously agreed that they’ve received a high return on their investment through their successful careers.

C. Mondavi & Family CFO Claire Hobday, a recent graduate of Sonoma State University’s Executive MBA program in wine business, has held senior finance roles in three countries: England, New Zealand,

and the U.S., where she realized that an MBA “was a prerequisite to advancement as a finance professional.” As a relative newcomer to the California wine industry, Hobday also wanted to expand her network, and she found ample opportunity to do so. “I embraced the mindset of a C-level executive, and [as a result], I was perceived by prospective employers as a C-level candidate,” she said.

As for Certified Sommelier Sylvie Tannhauser, training with the Court of Master Sommeliers has, in her words, “given [her] the skills and credibility [she needs] to train and manage the hospitality team at Cakebread Cellars.” As Assistant Tasting Room Manager, Tannhauser conducts weekly staff training on wine theory, tasting, and customer service while seeking additional venues for her own education: She’s currently pursuing her Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) Level 3 and Society of Wine Educators (SWE) Certified Wine Educator certifications.

Wine Business Monthly Managing Editor Erin Kirschenmann, meanwhile, said she’s



Nakedwines.com People Manager Seanna Ochoa and Portfolio Manager Laura Bacharach with Elizabeth Smith, Ph.D., of the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone.

“making up for the business classes [she] didn’t take while pursuing a journalism degree in college” as she works toward earning a WSET diploma. Among her major takeaways so far is that, “in any profession, you’ve got to understand how your decisions and actions impact the bottom line,” she explained. “Let’s face it—money talks.”

Finally, Balkis Johnson, a full-time student in the advanced viticulture program at Napa Valley College, shared her ambitions to start her own brand. She recalled that when she moved to Napa Valley, she “had to learn the language of wine,” so she enrolled in the Wine Industry Sales Education (WISE) Academy and adapted her skill set to include winery sales and customer service. “It gave me credibility,” said Balkis of her training, noting that she has since pursued her Certified Specialist of Wine certification from the SWE as well. For more information on upcoming Wine Women events, visit winewomen.net. ❧



Pictured from left to right are panelists Erin Kirschenmann, Claire Hobday, Sylvie Tannhauser, and Balkis Johnson. Not pictured: Deborah Parker Wong.

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Gillian Ballance, MS (second from left), with the Miami scholarship winners: Advanced Sommelier Mladen Stoev, Assistant Food & Beverage Director at Bay Colony Golf Club in Naples, FL; Kirsten Scott, Beverage Director at the Boca Raton Resort & Club, a Waldorf Astoria Resort; and Jazmin Masee, sommelier at Casa D'Angelo in Aventura, FL.



The Final Stop

TREASURY WINE ESTATES' LUXICON TOUR FINISHES STRONG IN MIAMI

story by Irene Moore / photos by Benjamin Rusnak

ON A BRISK, sunny day in January against the breathtaking backdrop of the Miami skyline, Treasury Wine Estates' 2019 Luxicon tour held its final event at The Rusty Pelican in Key Biscayne after making stops in Washington, D.C.; San Francisco; Los Angeles; Chicago; and Atlanta.

wine professionals through the Luxicon program, adding that she and her colleagues “take pride in giving back to the community.”

Ballance—who co-hosted the lively Techniques of Tasting seminar with fellow MS Juan Gomez of The Breakers Palm Beach—commenced the morning's proceedings by remarking, “We're looking at Florida's finest right here!” (A contingent of sommeliers from the Caribbean had also flown in for the event.) Both then referenced the Court of Master Sommeliers Deductive Tasting Grid as they sought to advise the attendees on what should be a “very personal” approach to tasting, according to Ballance. “You have to find your own organoleptic style,” she added. “In the blind examination, see what comes to you naturally. You can pass the test by reduction—where the wine is from, the vintage, even the vineyard.”

Gomez concurred: “A blind tasting is

about eliminating what you don't know by going through the process. By observing the concentration of color in the glass, I eliminate thin-skin types,” he said. “Also look at the rim color—young wines don't have rim color. On the palate, Old World wines are more tart; New World wines are bigger and more fruit-forward.”

At the conclusion of the seminar, the sommeliers were tasked with blind tasting four Cabernet Sauvignons in a timed session. As their scores were checked, they moved to the adjacent ballroom for a walkaround tasting of limited-production wines in Treasury Wine Estates' portfolio, including Penfolds Grange. Other notable selections hailed from Stags' Leap Winery, Beringer Vineyards, Beaulieu Vineyard, Chateau St. Jean, and Etude.

A trio of winners ultimately walked away with \$1,200 scholarships: Kirsten Scott, Beverage Director of the Boca Raton Resort & Club, a Waldorf Astoria Resort; Jazmin Masee, sommelier at Casa d'Angelo in Aventura, Florida; and Advanced Sommelier Mladen Stoev, Assistant Food & Beverage Director at Bay Colony Golf Club in Naples, Florida. **STJ**



Master Sommeliers Gillian Ballance and Juan Gomez lead the blind-tasting seminar during the Luxicon tour's final stop in Miami, FL.

Gillian Ballance, MS, who serves as Treasury Wine Estates' Senior Education Manager—Americas, noted that the company had given \$77,000 in scholarships to

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There's Something About Oregon

A SAN FRANCISCO-BASED MASTER CLASS EXPLORES WHAT MAKES THE STATE SO SUCCESSFUL

by Randy Caparoso

AFTER BEING DEEMED a “region of discovery” for years, Oregon is attracting such a high caliber of attention and acclaim for its winemaking that it required not one, not two, but *three* Masters to adequately capture its scope during a recent master class focused on the state.

Held in San Francisco and attended by 100 trade professionals and members of the media, the event—aply titled “3 Masters, 2 Varieties, 1 State”—was sponsored by the Oregon Wine Board. Lending his organizational expertise was one member of the trio, Master Sommelier Evan

Goldstein, on behalf of his wine-education and PR firm Full Circle Wine Solutions, Inc. Fellow MS Chris Tanghe, the Seattle-area Chief Instructor for the Guild of Sommeliers, and Oregon Wine Board Education Manager Bree Stock, MW, joined Goldstein on the panel to offer their own perspectives on Oregon's rise.

To emphasize just how far the state has come, Goldstein noted that when he and his mother, chef Joyce Goldstein, opened groundbreaking restaurant Square One in San Francisco in 1984, “Oregon was just getting started, Pinot Noir was not that

popular, Pinot Gris was nascent, and there were few wineries to speak of.” Today, by contrast, “there are 793 wineries, 503 of them in the northern Willamette Valley,” Goldstein added, making sure to acknowledge some of the region's original producers, among them Adelsheim, Amity, Bethel Heights, The Eyrie Vineyards, Knudsen Erath, and Ponzi.

Goldstein also noted that “Oregon wine is bucking the trend in terms of the flat growth currently experienced by the rest of the American wine industry.” According to Nielsen data gathered from December



PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON WINE BOARD

The Oregon-focused “3 Masters, 2 Varieties, 1 State” master class in San Francisco, CA, was moderated by Chris Tange, MS; Evan Goldstein, MS; and Bree Stock, MW.



Eight of the 15 Oregon wines served at the master class.

2018 to December 2019, the state is still far outpacing the sales growth of other wine regions, largely due to its increasing availability. (It also bears mentioning that, according to the Oregon Wine Board, the average price per bottle of Oregon wine has been higher than California's since 2015.)

Tanghe, meanwhile, discounted the misconception that Oregon can be a one-trick pony: Despite the emphasis on Pinot Noir; with more than 20,000 acres planted, another 81 grape varieties are grown across the state's 19 AVAs. Data gathered by the Oregon Wine Board found that plantings of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Syrah have increased by over 20%; Chardonnay, Albariño, and Viognier are also on the rise, and over 30 producers are making wines with Gamay.

It goes without saying that these diverse bottlings have captured the attention of not only this trio of Masters but also forward-thinking consumers and sommeliers the world over. See the sidebar for a few highlights from the event's featured lineup of 11 Pinot Noirs and four Chardonnays, all of which embodied Oregon's consummate acid-driven style. Regarding future events led by the Oregon Wine Board, Stock, Goldstein, and Tange will visit Seattle in October for a master class on Southern Oregon wines. *sj*

Hiyu 2018 Halo Spring Ephemeral, Columbia Gorge Lean, tart, and edgy yet silky, this Pinot Noir was co-fermented with 100% whole-cluster Pinot Gris and shows nuances of herbs and leather. Stock described it as "very experimental," adding that it "encapsulates the terroir of the Columbia Gorge. . . . You can pick up the skin contact and whole-cluster character in the glass, but there is also a sense of place coming through a minimalist winemaking lens."

Maison Roy & Fils 2017 Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley Stock commented that this plummy, juicy, and distinctly savory cuvée—which features fruit sourced from multiple sub-AVAs—reflects "a second generation's approach to whole cluster-style Pinot Noir winemaking while also supporting Oregon's growing organic and Biodynamic movement." (In this case, that "second generation" is represented by Jared Etzel, son of Beaux Frères' Mike Etzel.) According to the Oregon Wine Board, the state accounts for 52% of the nation's Demeter-certified Biodynamic vineyard acreage.

Coeur de Terre 2017 Heritage Reserve Estate Pinot Noir, McMinnville Very much a "sommelier's wine," with a tense and acid-driven yet dense structure supported by earth-toned flavors of dark fruit. "Although this vineyard is located in the foothills of the Coast Range, it is a warm site because it sits on a west-facing slope sheltered from the impact of Van Duzer Corridor winds," Stock said. "This plus the thin, volcanic Nekia series soil tend to create small, tight, thick-skinned clusters, contributing to this wine's dark color . . . and deep and powerful structure."

Chehalem Winery 2017 Corral Creek Vineyard Pinot Noir, Chehalem Mountains Notes of lush fruit, sun-dried cherry, coffee, and spice are encased in a sturdy, fleshy, medium-full body. Stock attributed this wine's character to the AVA's loess soils, which "are nutrient-poor and dusty, creating a distinctive graphite character on the mid-palate and structured, drying tannins." The warm winds that blow in from the northeast and the Columbia River Gorge, meanwhile, "slightly dehydrate the grapes" and, as a result, impart "some dried-fruit qualities," she added.

Evening Land 2017 Summum Chardonnay, Yamhill-Carlton A strikingly multifaceted nose of honeyed toast, apricot, citrus, and distinctive minerality leads into a tart, edgy, and finely textured medium body. "Chardonnay is a winemaker's wine, but many Oregon producers are trying to pick based on acid levels to avoid having to manipulate it in the cellar," Stock said. "Summum is primarily from Old Wente and Dijon Clone 76 selections, but the end result is as much about the wind, soil, and the Stockinger oak barrels that the wine is raised in [as it is about the fruit]."

Barrel Benefactors

THE PRIVATE BARREL AUCTION OF WASHINGTON WINES RETURNS TO WOODINVILLE IN AUGUST

PHOTOS: SASKIA POTTER



Bob Tomberg signs up for the Barrel Series.

OPEN EXCLUSIVELY TO members of the trade on August 13 at Novelty Hill–Januik Winery in Woodinville, Washington, the sixth annual Private Barrel Auction of Washington Wines will feature over 35 one-of-a-kind auction lots from premier wineries in an effort to “raise the acclaim of Washington wine across the country,” says Auction of Washington Wines Executive Director Jamie Peha, who adds that the event is geared toward “a trade audience who wants to buy something unique for their top clients.”

The Private Barrel Auction distinguishes itself in part through its Barrel Series, an annual collaboration that celebrates the relationships between growers and vintners. This year, Auction of Washington Wines co-chair John Bookwalter will join forces with Sagemoor Director of Vineyard Operations Kent Waliser and Vineyard Manager Lacey Lybeck of Sagemoor to create 25 cases of a signature wine in collaboration with students from Washington State University’s Viticulture and Enology Program.



Bob Betz, MW, consulting winemaker for Betz Family Winery.

“As a Washington winegrower and graduate of WSU, it gives me enormous pleasure each year to select the wine for the Private Barrel Auction. It is always from older vines and from extremely limited production,” says Rick Small, owner/Director of Production at Woodward Canyon Winery. “That the revenue raised from this special wine comes full circle back to WSU’s Viticulture and Enology Program is just icing on the cake!”

Supporting the program can have broader implications for the industry: For example, a recent smoke-taint study led by assistant professor Tom Collins will, in his words, help future generations of vintners “understand how the chemical composition of grapes changes after being exposed to smoke on the vine” and how potential issues in the resulting wines can be mitigated.

Serving as the auction’s honorary chair this year is highly lauded wine writer Karen MacNeil, author of *The Wine Bible*. “That top-notch wine can be made in Washington is no longer a question. What’s compelling now is to see how Washington’s winemakers are upping their game and making distinctive wines of ever-greater refinement, complexity, and personality,” MacNeil says.

Famed auctioneer Ursula Hermacinski, who will preside over the live bidding, refers to the “conviviality of the event” as “priceless”: “There is no other venue I can think of at which a member of the trade can taste, assess, and explore a vintage as expressed by some of Washington’s finest winemakers,” she continues. “The fact that one can then be the earliest adopter and actually purchase the wine is thrilling to see. My job is to . . . make the market for these unique wines, and the prices have risen each year, reflecting the mounting interest in securing them.”

In recognition of his contributions to the state’s wine industry, winemaker Mark McNeilly of Mark Ryan Winery has been selected by his peers and the Auction of Washington Wines board as the auction’s 2020 Honorary Vintner. “Sharing great Washington wines through the Private Barrel Auction is incredibly impactful—it reaches a large audience directly searching for what Washington has to offer,” Ryan says. “It’s extremely important to educate winemakers within Washington, and the direct influence of the Private Barrel Auction to WSU’s Viticulture and Enology Program is both effective and rewarding.” Mercer Family Estates, meanwhile, has been named the 2020 Honorary Grower and will participate in the Consumer Picnic and Barrel Auction, held at Chateau Ste. Michelle just an hour after the Private Barrel Auction ends. 

To register for the event, visit <https://auctionofwawines.org/events/private-barrel-auction-registration>.



Glenn Siegel of The Wine Spectrum places a bid.



Lane Hoss of Anthony's Restaurants and Rick Small of Woodward Canyon Winery bond during the auction.

A Recap of Last Year's Auction

- **Top buyers:** Total Wine & More, Joly Restaurant Group, and Anthony's Restaurants
- **Top lot:** Quilceda Creek, purchased by Total Wine & More for \$18,000
- **Amount raised:** \$301,000 (a 20% increase from the 2018 event). Over \$800,000 has been raised in five years, with all proceeds going toward the Washington State University Viticulture and Enology Program.
- **Twenty-five cases** of the 2019 Inaugural Private Barrel Auction Barrel Series wine, the 2018 Boushey Single Barrel Syrah crafted by growers Dick and Luanne Boushey and winemaker Jeff Lindsay-Thorsen of W.T. Vintners, will be released this fall in Woodinville, Washington.
- **The 2019 Vintners Blend** (by Chris Peterson of Avennia, Louis Skinner of Betz Family Winery, Jason Gorski of DeLille Cellars, and Canlis Wine Director Nelson Daquip) will be available starting this spring at Metropolitan Market, Barking Frog, Canlis, Purple Cafe, Ray's Boathouse, and Costco Wholesale. An additional ten magnums (1.5-liter bottles) were sold during the live auction to Joly Restaurant Group.



Trying Their Duck

FIVE SOMMELIERS EMBARK ON A FOWL-CENTRIC CHALLENGE COURTESY OF PITTSBURGH RESTAURANT SPORK

by Michelle Metter

WELCOME TO THE SOMM JOURNAL'S

newest column, Pairing Up, in which we ask a group of sommeliers from all over the country to pair a wine with a different signature dish. Under the most ideal conditions, sommeliers and chefs work in tandem to perfect the pairing process, making necessary adjustments to match the dish's flavor profile with a complementary wine; in turn, that wine will reveal new dimensions of its character through the lens of fat, heat, salt, and acid.

Sometimes, however, a more challenging task is presented, requiring sommeliers to draw on their expansive knowledge of varieties, terroir, and vintage to conceive a pairing without having actually tasted the dish. This time, the arbiter of that task is Pittsburgh restaurant Spork, whose most iconic dish is a French specialty known as *Canard à la Presse*, or pressed duck, that made its debut in the 1880s at *La Tour d'Argent* in Paris.

To make this complex and decadent dish, Spork executive chef Christian Frangiadis sources his ducks from fourth-generation duck farm Joe Jurgielewicz & Son, Ltd., in Berks County. After dry-aging them for more than two weeks, a process that imparts tenderness and robust flavors,



Executive chef Christian Frangiadis of Spork in Pittsburgh, PA.

he rubs the ducks with salt and mango-scented, lacto-fermented honey before roasting them for 30 minutes; next, the breast, leg, and thigh meat are carved and inserted into a 2-foot-tall weighted vintage press to release their precious juices. The thick mahogany juice and fat are then



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SPORK

added to a base of duck and veal stock reduction, Grand Marnier, Madeira, red Burgundy, shallots, lacto-fermented plum water and honey-and-koji water, and a large pat of butter.

At Spork, the dish is paired with Kutch Pinot Noir, an off-menu wine that in-house sommelier Olivia Lindstrom keeps on hand specifically for those who reserve the duck in advance. "Kutch made an initial impression on me because they are focused on minimal intervention [and] allowing the profiles of the grapes to showcase themselves through the wine," Lindstrom says, noting the producer's use of indigenous yeasts, native malolactic bacteria, and 100% neutral oak barrels.

She adds that the pairing "focuses first on the congruent savory flavor of the duck itself and the earthy and mushroom notes of the wine. The light, red-fruit flavors from the Pinot Noir highlight the nuanced sweetness and brightness of the [lacto-fermented honey marinade]. The duck is extremely rich; considering the fat, veal reduction, Grand Marnier, red Burgundy, and other ingredients in the sauce, I chose a wine that came from a cooler climate with acidity that could cut through such a complex dish."

We asked four more sommeliers for their pairing recommendations based solely on a description of the dish. Here's what they came up with:

PHOTO: SARAH GERRITY



Vanessa Cominsky
Beverage Manager, St. Anselm/STARR Restaurants, Washington, D.C.

Domaine Pierre Morey 2010 Meursault, Côte de Beaune, Burgundy, France "This expression delivers crisp citrus, ripe apricot, marjoram, toasted almond, and a bit of aged cheese with a supple, savory finish. Its driving acidity can accentuate the high-tone flavors of a rich dish like this, but that acidity is tempered by a bit of creaminess, bringing out the lacto-fermented components and the koji in this unique preparation."

PHOTO: JOSUE CASTRO



Brian Donegan
Sommelier, Studio at Montage Laguna Beach, CA

Cirillo 2012 1850 Ancestor Vine Grenache, Barossa Valley, South Australia "The deeply built richness of chef Frangiadis' Canard à la Presse calls for a wine with both aromatic intensity and an elegantly soft yet still weighty mouthfeel. Cirillo's 1850 Grenache has the complexity and texture necessary to pair with the duck and, crucially, to not overpower it. Its ripe fruit and savory qualities will both complement and contrast with the flavors developed during the dry-aging process as well as the fruity elements of mango, plum, and Grand Marnier."

PHOTO COURTESY OF MINIBAR



Jeremy Allen
General Manager and Sommelier, MiniBar Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA

Matthieu Barret Domaine du Coulet 2011 Brise Cailloux Cornas, Rhône Valley, France "Along with the notes of green and black peppercorn you can expect from the Northern Rhône, this wine also gives Dijon mustard and sauerkraut on the nose and herbs you'd find in sausage on the palate, as well as a spectrum of flavors from bright blackberry to bay leaf. Coming from vineyards that date back to the Romans, it's an assured and individualistic red that still acknowledges the weight of tradition."

PHOTO COURTESY OF CITYWINERY



Evan Danielson
Beverage Director and Sommelier, City Winery, Nashville, TN

Yalumba 2018 Barossa Bush Vine Grenache, Barossa Valley, South Australia "This is a beautiful rendition crafted from old-bush-vine Grenache in the Barossa Valley. I've been enjoying Australian wines more and more over the past couple of years, and this bottle is a great example of why. With lovely cherry, plum, peppercorn, and lifted perfume on the nose, it has an equally rich palate that could stand up nicely to the Canard à la Presse." §

**LOOMING THREATS ON
EUROPEAN WINES ARE
CRIPPLING OUR INDUSTRY**

TARIFFED

BY ERIK SEGELBAUM



Members of the US Wine Trade Alliance (USWTA) are pictured following their meeting with the Office of the United States Trade Representative to discuss the absolution of EU wine tariffs: From left to right are Chimene Macnaughton, USWTA Secretary; Richard Riddell, President of Well Oiled Wine Company; Erik Segelbaum, Chief Vinnovation Officer of SOMLYAY LLC; Robert Tobiassen, President of the National Association of Beverage Importers; Gabriele Bisio, General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer of Palm Bay International/Taub Family Selections; and Kevin Rapp, owner of Rapp Wine Import and Distribution.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG MACNAUGHTON/NEWYORK 90 PHOTOGRAPHY



Advanced Sommelier Erik Segelbaum, Chief Vinnovation Officer of SOMLYAY, stands in front of the office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, prior to a meeting with her trade staff.



his has already been an immensely difficult year for the hospitality industry, and we're barely through the first quarter. As it clamps down on the global economy with crushing results, COVID-19 is likely to be the nail in the coffin for thousands of wine industry-related businesses. However, that coffin was built by trade tariffs on European Union (EU) wines and the threat of more to come.

THE TALE OF TWO DISPUTES

Many people do not realize that there are two different disputes between the U.S. and the EU, both of which have led or could lead to retaliatory tariffs. First, there's the Digital Services Tax (or DST) which was recently initiated by France. On July 24, French President Emmanuel Macron signed a bill into law to impose a 3% levy on gross revenues generated from providing two categories of digital services in France: "digital interface" services and "targeted advertising" services. The DST applies only to companies that generate, from providing the taxable services, €750 million globally and €25 million in France, according to the United States Trade Representative (USTR) website. Even though the language of these tax laws didn't specifically indicate American companies, the provisions and revenue requirements did—to the point where the French dubbed it the GAFA tax (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon). The USTR then proposed a 100% tariff on Champagne specifically as a retaliatory measure. However, this

tariff was removed from consideration after Macron and U.S. President Donald Trump agreed to table the issue until 2021.

Second, and far more significant, is the Large Civil Aircraft (LCA) dispute, commonly referred to as the Airbus dispute. It's a complicated situation, but here are the basics: For 16 years, the U.S. has been making the case to the World Trade Organization (WTO) that the EU has been illegally subsidizing Airbus, creating an unfair trade advantage over American competitor Boeing. In late 2019, the WTO acknowledged the EU violation of global trade law and greenlit the U.S.'s imposition of a retaliatory measure. On the basis of that ruling, the U.S. initiated tariffs of 25% on all non-sparkling wine under 14% ABV in formats smaller than 2 liters from England, France, Spain, and Germany.

The tariffs went into effect with almost no public knowledge and with an immediacy that blindsided the wine industry. At the time of implementation, there were thousands of containers in shipment. Importers suddenly had to scramble to come up with tens of thousands of dollars per container, decimating any hopes they had of profitability for Q4, typically their most profitable time of year. So drastic and abrupt were these tariffs that some importers had to sell vehicles, take out massive loans, lay off employees, or even shutter their businesses altogether.

As Craig Demko, Western USA Sales Manager for Compagnie Médocaine des Grands Crus, explains, "My business is 99% Bordeaux and 1% Tokaji. The October [25%] tariffs were, quite simply, devastating. From the announcement of the tariffs, my business dropped 90% through the end of the year, and I haven't shipped a bottle yet in 2020. The uncertainty basically stopped business. I work with major customers who have just decided to wait and see and deplete inventory."

THE TWEETS HEARD 'ROUND THE WINE WORLD

In mid-January 2020, Twitter was abuzz with tweets from Trump and Macron stating that an agreement had been reached and that there would be no enforce-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIK SEGELBAUM

Members of the US Wine Trade Alliance during the "One America March" to the White House on February 9, 2020.

ment of either the DST or the counter-tariffs through the end of the year. The wine industry responded by breathing a misplaced sigh of relief. Though it was a temporary truce on a minor issue involving only one wine product, Champagne, many people thought they were celebrating the end of tariffs; they could not have been more wrong, as the 25% tariffs from the LCA were still in place.

Furthermore, the USTR had proposed expanding those tariffs to include all wine and liquor from all EU states at 100%, as well as a few hundred other items to be reviewed for adjustment every six months. One week prior to the Macron/Trump tweetathon, the USTR had closed the comment period for this action; all that was left was to wait until the February 15 deadline for the USTR's decision.

THE UNITED STATES WINE TRADE ALLIANCE

Faced with this seemingly insurmountable threat to their businesses and unwilling to let everything they worked for disappear overnight, a small group of individuals began mobilizing. In a matter of weeks, the group exceeded 6,000 members (including myself), who voted on an official name,

the US Wine Trade Alliance (USWTA); held an anti-tariff march on the White House; elected a board of directors, chaired by Ben Aneff, Managing Partner of Tribeca Wine Merchants; and established 501(c)(3) status. We methodically roamed the halls of government with anti-tariff messaging and spent days on end meeting with congresspeople, Senators, and their staffs on both sides of the aisle.

We found that we had the support of hundreds of government officials, many of whom took public anti-tariff stances and signed off on a letter to the USTR. Additionally, in the lead-up to the deadline for comments on the LCA expansion, we were able to assist with a social media campaign that—along with a large-scale email campaign in conjunction with the National Association of Wine Retailers (NAWR)—ensured that more than 23,000 comments were submitted to the USTR opposing increased tariff activity. The NAWR campaign also helped to send nearly 30,000 letters to members of Congress.

The net result of our actions was a stay of execution of sorts. The USTR agreed not to impose additional duties or expand the tariff actions on EU wines and spirits—for now. While a huge win for not only the

industry but the broader American public, the decision is up for review in August 2020, meaning the threat of 100% tariffs still looms large on the horizon.

TARIFFS COST AMERICAN JOBS

When the 21st Amendment repealed Prohibition, it also established the three-tier distribution system for alcoholic beverages while giving individual states governing authority over the sale and regulation of these products. As a result, there are tens of thousands of people employed along the wine supply chain between Europe and the U.S.

By law, European wines must be brought to the U.S. through an importer, which must then sell to a distributor. The distributors then sell to the intermediary, be it on- or off-premise, which then sells to the end user, or consumer. The reason that tariffs are problematic with respect to the alcohol industry is that their costs are borne by the importer, which, by law, is an American business. This differs from industries in which foreign entities can own and profit from all tiers of distribution from export to retail; for example, a European fashion house can own the export company, import company, distributor, and retail outlets, which can all funnel revenue back to Europe. With respect to alcohol, approximately 85 cents of every dollar spent on EU wines and spirits is revenue that is generated by domestic businesses and that stays within the U.S., according to the American Association of Wine Economists, whose data also shows that EU wine imports to the U.S. accounted for nearly \$11 billion in 2015. Since then, we've been on an upward trend, with estimates suggesting that the (pre-tariff) 2019 figures could approach \$20 billion. That would mean \$20 billion of potential lost revenue and profit to American businesses in 2020 (as estimated before the COVID-19 pandemic brought the industry nearly to a halt).

It also bears mentioning that there are over 6,500 distributors and importers along the distribution pathway and tens of thousands of on- and off-premise estab-

lishments—all of which have been or will be impacted by tariffs. These businesses employ thousands of people and pay all sorts of operating and payroll taxes. Furthermore, sales tax alone (on the aforementioned \$20-billion projections) would account for nearly \$1.8 billion in potential losses from state and federal coffers—money that would typically be used to fund infrastructure, health care, and educational programs.

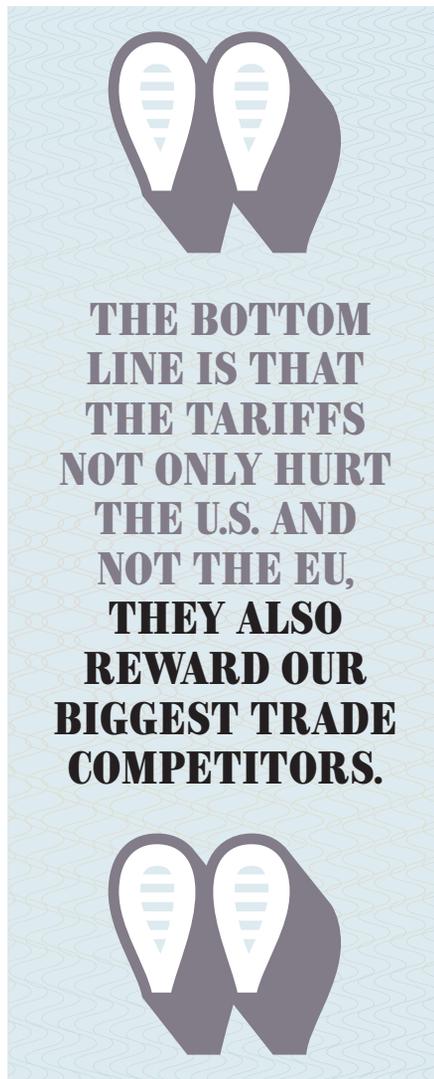
In short, the problem is not that the wealthy will have to pay more for their luxury goods. This is about the warehouse workers, truck drivers, administrative staffers, bussers, dishwashers, hosts, servers, cooks, sommeliers, retail employees, and more who will lose their jobs when businesses shutter due to their inability to absorb the increased costs of tariffs.

BUT ISN'T THIS GOOD FOR AMERICAN WINES?

Put simply, the answer is no. In fact, most U.S. wine organizations, such as the California-based Wine Institute (representing California's wineries and grape growers), strongly oppose the tariffs on the grounds that they will destroy domestic business as well. Many distributors keep their lights on through their European portfolios, and if they shutter, American wineries lose their path to market. Meanwhile, the threat of counter-tariffs can dry up the export market overnight. What's more, America simply does not have the capacity to produce the amount of wine needed to fill the void, nor can domestic wines be produced as inexpensively due to elevated land, labor, and production costs.

Because the costs are paid by Americans, these tariffs only serve to hurt America. EU wine is a finite resource that cannot increase much if at all due to appellation law, which means that demand far exceeds supply; it's only thanks to decades-old relationships that the U.S. imports as much EU wine as it does. Even in a tariff-free environment, many EU producers could double their price and sell to China and other trade competitors. Now that the U.S. is becoming an unreliable trade partner, they are indeed sending their products to other countries and making more money because of it. The bottom line is that the tariffs not only hurt the U.S. and not the EU, they also reward our biggest trade competitors.

This is not a partisan issue, it's an American issue—and there's something you can do about it. Write to your representatives in Congress to express your concerns that these tariffs hurt Americans and cost American jobs, and ask them to stand publicly in opposition. Contact the USTR and urge them to remove wine and spirits from the tariff carousel for at least the next year to give Americans a chance to rebound financially from the COVID-19 pandemic. And, finally, join the USWTA at uswinetradealliance.org. These are all vital steps toward making your voice heard and protecting our industry in this time of great uncertainty. 



THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THE TARIFFS NOT ONLY HURT THE U.S. AND NOT THE EU, THEY ALSO REWARD OUR BIGGEST TRADE COMPETITORS.

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{ library tastings }

Bin Through Changes

*Penfolds chief
winemaker Peter
Gago in the Magill
Estate Barrel Room.*

PENFOLD'S
AUSTRALIAN
VINEYARDS

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PENFOLDS

A Retrospective Tasting with Penfolds Chief Winemaker Peter Gago Celebrates the 60th Anniversary of BIN 389

by Deborah Parker Wong

Accurately capturing a snapshot of the Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz—fondly known as “Baby Grange”—involves revisiting a vital moment in the company’s history. The year 2002 marked the beginning of a new era for Penfolds in several respects: Winemaking had once again returned to its Magill Estate after a 29-year hiatus as the winery bid farewell to winemaker John Duval and appointed enologist Peter Gago as chief winemaker.

Credited with reinventing the role, Gago bolstered research and product development while building a rapport with members of the industry and consumers alike. Despite changes weathered by the company, though, the winemaking team has remained quite consistent. Gago himself began making sparkling wine for Penfolds in 1989 and moved to red-wine production in 1993, but several of his colleagues in the lab and cellar have had even longer tenures at Penfolds: Red winemaker Andrew Baldwin, for example, has helped produce Bin 389 for more than 30 years.

To say that Gago’s star rose quickly post-appointment would be an understatement. Within three short years, the

Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz was recognized as “Outstanding” and the Bin 95 Grange as “Exceptional” by the Langton’s Classification, an independent guide to fine Australian wines that’s been compiled since 1990. Gago was also named Winemaker of the Year by *Wine Enthusiast* in 2005 and was recently awarded an Order of Australia—the country’s highest honor—for his contributions to the Australian wine industry.

Sixty Years in the Making

Bin 389, a clet-style blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz, was first released in 1960, predating by eight years the release of another iconic Cabernet blend, Sassicaia. Inspired by the experimental St. Henri Clarets—Cabernet and Mataro blends that evolved toward the use of Shiraz—Bin 389 relies on warm-climate Cabernet for its perfumed intensity and chocolatey tannins; the Shiraz, meanwhile, contributes a dynamic presence of opulent fruit.

While several techniques have proved instrumental over the years in evolving the style of Bin 389 (among them partial barrel fermentation in American oak and aging stainless steel-fermented components in seasoned ex-Grange and Bin 707 hogsheads), what Gago refers to as the wine’s “original blueprint” remains intact. Regarding himself as a custodian of that style, he’s set about refining this multidistrict blend—



vineyard sources include the Barossa Valley, Coonawarra, Padthaway, Robe, McLaren Vale, Langhorne Creek, and Clare Valley regions—through adaptive vineyard-management practices that are better suited to modern winemaking techniques.

In a panel review of Bin 389 from the seventh edition of *Master of Wine Andrew Cailiard’s book Penfolds: The Rewards of Patience*, the vintages of the 1990s are noted as relatively tannic, with beautiful fruit, richness, and power; the ’91, ’94, ’96, and ’98 expressions were

named as the highlights. The early 2000s produced wines with softer textures, a shift attributed to older vines and better tannin management. Vintage highlights were ’02, ’04, ’06, ’08, ’09, and ’10.

The aforementioned Bin 95 Grange (aka Grange), which made its commercial debut in 1952, has long served as Penfolds’ calling card: A Shiraz-dominant, multi-regional blend, it usually comprises less than 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. In keeping with Gago’s practice of tasting verticals of older Penfolds vintages alongside panels of expert tasters, I’ve amended my tasting notes to include the historical perspective documented in *Penfolds: The Rewards of Patience*. This consummate guide to all things Penfolds provides invaluable hindsight through the lens of the world’s most highly regarded palates.

**Penfolds 1990
Bin 389 Cabernet
Shiraz, South**

Australia A banner year for Bin 389 that was lauded for its rich fruit, chocolate tannins, and balance. Aromas

of cassis are underscored by tobacco and earthy minerals. The tannins are almost powdery and the finish laden with umami.



Penfolds 1990 Grange, South Australia

Upon its release in 1995, the 1990 Grange was named the Wine of the Year on *Wine Spectator's* Top 100 list. Declared viable through 2045, it shows evolved black fruit akin to mulberry on the palate, with minty vanilla bean and earthy, tarry flavors mid-palate that give way to vanilla on the finish. The wine held up well for the first 30 minutes and changed considerably over the course of an hour in the glass. 5% Cabernet Sauvignon.

Penfolds 1996 Bin 389 Cabernet

Shiraz, South Australia Dominated by secondary aromas of earth, umami, and eucalyptus. Milk chocolate coats a core of mildly grippy tannins that persist through a lengthy finish of darker fruits. Upon release, the 1996 showed classic Cabernet Sauvignon markers of savory red currant and mint with gravelly tannins. It was originally deemed viable through 2016, but the drinking window has extended beyond what was anticipated.

Penfolds 1996 Grange, South Australia

Lauded as a "classic" vintage, with star anise and complex, high-toned varietal aromas. The blue plum and blackberry that defined its youth are supported by still-firm tannins. In 1996, the aging of Grange and Bin wines was discontinued at Magill Estate. 6% Cabernet Sauvignon.

**Penfolds 2004
Bin 389 Cabernet
Shiraz, South Australia**

Comprising 53% Shiraz, this expression has a dark, compact, and refined structure. Medium-intensity flavors of black pepper and savory black fruit show a linear progression from the wine's youth. It showed particularly well upon release with brambly fruit and herby/leafy notes, earning a "special wine" designation from the tasting panel in 2004 and a 2035 lifespan (Gago recommends patience).



Penfolds 2004 Grange, South Australia

Still opulent, with aromas of tobacco and dry forest floor as well as a flourish of black raspberry on the palate. Notes of camphor and vanilla cloak a refined tannin structure, with cedar and mocha defining the finish. Largely due to that structure, the wine was initially given a drinking window to 2050. 4% Cabernet Sauvignon.

Penfolds 2010 Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz, South Australia

The nose leads with notes of cinnamon and exotic wood spice akin to sandalwood, showing an evolution from the more overt vanilla and marzipan aromas of the wine's youth. The palate is precise, with flavors of black fruit merging into dark spice, mocha, bittersweet dark

chocolate, and, on the finish, a flourish of saffron-infused minerality. Described by Gago as "no wimp" upon release, the vintage was given a 2050 lifespan; it's still developing, promising even more complexity as tertiary notes begins to emerge. 51% Cabernet Sauvignon.

Penfolds 2016 Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz, South Australia

"The 1990s [are] antecedents to this vintage," observed Gago, noting that the 2016 has progressed in the same manner. Scheduled for release in August, the wine shows primary notes of red and black fruit, precise varietal expression, and a lithe body that, according to Gago, will "fatten up [with time] in the bottle."

**Penfolds 2015
Grange, South Australia**

Also scheduled for release in August, this wine is comparable to the '10 Grange in character (Gago is emphatic that "absolutely nothing" has changed with respect to winemaking in the last six years). It shows peppery dark fruit, with a tight, firm core and almost seamless intensity from start to finish.



Now in its 176th year, Penfolds has learned the hard way that imitation is not the highest form of flattery: Over the last decade, its sought-after wines have increasingly become the target of counterfeiters. Fortunately, efforts to curtail fakes have been successful, and while the Penfolds portfolio has expanded and contracted over the years in response to the market, the impact of Gago's tenure has undoubtedly helped the company sustain its lengthy record of success. SJ

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A Seat at the Table

**SOMMELIER
ZACHARY BYERS**
DISHES ON HIS
EXPERIENCE AT THE
RUDD ROUNDTABLE



Jay James, MS, with Zachary Byers, head sommelier at Beckon in Denver, CO.

“TOMORROW, WE’RE GOING to break your brains open,” Jay James said with a perverse delight twinkling in his eyes, sucking the levity out of the room like a jaded clown popping a child’s balloon at a party. James ranks among those who have triumphed over the gauntlet of the Master Sommelier exam, and as much as I wanted to believe his statement—directed at myself and 11 other Master Sommelier candidates—was hyperbole, I had a feeling it wasn’t. What had we gotten ourselves into?

Just that morning, I had made my way to the airport, Saturday night’s service still ringing in my ears after three hours of restless sleep and a 4:30 wakeup call. The usual scenery greeted me on the way to the gate: security, fluorescents, loud speakers, much-needed coffee. I’d been anticipating this day since July, when, much to my surprise and confusion, I passed the Court of Masters Sommeliers’ Advanced Sommelier exam on my first attempt.

It wasn’t that I’d thought my prospects of passing were far-fetched: I’d had a calm sense of hope and reserved confidence backed by several years of preparation. Yet, while going through this process, one is conditioned to always have some degree of doubt. The vast majority of candidates preparing for upper-level exams carry with them an expectation of failure. This is not a character flaw—it’s simply the culture of the process. Time spent studying can whittle years away with absolutely no guarantee of success.

If thinking I’d pass was audacious, ending up as the exam’s top performer seemed downright ludicrous, like showing up for a local 5K race and somehow breaking a world record. But that’s what had happened, resulting in me being named a Rudd Scholar. Consequently, I earned the privilege of attending the Rudd Roundtable—a prestigious event presented annually since 2009 by the Rudd Foundation and SommFoundation—along with those other aforementioned MS candidates.

That takes us back to James’ warning: We had just arrived at PRESS in St. Helena after a tour of the Rudd Estate and a guided tasting of Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon from around the world when he foreshadowed what awaited us at sommelier boot camp the following day. The remainder of the evening was reserved for fanfare and socializing with the Master Sommeliers in attendance, who flanked every candidate seated. Hours of conversation passed as we shared courses and glasses of Rudd wine, and as we got to know one another, hearing their stories made me feel like a peer, regardless of our pin colors.

Have you ever had to blind a 25-year-old wine in front of some of the world’s most promising young somms, let alone 20 or so Masters? This scenario marked the start of day two, the entirety of which was held at Compline—which Matt Stamp, himself an MS, co-owns with Ryan Stetins—in downtown Napa. A flight of somewhat manageable and neutral white wines was followed by aged reds that not

many of us had had much experience with. It was the blind-tasting equivalent of a bloodbath, and James’ prophecy was fulfilled: Our brains were everywhere.

Between tasting exercises, one-on-one verbal theory, service demonstrations, and endless cups of coffee, we absorbed invaluable advice on the importance of resilience and maintaining a confident mindset. We heard how many times each MS had to sit before passing—more than once for all but two present—making it quite plain that the next several years of our lives won’t be without difficulty. We talked about our fears and sources of anxiety, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable in front of people we’d just met yesterday. It was the wine professional’s version of group therapy.

The day closed with a dinner that comprised what most probably fantasize about when they think of the Rudd Roundtable: the unveiling of unicorn wines like a ’37 Volnay, Scharzhofberg Riesling, a 25-year-old Grand Cru Burgundy, a ’98 Grange, old Port, and more. I’d certainly never had a chance to taste such incredible wines before in my life—and likely won’t again for some time.



A few of the wines blind tasted at the Rudd Roundtable event.

Now that it’s all said and done, though, that’s not what I’m going to remember or cherish about the event. The generosity of the Court, SommFoundation, Rudd Estate, and everyone else involved was so much bigger than any bottle presented. These organizations have given me not only professional purpose but also an excuse to wake up every day with a goal of improving myself. Wine will eventually go bad, but the relationships and connections I made will last forever. *sj*

For another somm’s perspective on the Rudd Roundtable, visit sommjournal.com.



THE
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Joury

In each issue, the editorial team at *The SOMM Journal* will deliberate on wine submissions before releasing final judgment on select wines that garnered scores of at least 90 points.

Banking on the

Rivers

TASTING THROUGH THE
CONCHA Y TORO GRAN
RESERVA SERIE RIBERAS

Ucúquer Vineyard, located on the southern bank of the Rapel River in the Colchagua Valley, benefits from the maritime influence of the Pacific Ocean just 9 miles away. Its soil imparts a freshness and minerality to the Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay that grows there.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONCHA Y TORO



The Villa Alegre Vineyard in the Maule Valley extends along the southern bank of the Loncomilla River. As exemplified by the Gran Reserva Serie Riberas Syrah, cooling sea breezes create conditions for well-structured wines, even during the extended dry season.

THE GRAPES THAT grow on or near the banks of the Tinguiririca, Cachapoal, Rapel, Maipo, and Loncomilla rivers in Chile owe their complex, concentrated flavors and aromas to the ocean breezes that funnel through the sculpted basins and valleys: This cooling effect helps the fruit ripen slowly, resulting in stunning examples of moderation, maritime influence, and minerality from winemaker Marcio Ramírez.

Concha y Toro 2018 Gran Reserva Serie Riberas Sauvignon Blanc, Litueche, Colchagua Valley (\$17) Aged and fermented in stainless steel, this lean white makes a distinct impression through its aromas of freshly cut grass, tarragon, and lime; it's lean and edgy on the palate, with clean, pure stony notes and abundant minerality. Lime zest zings with oregano and dill, and as the wine opens up, an underlying weight offers notes of peach to soften the acidity of the citrus core. 13% ABV; 2,500 cases produced (1,000 imported). **92**

Concha y Toro 2018 Gran Reserva Serie Riberas Chardonnay, Colchagua Valley (\$17) With a lovely nose of lemon curd, this special Chard goes unctuous and weighty on the palate with notes of apricot. A salty minerality weaves through midway as chamomile and lemon verbena hit the high mark for fabulous, exotic floral flavors and aromas. 14.5% ABV; 1,100 cases produced (500 imported). **94**

Concha y Toro 2018 Gran Reserva Serie Riberas Syrah, San Javier, Maule Valley (\$17) Dark, inky graphite and desiccated violets mingle with anise-kissed black pepper. The satin entry morphs into creamy black fruit as deep notes of dark chocolate and plum coat the tongue. 95% Syrah; 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. 14.5% ABV; 8,800 cases produced (1,000 imported). **94**



Pym-Rae: Connected by Generations



Estate Manager Thomas Comme walks through a Tesseron Estate vineyard in Napa Valley.

LOCATED MORE THAN 1,700 feet high on Mount Veeder in Napa Valley, Tesseron Estate is home to Pym-Rae, a small vineyard on a large property. (It's named for two of late actor-comedian Robin Williams' three children, as Williams was the former owner.)

Known for his Cognac, proprietor Alfred Tesseron (who's also the co-owner of Château Pontet-Canet in the Pauillac appellation in Northern Médoc) commented, "This property was not at all what I originally wanted. The vineyard is less than 10 hectares, but the view is immaculate."

Tesseron paid a visit to the *SOMM Journal* offices earlier this year as part of his U.S. tour to promote the inaugural release of the hearty, Cabernet Sauvignon–dominant Pym-Rae blend. "The vineyard is almost 30 years old [and] planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot," he said. "Day one when I took over the property, I switched off the water and we began dry farming."

Tesseron and Estate Manager Thomas Comme—the son of Jean-Michel Comme, the Estate Manager at Château Pontet-Canet for more than 25 years—regard each parcel of the vineyard as having a different personality. Both organic and Demeter-certified Biodynamic, the site is planted on volcanic soil that predominantly comprises limestone and clay. In praising the first vintage, Tesseron attested, "Terroir is speaking again, despite the old-guard wine critics."

Pym-Rae 2016 Tesseron Estate, Napa Valley (\$350) A blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, and 7% Cabernet Franc, with stunning aromas of black cherry, caramel, and oak. The entry is feather-light and almost ethereal, with black fruit descending softly on creamy, teeth-coating tannins. Cigar leaf and dark coffee further explore the depths of the wine's primal heritage. **96**

Pym-Rae is distributed by Twins Bordeaux. For information, contact Anthony Moses at anthonymoses@twinsbordeaux.com.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TESSERON ESTATE

Denner Vineyards: A Deep Voice for Paso Robles

LOCATED ACROSS FROM the “Grand Cru” James Berry Vineyard of Saxum fame, Denner Vineyards in the Paso Robles Willow Creek District AVA occupies a truly coveted location. Its calcareous and loam soils are influenced by a maritime flow, and it doesn’t “experience the usual extended diurnal swings that most of the region is used to,” explains cellar master Paul Lopez, who recently visited the *SOMM Journal* office to share some 2017 releases.

The winery utilizes a variety of vessels for aging and fermentation. “In any vintage, we’ll use three different sizes of oak barrels,” Lopez notes, adding that winemaker Anthony Yount and his team also utilize acacia wood barrels, terracotta, and stainless steel. The 320-liter cigar barrels they employ, for example, are 50% longer and 25% thicker than a standard barrel despite being the same width; bent via steam instead of fire, they’re slowly toasted over embers before they’re used for the winery’s Viognier, imparting a rich mouthfeel as well as an inherent freshness. **93**

PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNER VINEYARDS



Winter vines at Denner.

Denner Vineyards 2017 Viognier, Paso Robles Willow Creek District (\$50) Following clean aromas of white flowers, linen, and Asian pear, the salty and nutty palate delivers flavors of summer peach and nectarine jam. The long finish has a honeyed-croissant character. **93**

Denner Vineyards 2017 Grenache, Paso Robles Willow Creek District (\$70) A blend of 88% Grenache, 7% Cinsaut, and 5% Mourvèdre from the Denner estate, it exudes aromas of rhubarb and clove that lead to a floral palate with plum and anise. It’s a whisper of a wine, but with impact: The lengthy finish hangs on as the textural sensations continue to impress. **94**



Denner Vineyards 2017 Dirt Worshipper, Central Coast (\$72) Comprised of grapes from the Denner estate along with fruit grown in SLO County’s Edna Valley and the Santa Ynez Valley to the south, this blend of 97% Syrah, 2% Roussanne, and 1% Viognier is the winery’s ode to Côte-Rôtie. It’s a big, black-peppered powerhouse of tar, slate, anise, and cigar leaf, with olive tapenade adding to its stemmy and savory magnitude. **95**

Denner Vineyards 2017 Mother of Exiles, Paso Robles (\$80) The label, designed by Ron Denner, links this wine’s name with the flame of the Statue of Liberty (“Give us your tired and your poor . . .”). A blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Petit Verdot, 10% Merlot, and 2% Cabernet Franc, it impresses with its inky crimson hue. Violets and dark chocolate are the focal point, complementing well-integrated, grainy tannins and deep notes of the blackest fruit. **94**

Dear Good Somm/Bad Somm,

One of my distributors wants to come in and teach my staff about their wines, but I just don't know if I actually trust them to do so effectively. As an example, I asked them last week if they had any Chardonnays, and they said, "No, but I do have this Chablis!" If that's any indication of their level of expertise, how can I expect them to explain anything—even something as straightforward as their by-the-glass Cabernet—properly?

Sincerely,
 Mistrustful Manager

Good Somm

Dear Mistrustful Manager,

I understand your reservations, but I encourage you to give them a chance. One of the many tools you can give your staff as a leader is perspective, and while this distributor may lack your depth of knowledge, they've at least clearly conveyed that their wines are worthy of placing on your list. Each person has a different journey that shapes their point of view, and the opportunity for education and training is at its strongest when as many voices as possible can be heard. You clearly work hard, so why not make your life a little less stressful and give someone else a chance to contribute and rise to the occasion? After all, it takes a village to keep a wine program running.

Best,
 Good Somm

BAD SOMM

Dear Mistrustful Manager,

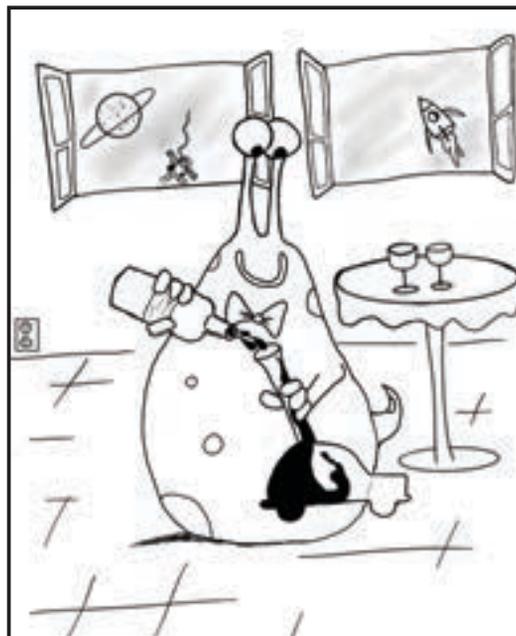
I once asked a "Champagne specialist" what the makeup of their tête de cuvée was and they said that they didn't know, but that they'd get back to me. Their tête de fricken' cuvée! I wonder if they even know what tête de cuvée means, but I'll tell you what it *doesn't* mean: "I'll get back to you!" I was so livid that I told them not to bother and vowed to never buy any of their products again. I mean, isn't that their one job? I'm willing to bet that the only reason they landed a posh gig as a Champagne specialist is their bubbly personality. Unless you're as brainless as they are, I advise you take a similar tack. *§*

Signed,
 Bad Somm

This column is a parody and does not reflect the views of The SOMM Journal. Follow the columnists at @goodsommbadsomm on social media and visit their website at goodsommbadsomm.com.

corked

A WINE-CENTRIC COMIC BY JESSIE BIRSCHBACH AND KELLIE LABOSSIERE. THEY'RE SISTERS!



What decanters look like on Mars.



"Ugh! If you're going to use a lame pick-up line, get it right: I'm a sensuous and spicy variety, not varietal. We're not wine yet, we're grapes, Botrytis brains . . ."

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Whine on the Rise

GERMANY'S YOUNG
FEMALE WINEMAKERS ARE
BREAKING THE MOLD

story and photos by Michael Cervin



IN GERMANY, a young generation of female winemakers is taking control, making everything from traditional Riesling and uncommon expressions of Chardonnay to wines featuring obscure indigenous varieties like Scheurebe and Gelber Orléans. With a shared passion for breaking the mold to produce compelling labels, these women are reflecting a new paradigm of German viticulture as they seek to foray into the U.S. market.

Rebecca Crusius of Weingut Dr. Crusius

The Crusius family traces its roots in the Nahe region back to 1565, when they were listed as winegrowers in local parish records; today, their descendants farm 55 acres of estate fruit, and 25-year-old Rebecca Crusius is part of the 13th generation to carry on their viticultural tradition.

When Crusius started producing wine in 2015, she immediately introduced changes that her father, with whom she shares winemaking duties, had to adjust to. "I'm interested in less oak, more acidity, and a lighter style," she explains, adding that she wants to condense their vast portfolio and instead focus on styles that have proved successful, like Chardonnay and dry Riesling. Weingut Dr. Crusius is one of the few wineries in the region that still grows Auxerrois, which, under Crusius' guidance, ultimately shows white peach, amber, Red Delicious apple, apricot, and hints of hay and wet stone held together by comprehensive acidity. "My generation is building the new wines of Germany," Crusius says.



Gina Gehring of Weingut Gehring

While she admits that she “never wanted to be a winemaker,” Gina Gehring assumed control of her family’s winery in the village of Nierstein at the tender age of 21 and now represents the fourth generation behind the business. “It’s difficult to tell your parents that you want to make changes. We have new, innovative ideas, but we don’t have their experience,” she says.

That may be the case, but her Riesling Sekt Brut is an exemplary example of the sparkling-wine renaissance unfolding in Germany, nearly two centuries after the category first emerged there in 1826. Her Gelber Orléans, which offers notes of chamomile and fennel root, is equally memorable, with an apparent sense of place: “You can taste Nierstein in this wine,” says Gehring, who also makes Chardonnay and Gelber Muskateller. Though she hasn’t visited the United States, the prospect of reaching a new audience entices her: “For me as a young winemaker, it’s exciting that there’s a market for your wines half a world away,” Gehring adds.

Klara Müller-Oswald of Weingut Burghof Oswald

In the village of Wahlheim in the Rheinhessen, husband-and-wife winemaking team Klara and Simon Müller-Oswald produce wines for a younger demographic: He oversees the reds and she makes the whites. Just 28 years old, she’s often joined in the vineyard by her 83-year-old grandfather.

Klara’s expression of Scheurebe—bred in 1916 as a cross between Riesling and Bukett—is floral and aromatic, with flavors of tropical fruit and great acidity. The unusual 2016 St. Laurent, meanwhile, shows cracked pepper, herbs, and alpine wildflowers, with hints of cranberry and Bing cherry; with its elements of mocha and cocoa powder, it mirrors Cabernet Sauvignon. (The couple makes a beautiful Chardonnay as well.) Klara’s engaging energy reflects her focus on building relationships with consumers over making decisions purely based on sales-driven data: “It’s not about selling more or less wine, it’s about connecting with our customers,” she says. 



Time Traveler

IN STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO, NEWCOMER **THE PERIODIC TABLE** AIMS TO TRANSPORT GUESTS TO DIFFERENT MOMENTS IN HISTORY

by Amanda M. Faison

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY



Bar Manager Kyle Currell pours a Gibson cocktail at The Periodic Table in Steamboat Springs, CO.

WHEN KYLE CURRELL first began dreaming up the cocktail menu for The Periodic Table, which opened last December in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, he didn't begin behind the bar. Instead, he took a trip to the New York Public Library and, while digging through the archives, stumbled upon a deep well of inspiration.

Considering that the restaurant plans to completely reinvent its concept twice a year, such resourcefulness is a must for Currell, restaurateur Phillips Armstrong, and culinary director Patrick Ayres, who together set out to travel back in time and recreate the ambiance, food, and drink of a 1920s New York supper club.

Of course, a defining factor of that era was Prohibition, which ironically spawned a movement of great creativity for mixologists despite attempting to tamp down the culture of consumption altogether. "Not only did Prohibition spur cocktails in America, it's also widely accepted that drinking increased during that time," Currell says.

In an effort to transport guests to this specific period and place, the bar menu runs deep with time-appropriate London Dry-style and Old Tom gins as well as domestic whiskey, bourbon, and rye. "I had a lot of fun reading articles and trying to accurately put together a menu of things people actually drank in establishments in New York at that time," Currell says, meaning cocktails like the Spritz or Negroni, then popular in Paris, were off the table. Instead, he showcases shaken cocktails like the Bee's Knees and the Clover Club, stirred drinks like the Manhattan and the Old Fashioned, and the wet (vermouth-heavy) Martini, which bartenders mix on a gleaming cart that rolls through the dining room.

Though he aimed to capture the essence of the era as much as possible, Currell did make some concessions—namely by reducing the sugar content of many of the recipes to appeal to modern drinkers. "In the '20s, they were always coming up with unique ways to sweeten their gins to cover up the impurities," he explains. "I tried to keep things pretty tight, but you have to round out your edges." For the Bee's Knees, for example, he imparted balance by using local Colorado honey and shaking the cocktail with a grapefruit peel; for the Sidecar, he skipped the sugared rim.

While Currell sees the supper-club experiment as a resounding success ("I've converted quite a few people into gin drinkers," he says with a laugh), he's already shifted focus to the Mojitos and Daiquiris that will define the next concept: Havana circa 1945.

But that's the beauty of The Periodic Table: While some bar managers might be averse to facilitating a complete about-face behind the bar, Currell knows what he signed up for—and he embraces the challenge. "It gives me the ability to . . . grow as a professional and experience specific cultures and periods of time," he says. "I'm putting a lot of pressure on myself to execute and put on a show that immerses the diner so they can give in to [that] experience." ❧



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UNRAVELING VALPOLICELLA

**REVIEWING THE
BASICS OF ONE OF
ITALY'S MOST
BELOVED REGIONS**

by Lars Leicht

Grapes dry in Sartori di Verona's fruit barn.

Pretty much anywhere in the world, the true beauty of wine country lies in its infinite variables, among them exposure, slope, soil, microclimate, varieties, vine training, winemaking style, and even historical factors, particularly in terms of terroir. Considering it all, the Italian region of Valpolicella may be the poster child for variability.

Let's start with the fact that the zone spans not just one valley but nearly a dozen: From west to east, there are Fumane, Marano, Negrar, Quinzano, Avesa, Valpantena, Squaranto, Marcellise, Mezzane, Illasi, and Tramigna. In addition to those, there are the townships of Sant'Ambrogio and San Pietro in Cariano, located just below the Fumane, Marano, and Negrar valleys; together, these five areas are distinguished as the Valpolicella DOC Classico, the most historic production area. By Italian government decree, the broader Valpolicella DOC was established in 1968, and to add to the mix, another area within the broader DOC was given its own denomination, Valpolicella DOC Valpantena, for the distinctive characteristics of its wines. It lies to the east of Classico and directly north of the city of Verona, the zone's fulcrum.

The Classico area is located just south of the Monti Lessini range, essentially making up its foothills; in the northernmost reaches of the zone, cool Alpine winds prevail, but the warming effects of Lake Garda to the west and the fertile plains of the Adige River to the south are the distinguishing features at lower altitudes. The Adriatic Sea, meanwhile, is less than 80 miles from the westernmost limits of the DOCG and 60 miles from the eastern limits of the DOC area.

Between Valpolicella's valley floors at 200–300 feet above sea level and the highest mountain ranges at upwards of 2,100 feet, you have high hills and medium and low slopes, all with different soil types and aspects. Winemakers contend that the afternoon sun's impact on west-facing vineyards yields more intensely flavored grapes than those from east-facing sites and vineyards that bask in milder morning sun. The slopes are

separated by streams rather than rivers and are more “wrinkles” than valleys; not particularly steep, they’re terraced with stone walls called *marogne* (pronounced *mah-ROHN-yay*). The whole landscape could perhaps best be described as a hand with its fingertips flat on a surface, knuckles and wrist slightly raised.

The vast majority of grapes grown in the area—some 97%—are indigenous varieties. The most widely planted by far at 57% is Corvina, justly called “the Queen of Valpolicella,” followed by Rondinella (21%), Corvinone (13%), and a small showing (6%) of other native varieties such as Molinara, Oseleta, and Croatina. The remaining 3% of the region’s vineyards are planted

Following the same naming convention is Rondinella, which translates to “swallow” and brings plenty of color, sapidity, acidity, and tannin to blends, despite lacking aromatic influence. There must be a minimum of 5% Rondinella (and a maximum of 30%) in Valpolicella.

That may seem like a lot of variation for one wine, but we’re actually talking about four distinct expressions made from the same blend: Valpolicella DOC, Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG, Recioto della Valpolicella DOCG, and Valpolicella Ripasso DOC. In a nutshell, here’s the breakdown of their differences. Valpolicella is the straightforward vintage wine, traditionally vinified and given little (if any) aging,

pressings of Amarone or Recioto to give it more structure.

Now, about that drying process, which is referred to in Italian as *appassimento*. The healthiest grapes are chosen and harvested slightly underripe so that they have higher acidity; after they are gently laid out in open wood boxes or, increasingly, easier-to-clean versions made of aerated plastic, they’re set up in well-ventilated attics called *fruttaio* and constantly monitored. The grapes are left on their stems, which continue to perform a function akin to an umbilical cord in the now-detached central nervous system responsible for nourishment. Knowing it’s cut off from the mother vine, the stem carries out a “flight or fight!”



A crisscross pattern in Bertani's vineyards.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BERTANI

to Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, but these grapes have grown here so long that their local character has become more Veronese than international.

Legally, Valpolicella blends call for a minimum of 45% (and maximum of 95%) Corvina, which above all contributes aroma as well as color, tannins, structure, and acidity. Recently, the denomination began permitting the same minimum and maximum for Corvinone, which, though similar in name, has no genetic relation to Corvina. (Both are named for a black bird—“crow” and “large crow”—because of the dark color of their skins.) Corvinone grapes are not only bigger—hence the Italian suffix “-one” (pronounced *OH-ney*), indicating large—but a more significant contributor of the aforementioned characteristics.

depending on house style. Amarone is a dry wine made by essentially air-drying the grapes for three months and slowly fermenting with lengthy skin contact the following January; this process is followed by moderate to lengthy aging in cask.

Recioto results when Amarone isn’t allowed to ferment out completely dry; in fact, it was the historical method for making wine from dried grapes, and in ancient times, it competed with sweeter Greek wines on the lucrative market of the Venetian Republic. Only marketed commercially since the 1950s, Amarone (remember that “-one” suffix?) means “big bitter (dry) one” and was once considered an aberration that resulted from trying to make the sweeter Recioto. And, finally, Ripasso takes a young Valpolicella and “repasses” it over

reaction that changes the metabolism of the grapes, which in turn impacts anthocyanins, flavonoids, acids, and stilbenes, which are a precursor to resveratrol.

This happens with other grapes such as Cabernet and Merlot as well: They too will lose 40% of their water weight and gain intensity and concentration, but more quickly and with less of a physiological change. The indigenous Veronese grapes inherently lend themselves to *appassimento*.

The process provides yet another variable for the winemaker: Even if the growing season offered up perfect conditions through harvest, a rainy start to winter can negate those prospects. Nobody wants a damp *fruttaio*!

So, all of that said, will you ever think of Valpolicella as a “simple” wine again?



Valpolicella: A SAMPLER PACK

At SommCon San Diego last November, the Consorzio Tutela Vini Valpolicella offered up a master class on its regional wines, with nine producers sending examples for attendees to taste.



Corte Cavedini 2018 Valpolicella

From a small estate winery run by Umberto Cavedini and his wife, son, and daughter. Great cherry notes with a round, velvety mouthfeel. Corvina-Corvinone (70%), Rondinella (15%), and Croatina-Merlot-Oseleta (15%) from Marcellise and San Martino Buon Albergo. Aged in stainless steel for six months and in bottle for an additional four. 12.5% ABV.



Novaia 2016 I Cantoni Valpolicella

Classico Superiore Four generations of the Vaona family have farmed grapes for their label (exempting a brief interruption in the 20th century). Deep, concentrated jammy flavors. Corvina (50%), Corvinone (30%), Rondinella (15%), and "other" (5%) from Marano. Aged in barrel for 18 months and in bottle for four. 14% ABV.



Ilatium Morini 2015 Campo Prognà

Valpolicella Superiore From another family who started growing grapes for a cooperative until founding their own winery. Intense ripe fruit, minerality, and spice. Corvina/Corvinone (70%), Rondinella (20%), and Croatina/other (10%) from Mezzane di Sotto and Valle d'Illesi. Aged in French and American oak for 12–15 months and in bottle for six. 15% ABV.



Cà Dei Maghi 2018 Valpolicella

Classico Made by third-generation hillside growers now dedicated to their own label. Intense, with cherry, raspberry, and other forest berries. Corvina (45%), Corvinone (30%), Rondinella (20%), and Molinara (5%) from Fumane. Aged in stainless steel for six months. 13% ABV.



Villa Mattielli 2017 Valpolicella

Superiore From a new property on the eastern reaches of Valpolicella bordering Soave. Fresh and mouthwatering, with deep notes of red fruit alongside light tannins. Corvina (60%), Corvinone (20%), and Rondinella (20%) from Lavagno. Aged in stainless steel for six months. 13.5% ABV.



Secondo Marco 2016 Valpolicella

Classico The scion of a historic producer, Marco Speri now oversees his own vineyards and cellar. Juicy dark cherry with notes of herbs and dried flowers. Corvina (50%), Corvinone (40%), Rondinella (5%), and Molinara (5%) from Fumane. Aged six months in both concrete and barrel. 13% ABV.



Villa San Carlo 2016 Campo Bianco

Valpolicella Superiore The Pavesi family started growing grapes on its wooded property in 1958; a decade ago, they launched their own label. Intense red fruit with spices and light balsamic notes. Corvina (40%), Corvinone (40%), Rondinella (15%), and Molinara (5%) from Montorio Veronese. Aged in French oak for four months. 13.5% ABV.

The vineyards and winery of Sartori di Verona.

A SARTORIAL Approach to VALPOLICELLA

PHOTO COURTESY OF SARTORI DI VERONA

The Latin saying *Nomen est omen*—"The name is a sign"—parallels the theory of nominative determinism: that a person's name influences the career path they choose. So it is for Sartori di Verona and the Italian word for tailor, *sarto*, as one could say that the producer custom-tailors each of its wines in a classic style that appeals to both traditional and contemporary tastes.

Take, for example, Sartori's Valpolicella Classico Superiore DOC expression. In addition to the traditional Corvina, Corvinone, and Rondinella, Sartori adds a soupçon of Oseleta. Just 5% of this rare, low-yielding indigenous variety is enough to impart a complexity and richness that's rarely seen in the denomination's typically lighter-bodied wines. Conversely, at 15% ABV, Sartori's Amarone has a drier, leaner style than many popular brands, with more Port-like characteristics of high alcohol and jammy fruit. "Our wines are meant to be food wines," says fourth-generation proprietor Andrea Sartori. "Wine should complement the food and be an integral part of the meal, not an adjunct to it."

Andrea traces Sartori's house style directly back to the founder, his great-grandfather Pietro, whose successful restaurant led him to the wine business. "In the late 1800s, Pietro's trattoria was a place not to be missed for merchants, small industrialists, and business-

men of the area," Andrea says. "Pietro had to offer them only the best Rosso Veronese, as it was called back then, both for table service as well as direct sales in demijohns and bottles. He needed to make sure he had a steady supply of wine that was sufficient in both quantity and quality."

In 1898, Pietro bought his first vineyard, which remains under family guardianship today. Pietro's son Regolo took over the business in the early 20th century and became renowned as a talented wine broker with the palate to match. He'd personally prepare individual lots for his customers, who would affix their signatures on the barrel to confirm their approval of the blend.

Eventually, the winery expanded beyond Italy's borders after Regolo's two sons inherited the winery mid-century. That growth continues today as Andrea joins his brother Luca and cousin Paolo in adapting Sartori's offerings to each market, from Asia and the Americas to Europe and Russia. "Every culture and every country have slightly different tastes," notes Andrea. "We have the ability to tailor our wines appropriately, without succumbing to passing fads that, like violent storms, cyclically cloud the skies of winemaking. Our wines must always reflect the nature of Verona and classically represent this territory's sense of place."



Sartori di Verona
2015 Estate Selection
Valpolicella Classico
Superiore A classic style from a fourth-generation winegrower. Deep flavors of black cherry with some earthiness; structured with rich fruit and soft tannins. Corvina (45%), Corvinone (30%), Rondinella (20%), and Croatina (5%) from the Valpolicella Classico area. Aged in oak casks for 15 months and in bottle for four. 13.5% ABV.

BERTANI: Bonded to a Wine, a Region, and a Country

PHOTO COURTESY OF BERTANI

The 19th century was a heady time for Italy, with a succession of social, cultural, and political changes that would eventually shape it into the country we recognize today. Among the players of its enological evolution during this period was historic winery Bertani, founded the decade before Italy became a nation.

In 1850, young Gaetano Bertani traveled to Burgundy to learn modern winemaking techniques from his friend, the famous scientist and viticulturalist Jules Guyot. Italy already had a long winemaking tradition—ancient Greeks called it Enotria, “the land of wine”—but by this point, Italian wine had stagnated, remaining commonly sweet and fizzy. Even Piedmont is said to have turned to its French neighbors to learn how to dry out its Barolo wine.

After returning from his studies, Gaetano and his brother Giovan Battista founded their winery in 1857; three years later, they released Secco Bertani, whose name (secco is Italian for “dry”) alone spoke to how revolutionary it was for the time. Featuring up to 20% “international” grapes such as Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon in addition to Corvina and Corvione, it was imported around the world as an ambassador of Veronese and Italian wines by

the 1880s.

Halfway into the 20th century, Bertani embraced its pioneering nature yet again by releasing its 1959 Amarone della Valpolicella, then considered a new style of wine. Fast-forward to today, when Bertani is not only a leading producer of the category but also, with its extensive library of back vintages, a testament to the wine’s ageworthiness.

As another testament to the winery’s influence, the area where it was founded and its first vineyards planted has been designated a unique subzone, producing wines known for their notes of minerals and spice. Located in the middle of the greater Valpolicella DOC and to the east of Valpolicella DOC Classico, the Valpolicella DOC Valpantena is a pre-Alpine valley just under 2 miles wide and 7.5 miles long. Grapes grown here benefit from prolonged exposure to the sun and large diurnal temperature shifts; the soil, meanwhile, is uniformly calcareous marl with large iron deposits.

Bertani continues to produce its Amarone and Secco Original Vintage wines in the Valpantena, and why not? Once you’ve attained distinction, it doesn’t make sense to settle for anything less.



Bertani 2018 Valpolicella From one of the region’s most historic producers, with a history of groundbreaking initiatives. Bright cherry, light spicy notes, and a crisp, zesty finish. Corvina Veronese (80%) and Rondinella (20%) from Valpolicella Classico and Valpantena. Aged in concrete vats for five months. 12% ABV.

ALLEGRIINI: All About the Land

Many a winemaker claims to maintain a strong focus on the vineyard, but in the case of Allegrini and its carefully tended, well-manicured rows, that sense of focus becomes a fixation. Its reds exclusively comprise estate-grown fruit, and three of the five imported to the United States are single-vineyard designations located within the Fumane Valley and neighboring Sant'Ambrogio township, a factor that drives two key elements of success: limited production and focused terroir.

Case in point: La Poja, bottled from a 6.5-acre cru with white soils that crowns Allegrini's prized La Grola vineyard. Both plots and their namesake wines are dedicated to the indigenous Corvina grape—exclusively in the case of La Poja, while La Grola blends in 10% Oseleta.

Palazzo della Torre, another single-vineyard wine, comprises 70% Corvina, 25% Rondinella, and 5% Sangiovese; a portion of the fruit goes through the appassimento process before being vinified and added to the fresh wine in December, instigating secondary fermentation for greater structure.

Allegrini's success also lies with the family itself: Patriarch Giovanni Allegrini was known for his passion and thoughtful approach to innovation, and though he died prematurely in 1983, his legacy remains strong thanks to his children. His son, Franco, had apprenticed with him in the winery, while his daughter, Marilisa, has long overseen the winery's marketing and sales departments. Thanks to their efforts, Allegrini maintains its sterling reputation. SJ



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A bird's-eye view of Allegrini's La Poja Vineyard.



Gilles executive chef Gilles Epié and Montage Beverly Hills Beverage Manager Oscar Chinchilla.

An Unstoppable Spirit Meets a Confident Somm

MONTAGE BEVERLY HILLS BEVERAGE MANAGER OSCAR CHINCHILLA AND GILLES EXECUTIVE CHEF GILLES EPIÉ EMBARK ON A PAIRING CHALLENGE WITH **JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY** story by Rachel Burkons / photos by Devin Berko



Chinchilla's first matchup paired Jack Daniel's Old No. 7 Tennessee Whiskey with *filet mignon au poivre*.

AMONG THE KEY responsibilities of sommeliers around the world is understanding the art of pairing food and wine, and at chic eatery Gilles in the Montage Beverly Hills, Beverage Manager and sommelier Oscar Chinchilla takes this task seriously. Unsurprisingly, helping to execute such pairings at this five-star hotel occupies most of his day-to-day, so to keep him on his toes, *The SOMM Journal* presented Chinchilla with a challenge inspired by one of the most unstoppable forces in the beverage industry: Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey.

With help from Gilles Epié, the famed French chef who gives the restaurant its name, Chinchilla created several pairings to showcase four expressions from the iconic spirits brand's portfolio: Honey, Gentleman Jack, No. 27 Gold, and, of course, the flagship Old No. 7. Despite the unfamiliar territory, Chinchilla found it easy to draw from prior experience: "I believe that spirits, like wine, are multisensory experiences," he says. "Finding the right pairing for an American whiskey can be tricky at first, but once textures and aromas are determined,



Jack Daniel's Gentleman Jack Tennessee Whiskey and grilled octopus may seem like strange bedfellows, but they made for a decidedly delicious pairing at Gilles.

there are plenty of options. Some whiskeys have a complexity that fits red meat like a glove, while other expressions tend to be softer," making them an ideal match for desserts.

While Gilles' French-Californian pedigree may seem an unlikely counterpart for a Tennessee-born and -bred brand, Chinchilla aimed to keep an open mind and let the spirits speak for themselves. "Tennessee whiskey has this distinctive sweetness and length that can adapt to various sauces and proteins and also serve as a palate cleanser between bites," he explains, noting that, as a result, "Jack Daniel's turns out to be a great option for our guests."

With confidence on his side, Chinchilla invited none other than Jack Daniel's U.S. Brand Ambassador Eric "ET" Tecosky to weigh in on the efficacy of the pairings. First on the docket was the Old No. 7, which Chinchilla served with a filet mignon au poivre in a matchup he saw as "classic on classic." "This is a bold whiskey with a strong personality and defined structure that needs red meat to best fit its flavors," he says. "The tenderness of the meat in this dish along with the texture of the sauce really help showcase the roundness of this Jack Daniel's style." Tecosky, for his part, savored every bite of the "perfectly cooked, seasoned, and paired" dish: "The pepper crust on the steak and the sauce created such a great balance with the vanilla notes of Jack Daniel's," he says.

Next up was Gentleman Jack, which undergoes an additional round of the brand's signature charcoal-mellowing process to impart smoothness and clarity of flavor.

To coax out the whiskey's mellow nuttiness and caramel flavors, as well as what Chinchilla calls its "more subtle and softer style," he and Epié sought to prepare something with contrasting flavors. Tecosky



Jack Daniel's No. 27 Gold with Maine lobster, spinach, onion, coconut milk, and wasabi.

agrees that the dish they landed on—grilled octopus with harissa aioli—certainly fell into the "opposites-attract category," adding that its "slight spiciness along with the char on the octopus offered a nice transition from the refined notes of Gentleman Jack."

Chinchilla and Epié took a similarly polished approach in their next pairing, which featured Jack Daniel's No. 27 Gold; made with the same twice-charcoal-mellowed base as Gentleman Jack, the spirit matures in oak before finishing in maple barrels for

added complexity. Its luxuriously rich yet dignified character effortlessly complemented Epié's Maine lobster, which he prepared with spinach, onion, coconut milk, and wasabi. "Chef and I are really excited about this pairing," Chinchilla says. "The softness of [the whiskey's] palate and roundness of its finish make the unique flavors and texture of lobster come alive." Yet again, Tecosky had no objections: "The subtle notes of the Gold and the delicate flavor of the lobster were perfectly in sync," he says. "Also, the slight bite from the onion contradicted the soft notes of the whiskey in a delicious fashion."

With a trio of successful savory pairings in the books, Epié and Chinchilla arguably saved the best for last, pairing the restaurant's signature chocolate soufflé with Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey, a liqueur that blends classic Old No. 7 with its eponymous ingredient. "The bitterness and subtle sweetness of the chocolate made this a fun and unique pairing," Chinchilla says. Praising how well "the bittersweet dark cacao blended with the sweetness of the Jack Honey," Tecosky warns that the dessert should be a strictly solo endeavor: "My wife would agree and order her own too," he says with a laugh.



Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey with Gilles' signature chocolate soufflé.

Chinchilla and Epié undoubtedly passed this unconventional pairing challenge with flying colors, but the somm made sure to give credit where credit is due. "Jack Daniel's sets the bar when it comes to the versatility American whiskeys have to offer," Chinchilla explained. "It's no secret that it's the top-selling whiskey in the world, and with such popularity, it's exposed to different types of global cuisines"—giving chefs and sommeliers truly endless possibilities for stark contrast or seamless synchronicity. **SJ**



Master Sommelier Chuck Furuya embraces his fellow Wine Speak Paso Robles co-founder, Amanda Wittstrom-Higgins of Ancient Peaks Winery.

Goodwill Tasting

WINE SPEAK PASO ROBLES REMAINS ONE OF THE INDUSTRY'S MOST INSPIRING CONVENTIONS

story by Jessie Birschbach / photos by Acacia Productions

HERE'S THE THING about Wine Speak Paso Robles: It's got heart. Our industry is chock-full of gatherings that meet the baseline expectation of educational seminars and tastings, but unlike many of its fellows, Wine Speak has generated a palpable sense of genuine community since its inaugural event three years ago.

Now, I know what you're thinking: *All* of these events provide a sense of community, as the simple act of congregation is at their very core, but I have yet to find a level of enthusiastic support and inclusivity that rivals what I've encountered at Wine Speak. Perhaps this is thanks to its thoughtful and kind-hearted founders, Hawaii-based Master Sommelier Chuck Furuya of DK Restaurants and Amanda Wittstrom-Higgins, VP of Operations for Ancient Peaks Winery—or perhaps it's because the event takes place in a region that's still eager to prove itself despite *The New York Times* recently deeming it one of "52 Places to Go in 2020."

The three-day gathering primarily unfolded within Atascadero Historic City Hall, which Furuya referred to as a symbol of Wine Speak's communal identity; each day, four seminars were interspersed with networking breaks and lunches that gave way to BYOB dinners and tastings. The first round of seminars—which comprised an overview of Paso Robles with some of the region's top winemakers as well as Old World insights from Northern Rhône winemaker Lionel Faury of Domaine Faury—was led by Furuya in his signature laidback style. Not only did the panel members "talk story" (a Hawaiian term for sharing personal anecdotes) but the audience did too.



The Paso Robles Overview panelists from left to right: Jason Haas of Tablas Creek, Jordan Fiorentini of Epoch Estate Wines, Steve Peck of J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines, and Mike Sinor of Ancient Peaks Winery.



Master Sommeliers Fred Dame, Madeline Triffon, and Nunzio Alioto are pictured during a blind-tasting seminar at Pavilion on the Lake in Atascadero Lake Park.

The second day focused on wines commonly found in Paso Robles: L'Aventure co-owner/winemaker Stephan Asseo and Master Sommelier Emmanuel Kemiji, owner of Priorat producer Miura Vineyards, led a seminar dubbed "Crazy Red Blends" before Thomas Rivers Brown of Napa's Rivers-Marie and Master Sommelier Fred Dame, now the Global Wine Ambassador for DAOU Vineyards, took a deep dive into Cabernet Sauvignon.

With a focus on professional development, the third day delved into blind-tasting strategies from Dame and fellow Master Sommeliers Nunzio Alioto and Madeline Triffon, among other topics. But perhaps most reflective of Wine Speak's benevolent spirit was Wittstrom-Higgins' "Dream Big Darling: Wine from a Different Perspective" seminar with Triffon. During the moving hour-and-a-half-long talk—named for the nonprofit Wittstrom-Higgins created to support female professionals in the wine and spirits industry—Triffon recalled the experience of becoming the second woman in the world to earn the Master Sommelier title.

Wittstrom-Higgins went on to draw an emotional parallel between Triffon and her grandmother, who always called her "darling": "Through her I realized how powerful kindness and love can be," she said. "Likewise, there are so many people Madeline has touched throughout her career, and that's why we're here sharing her story. I hope that you all take the time to help someone who is coming up the ranks and champion them because that's what our world needs—and that's what our industry needs in order to be successful."

And there you have it: At the core of Wine Speak is not just community and education but also compassion and generosity. See the sidebar for a few of my favorite quotes from some of the heavy hitters in attendance.



"Wine Yoda" Bruce Neyers brought a 2014 magnum of Domaine Clape Cornas to the BYOB dinner.

Overheard at Wine Speak Paso Robles

Jason Haas, Partner/General Manager for Tablas Creek At the "Paso Robles Overview" seminar, Haas offered an in-depth explanation of why his family and the Parrin clan of Château de Beaucastel selected their winery's location: the longer growing season for late-ripening Rhône varieties and significant diurnal swings; adequate rainfall; and calcareous soils that are remnants of an old seabed. "If you draw the overlays on the map of those things, you end up with this little triangle in west Paso Robles. So we ended up here—to our surprise as much as anyone else's. It was not a particularly established region at that point. I don't think anyone was talking about Paso in 1989 as the next great California wine region, but it's incredible to see the way that it's developed."

Bruce Neyers, Winemaker for Neyers Vineyards During the "Talk Story with the Wine Yoda" seminar, Neyers spoke of his greatest influences—a list that amounted to a who's who of figures that have shaped the contemporary wine scene. In one example, Neyers paid homage to Joseph Swan of Joseph Swan Vineyards for making one of California's breakthrough Pinot Noirs in the 1970s: During that time, as a pilot on a visit to Burgundy, Swan asked the leadership at Domaine de la Romanée-Conti if he could take some budwood back with him to California. When he didn't get a straight answer, Swan returned that night to take matters into his own hands. Years later, after being blown away by Swan's Pinot Noir, Neyers asked, "Hey Joe, which DRC vineyard did you get that budwood from?" Swan responded, "Oh, I don't know—it was way too dark to tell."

Steve Peck, Director of Winemaking for J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines At the overview seminar, Peck remarked, "This wine [the J. Lohr Signature Cabernet Sauvignon] is from the Beck Vineyard in the Creston sub-AVA. [It's] just a beautiful property with weathered sandstone and shale that sits above the fog line. I think of Paso as an elevated valley with mountains in a circular form around it, and this is one of the high points in that sort of southern crested area. At 1,700 feet, there are lots of mornings where you're . . . looking down on the fog in the valley."

Madeline Triffon, MS Triffon offered some valuable advice about the Master Sommelier exam during the Dream Big Darling seminar: "Your muscle memory is so essential. It doesn't matter if you're standing in a warehouse at 4 a.m., you don't put your fingers in the glass, right? Because when you take the MS exam, guess what's going to take over? Your muscle memory." ❧



Winemakers David Coventry of Talbott Vineyards and Michael Eddy of Louis M. Martini co-hosted a dinner with The SOMM Journal at PRESS in St. Helena, CA.

Masters of Their Craft



TOP TASTEMAKERS GATHER AT PRESS RESTAURANT IN ST. HELENA FOR THE HOTTEST, COOLEST, AND GNARLIEST WINES **LOUIS M. MARTINI AND TALBOTT VINEYARDS** HAVE TO OFFER

story by Jonathan Cristaldi
photos by Alexander Rubin

W

hen *SOMM Journal* publisher Meridith May rose to offer a welcome toast to the group of top buyers gathered in the cellar of St. Helena restaurant PRESS in late February, she wasn't being glib when she said, "We know these wines well." After all, the five expressions featured—the Talbott Vineyards 2016 Pinot Noir (\$50) and 2016 Chardonnay (\$45) from Sleepy Hollow Vineyard and the Louis M. Martini 2017 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$43), 2015 Lot 1 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$200), and 2016 Monte Rosso Gnarly Vines Zinfandel (\$70)—span California's most well-known appellations.

Both brands are part of E. & J. Gallo Winery's Élevage division, and as stewards of these iconic labels, the Gallo family aims to maintain a strong focus on quality. That's achieved through not only their farming and viticultural practices but their commit-

Martini sources its grapes from the warmer stretches of Pope Valley and the moderate climates of Stagecoach Vineyard and Oakville District in Napa to the cool, high-elevation Monte Rosso Vineyard, a Sonoma staple. The featured Talbott wines, meanwhile, hail from the aforementioned Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, which ranks among the coldest and windiest sites in the Santa Lucia Highlands.

At PRESS, winemakers for both brands—Martini's Michael Eddy and Talbott's David Coventry—presented a compelling case as to why each wine warrants a place on the table at on-premise accounts throughout the U.S. Stepping in briefly to discuss pairings, PRESS Beverage Director Amanda McCrossin pointed to a large-format 1991 Talbott Chardonnay behind a thick pane of glass and said, "Simply put, these [brands] are California classics, and we have a kitchen that does classic cuisine really well. So we'll be bringing out our bone-in rib-eye and coq au



The attendees clearly agreed, savoring the Chardonnay's notes of salted caramel and lemon peel. (Among the industry veterans present were Chris Costas, Managing Director of Indian Springs Resort in Calistoga; Jorge Ruiz, Director of Food and Beverage at Silverado Resort in Napa; Chris Sawyer, partner at Gravenstein Grill in Sebastopol; John Riggio, wine buyer/Director of Restaurants and Special Events for the Culinary Institute of America at Copia; Michael Ploetz, wine buyer for chef Ryan Scott's restaurant projects in San Francisco and Miami; Beki Miller, sommelier at La Toque in Napa; and Bob Bath, MS, professor of wine and beverage studies at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone.) Regarding the wine, Coventry remarked, "I'm a custodian of flavor; and I work with what the Sleepy Hollow Vineyard gives me. I can tell you that they're not making vineyard sites like this anymore."

Located 12 miles from the Pacific Ocean, Sleepy Hollow was planted in 1972 by the late Jerry McFarland; it fell into Robb Talbott's hands when he purchased the site in 1994—a decision that seems almost prophetic in hindsight, given that critic Per-Henrik Mansson awarded the 1990 Talbott Sleepy Hollow Chardonnay a perfect 100 points in 1997 during a retrospective tasting. By Mansson's account, it outperformed a Corton-Char-



Lars Leicht, VP/Communication & Trade Relations for The SOMM Journal, shares a laugh with Chris Costas, Managing Director for Indian Springs Resort in Calistoga, CA, and Jorge Ruiz, Director of Food and Beverage at Silverado Resort in Napa, CA.

ment to the level of consistency that long-time fans of Martini and Talbott have come to expect: These quintessentially Californian brand names command reverence on their own, but in the glass, their richly layered wines never fail to deliver:

vin, creamed spinach, and roasted Brussels sprouts. The first wine in your glass is the 2016 Talbott Chardonnay, and hitting the table right now is our salmon tartare, which I think you'll find matches the richness and mineral tension of the wine."



Sabrina Traverso, North Bay Portfolio Consultant for the Élevage division at E. & J. Gallo.



John Riggio, Director of Restaurants/Wine Buyer for the Culinary Institute of America at Copia, with Beki Miller, sommelier at La Toque in Yountville, CA, and Tiffany Tobey, sommelier at Sēr Steak + Spirits in the Hilton Anatole hotel in Dallas, TX.

lemagne, a Montrachet, and a Meursault Les Charmes (a Meursault Premier Cru). “If you need proof that California wines are as good as any in the world,” quipped Coventry, “there it is.”

In 2010, Talbott began the process of slowly replacing Sleepy Hollow’s old Wente Clone Chardonnay and Martini Clone Pinot vines to allow for greater diversity in the vineyard. “Our younger plantings are making the best wines in the entire winery,” said Coventry. “It offers a glimpse into the future of what’s to come

at Talbott.”

In addition to their high natural acidity—a result of the property’s extremely cool conditions—Talbott’s Sleepy Hollow Chardonnay and Pinot Noir possess a striking intensity and density in terms of both fruit character and mouthfeel. The former is a good fit for fish and chicken dishes, while the Pinot calls for steak or a rack of lamb.

Martini’s Cabernet was next on the tasting docket, with Eddy acknowledging that the variety requires “an element of mastery . . . to showcase different expres-

sions.” “I know that the theme of this dinner is ‘masters of their craft,’” he said, “but as winemakers, we learn something new every vintage.”

With seven different Cabernets currently featured in its portfolio, Martini is on the way to producing ten by 2021. But the 2017 Louis M. Martini Napa Valley Cabernet is what “defines us to most wine drinkers,” said Eddy. “We get a more compressed growing season from our sites in Pope Valley, [which is] a little warmer in the summertime, but the style is classic Martini: It’s more reserved than the hotter climate, jammy styles out there.”

By contrast, the Lot 1 Cabernet comprises fruit from Stagecoach Vineyard and sites in the Oakville, Stags Leap, and Coombsville appellations, combing terroir on mountainsides and valley floors to produce an expression that’s as ageworthy as it is memorable. Tiffany Tobey, sommelier at Sēr Steak + Spirits in the Hilton Anatole hotel in downtown Dallas, found that the wines “all showed really well, and for some of our regulars, I would absolutely steer them toward [the] Lot 1 Cabernet. It’s amazing.”

The last wine poured was the 2016 Gnarly Vine Zinfandel, which hails from the Sonoma side of Mt. Veeder. Situated at an elevation of roughly 1,000 feet and blanketed in iron-rich red soils, the Monte Rosso Vineyard was planted in 1893 and is proof that some old vines are worth preserving at all costs, even if their yields can be counted on to remain absurdly low. Inky black and showing decadent dark fruit, this invigorating wine is perhaps best described by Eddy’s parting words about its birthplace: “Something incredibly special is going on there.”



SOMM Journal Editor-at-Large Jonathan Cristaldi with Publisher Meridith May and Culinary Institute of America professor Bob Bath, MS.



United Sommeliers Foundation

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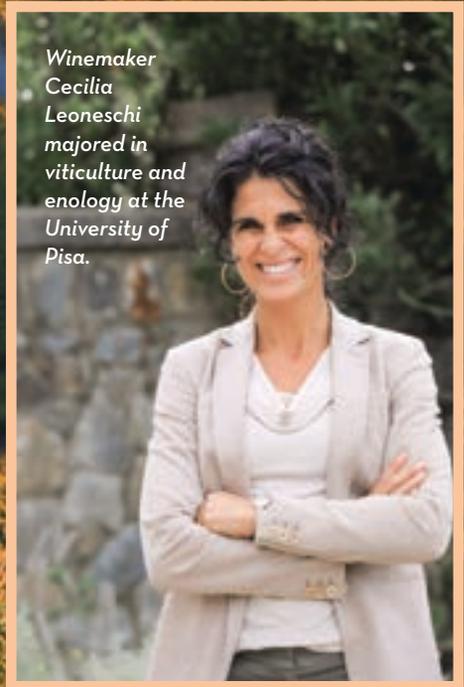
The awe-inspiring view overlooking the Capanna Vineyard, a 103-acre estate in the northwest corner of the Montalcino DOCG.

Higher GROUND

WINEMAKER
CECILIA LEONESCHI
ILLUSTRATES THE MAGIC
OF THE CASTIGLION
DEL BOSCO ESTATE IN
BRUNELLO

STORY BY MICHELLE BALL / PHOTOS BY JEREMY BALL

Winemaker
Cecilia
Leoneschi
majored in
viticulture and
enology at the
University of
Pisa.



Cecilia Leoneschi always knew she wanted to work in some part of the natural world. As a young girl growing up in southern Tuscany, she played among the Sangiovese vines in her father's vineyard, where her knowledge blossomed through youthful curiosity. "When you grow up in this kind of environment, you don't realize that this could be a type of [job]," Leoneschi says, reminiscing on the days she'd spend tending the vines with her father. A grower and wine lover, he taught her to discern and describe flavors in the grapes and bolstered her senses through regular tastings.

Those impressionable years helped shape her career path, and although she spent time as an aspiring winemaker in other parts of Italy, she knew she'd ultimately return to Tuscany. "The tradition of Sangiovese has roots in the past, and that's something that is magical to me," explains Leoneschi. After moving to Montepulciano, she sought what she called "a complete experience"—one that would enable her to help design a winery from the ground up. That opportunity arose in 2003, when Massimo Ferragamo, Chairman of Ferragamo USA Inc., purchased Castiglion del Bosco—a remote 5,000-acre estate in the northwest corner of Montalcino—and hired Leoneschi as the enologist.

The property, whose borders have remained unchanged for over 800 years, weaves along a steep hillside framed by dense forests; on the grounds are a medieval castle dating back to 1100 A.D. and, near the newly built winery, historic farmhouses that the Ferragamos have converted into luxury villas. From this tiny hamlet, the road continues to climb a steep incline to the top of the bluff, reaching an elevation of roughly 1,500 feet above sea level. From there, visitors can take in their first glimpse of the 103-acre Capanna Vineyard, home to the estate's three crus of Brunello. "All people that come here can feel the energy of this atmosphere," Leoneschi says.

The Capanna Vineyard is blanketed in rocky, well-drained soil, making the vines less susceptible to extreme heat and drought.



Each Sangiovese cluster is harvested by hand and placed in small aerated bins.

"WHEN SOMEONE OPENS A BOTTLE, I HOPE THEY ENJOY THE WINE FOR ITS HARMONY AND BALANCE, BECAUSE IN THE END, A GREAT WINE HAS TO BE IN BALANCE."

—Winemaker Cecilia Leoneschi



The vineyard's soil is primarily composed of galestro, a friable marl made from compressed layers of clay and shale. According to Leoneschi, these brittle rocks fracture easily, allowing for oxygen permeation that can support a rich ecosystem of microorganisms.

This panoramic view of Montalcino includes Italy's second-tallest volcano, the dormant Monte Amiata, which protects the region from cold winds and hail. With a prime southwest orientation, the vineyard straddles the descending ridgeline below, stretching toward the coast at elevations of roughly 800–1,450 feet. "You can't change a lot [here]; otherwise, you interrupt this line that connects our lives with the microorganisms, the flowers, and the trees. That is the power of this estate—its strong connection with the environment," notes Leoneschi in reference to Castiglion del Bosco's minimal-intervention approach to farming. With the use of machinery restricted, almost all of the work is performed manually by a full-time vineyard crew with intimate knowledge of each plot.

The property is surrounded by wilderness on three sides, making it particularly befitting of its name (*bosco* is Italian for "woods"). According to Export Manager Roberto Ruscito, this isolation made the decision to farm organically "easy," though the winery has chosen not to put the certification, awarded in 2016, on its labels.

This corner of Montalcino is considered to be cooler than the rest of the DOCG and typically receives more precipitation than its southern counterparts. This can make ripening Sangiovese, a variety that thrives in heat, more challenging, but the aspect of the site fortunately allows for maximum sun exposure; large diurnal swings, meanwhile, also occur at this high elevation. These conditions encourage longer hang time as well as acid reten-

tion, resulting in elegant wines with lively aromatics and floral undertones.

Nested against a hillside near the villas, the winery itself is nearly hidden behind the surrounding horticulture. Leoneschi helped oversee construction of the two-story facility, which relies on gravity flow to move the grapes and wine through the cellar. When asked about yeast, she laughs, replying, "What yeast?" Only indigenous yeasts, she explains, are employed for all fermentations—which is unusual for a winery of this size, especially considering the cost of Brunello. To ensure that native yeasts are efficient and prevalent, Leoneschi selects a small batch of clusters several days prior to harvest, crushes them at the



winery, and waits until they naturally begin to ferment. She uses this batch as her mother culture to inoculate the first few bins that arrive until the environment is well-populated with ambient yeast. "The perfect yeast comes from the perfect grapes," explains Leoneschi. "Because there is a risk [of contamination], we need to test every day and ensure really good hygiene."

After several vintages, Leoneschi's approach to aging has evolved with her understanding of the property. She chose to tone down the use of new French oak in favor of large oak casks that enhance the more delicate notes in the fruit. Concrete tanks, meanwhile, are used after oak maturation for blending, allowing the flavors to meld. "When someone opens a bottle, I hope they enjoy the wine for its harmony and balance," Leoneschi says. "Because in the end, a great wine has to be in balance." *SJ*

Winemaker Cecilia Leoneschi sits among the large barriques at Castiglion del Bosco.



CRUS OF BRUNELLO

Although the Capanna Vineyard is large, "we're able to work as though we're a small winery where each plot of the vineyard is managed in a different way," says Leoneschi. This ultimately results in a range of flavor profiles that are reflected in Castiglion del Bosco's three tiers of Brunello. The upper part of the vineyard, for example, bears the name Campo del Drago, and its fruit is typically destined for its namesake label. Depending on vintage conditions, however, that wine may be bottled on its own or blended into the estate's "black label" Brunello di Montalcino, allowing for greater flexibility.



Castiglion del Bosco 2015 Brunello di Montalcino (\$60)

This Brunello represents not only the Castiglion del Bosco house style but the Capanna Vineyard as a whole. A provocative tapestry of delicate aromas, it displays notes of crushed blueberries, chaparral, and fresh mushrooms, with subtle hints of amaretto. Firm tannins up front reveal

a silky texture with bright fruit, blonde tobacco, and notes of pomegranate and rose on the finish.



Castiglion del Bosco 2015 Campo del Drago Brunello Cru (\$140)

Campo del Drago is made with fruit from a 3.7-acre parcel at Capanna's highest elevation point (roughly 1,450 feet). Compared to the black label, Campo del Drago shows a significant uptick in concentration and intensity; darker, more pronounced fruit with intense

notes of black cherry is laced with lavender and brushy undertones. The mouthfeel is luxurious, flaunting superfine tannins that coat the tongue with flavors of dark chocolate and plump cherries before the persistent finish.



Castiglion del Bosco 2012 Millecento Brunello Riserva (\$220)

Only declared in the finest vintages, this Brunello is crafted from select blocks at roughly 1,300 feet in elevation; it's the best expression of the estate with the greatest aging potential. Named for the year the castle was founded, it's matured exclusively in large oak casks for three

years, followed by six months in concrete tanks. The powerful bouquet embodies Brunello at its finest, with alluring notes of burnt orange, leather, and rosehip that continue to evolve in the glass. It's elegant yet commanding, with a rich cherry core and tenacious length.



Pictured from left to right at the Battle of the Somms in Newport Beach, CA: Albertsons Companies Director of Liquor Phil Markert; Master Sommelier Fred Dame, Global Brand Ambassador for DAOU Family Estates; The Winery Restaurant partner William Lewis; and Master Sommelier Michael Jordan.

No Losers

INDUSTRY VETERAN **PHIL MARKERT**, ALBERTSON COMPANIES' DIRECTOR OF LIQUOR, HARNESSES RETAIL-RESTAURANT SYNERGY TO HELP HIS CUSTOMERS WIN story by David Gadd / photos by Todd Westphal



Tyler Wendland—shown in the Vintner Selections wine cellar in the Newport Hills location of Pavilions in Newport Beach, CA—is one of 100 wine stewards that Phil Markert employs at Albertsons, Vons, and Pavilions.

IT'S NOT OFTEN that Master Sommeliers are humbled, but when Phil Markert is in the room, even they can't help but pay tribute. When Markert invited his longtime friends Fred Dame and fellow MS Michael Jordan to a "Battle of the Somms" dinner at The Winery Restaurant in Newport Beach in January, Dame could be found bowing deeply toward the host with a sweeping, ceremonious gesture while proclaiming, "My liege ..."

It's a worthy title: As Albertsons Companies' Director of Liquor for Albertsons, Vons, and Pavilions, Markert is a force to be reckoned with. Based in Orange County, California, the 39-year veteran of the beverage industry has created expansive wine departments at numerous Pavilions stores with selections rivaling the finest boutique retailers. The wine and liquor department at Pavilions in the Newport Hills Shopping Center in Newport Beach, for example, features a glass-enclosed, temperature-controlled Vintner Selections cellar stocked with more than 500 high-end labels—and that's in addition to the myriad of enticing bottles available to shoppers in the main aisles. In-store

tastings attract curious shoppers daily—a recent one with Dame drew an overflow audience—and Markert’s team of 100 wine stewards is always on hand to help consumers make selections.

For Markert, playing off of the synergy between restaurants and retail is a tactical strategy for helping his customers explore the world of wine. “The foundation for [the in-store tasting] concept came from what I saw in the best restaurants,” Markert explains. “I would take notice of what they were pouring by the glass and make sure I stocked those wines in our stores located nearby.”

To capitalize further on the relationship between on- and off-premise, Markert produces an ongoing series of dinners at local restaurants, where his retail customers can experience the wines he sells alongside gourmet cuisine. “The restaurant gets exposure and [the series] also brings credibility to our wine program,” says Markert, adding that he’s organized more than 1,200 dinners over the course of his career.

At the friendly, food-enhanced Battle of the Somms showdown, Dame, who now serves as the Global Brand Ambassador for Paso Robles powerhouse DAOU Family Estates, pitted selections from the DAOU portfolio against offerings from Jackson



Master Sommelier Fred Dame, Global Brand Ambassador for DAOU Family Estates, with a loyal customer at the Newport Hills Pavilions.

Family Estates, represented worldwide by Jordan. (Dame was once Jordan’s CMS mentor and is currently mentoring Pavilions Liquor Manager Luis Avalos.) The Winery Restaurant executive chef Yvon Goetz and executive sous chef Jim Fritz provided plenty of culinary firepower to match the stellar wine selections, while partner William Lewis and Wine Director Dustin Laufenberg oversaw the seamless service.

Highlights of the indulgent evening included the stunning Siduri 2017 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir, which Jordan presented with succulent duck confit cannelloni, and the magisterial DAOU 2017 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, which Dame matched with New Zealand venison osso

buco. Dame also shared the very first vintage (2018) of the mouth-filling DAOU Pinot Noir, while Jordan wowed the crowd over dessert with the stately Arrowwood 2015 Knights Valley Cabernet.

After each course, Markert asked the enthusiastic guests for a show of hands on which selection they preferred “by itself” and which went best “with food.” After five show-stopping courses and ten beautifully matched wines, the evening ended up as a draw between DAOU Family Estates and Jackson Family, with both Dame and Jordan racking up points from the crowd for their eager support of their respective portfolios. In the end, there were no losers—and that’s just the way Markert likes it. *sj*

THE WINES



Pessimist by DAOU 2017, Paso Robles, vs. Cambria 2018 Julia’s Rosé, Santa Maria Valley
Hors d’oeuvres

DAOU 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Paso Robles, vs. Stonestreet 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Alexander Valley
House-cured king salmon

DAOU 2018 Pinot Noir, Central Coast, vs. Siduri 2017 Pinot Noir, Santa Lucia Highlands
Duck confit cannelloni

DAOU 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, Paso Robles, vs. Stonestreet 2016 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley
New Zealand venison osso buco

Bodyguard by DAOU 2017, Paso Robles, vs. Arrowwood 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Knights Valley
Sticky toffee pudding

The Soundtrack of

Sonoma

THANKS TO ASSETS LIKE ITS ENVIABLE LOCATION AND SKILLED WINEMAKER, **B.R. COHN** SINGS A SONG THAT'S ALL ITS OWN

by Jonathan Cristaldi

FEW IN THE WINE INDUSTRY possess powers of persuasion like B.R. Cohn Winery founder Bruce Cohn, who convinced Caymus owner Chuck Wagner to let him use “Special Selection”—the name of Caymus’ most highly rated wine—on a label. How Cohn got the green light is the stuff of legend and lore, but then again, making wine in the 1980s was a whole different ball of wax than it is today. Even so, this estate that’s all but synonymous with the Sonoma Valley appellation is hardly resting on its laurels.

Formerly a music promoter and manager of Grammy Award-winning rock acts like the Doobie Brothers, Cohn found the

transition into growing grapes and making wine to be a natural fit, as wine plays a role similar to music within our social fabric: It can be shared as easily as it can be savored in solitude. At the start of his burgeoning career, Cohn wasted no time tapping into impressive talent, producing his first wines with the likes of Helen Turley, Merry Edwards, and Steve MacRostie.

Now, more than 35 years after its founding, B.R. Cohn seems poised to sustain the sense of excitement so apparent in its early days. In 2015, Vintage Wine Estates (VWE) CEO Pat Roney purchased the estate and proceeded to oversee an

infusion of new equipment and vineyard plantings as well as investments in the safeguarding of old vines. Three years after the acquisition, he installed winemaker Glenn Hugo, whose Midas touch was apparent almost instantaneously: The recent releases are noticeably fresher and brighter than their predecessors.

Having seen Hugo work with expensive fruit and high-quality barrels to make \$100-plus bottles of Napa Cabernet at VWE’s Girard in Calistoga, Roney knew the winemaker had the skills necessary to produce both high-end direct-to-consumer wines and value-driven nationally distributed expressions at B.R. Cohn.

PHOTO COURTESY OF B.R. COHN

Underground hot springs beneath the B.R. Cohn property naturally warm the soil and protect the vines from frost throughout the growing season.



Winemaker Glenn Hugo rocks a pose in front of B.R. Cohn Winery.

Once he ventured over the hill to Sonoma, Hugo's first challenge was clear: keep producing an under-\$20 Cabernet that's "delicious [and] approachable," which he readily admits "is much harder to make than that \$100-plus Napa Cab."

Among the labels within Hugo's purview is the Silver Label Series, which comprises a 2018 Pinot Noir and Chardonnay as well as a 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, 2017 Merlot, and 2016 Red Blend; a 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon will debut this spring. Like Cohn before him, the change of scenery has invigorated the winemaker, who's quick to tout the many virtues of the Sonoma Valley AVA. Hugo says "it's only similar to Napa in that it's enclosed by two mountain ranges"—the Mayacamas Mountains to the east and the Sonoma Mountains to the west—"but Sonoma Valley is cooler, and the wines have always possessed an electric energy and freshness that make them unique."

It's undeniable that Napa has made an indelible mark on New World Cabernet, but Sonoma Valley has proved itself to be a vivid and layered counterpart, with a style that skews more Old World. As the fog rolls in over the vineyards, which often resemble those of Tuscany, it creates pockets of distinctly cool growing areas; B.R. Cohn, fortunately, has an enviable resource at its disposal for frost protection, as natural hot springs beneath the estate can be counted on to warm the soil throughout the growing season.

Unfolding aboveground each September, meanwhile, is one of the hottest music events in Northern California: Presented by BottleRock, the Sonoma Harvest Music Festival has a distinctly modern image that aligns with B.R. Cohn's. There's no sign of the Doobie Brothers at the top of the bill, but that's just fine: As a fresh wave of musicians takes the stage every year, they likewise bring a new generation of wine drinkers to the winery's front door—reinforcing that there's never been a better time to discover this Sonoma jewel. *SJ*

Tasting Notes by Editor-in-Chief

Meridith May

B.R. Cohn 2018 Chardonnay, Russian River Valley (\$17)

Did someone just squeeze a lemon wedge? There's an immediate sense of vibrancy on the nose, which stays lively with a touch of white flower petals. Buttered apple tarte tatin gets a lift from another twist of lemon as the first sip zings across the tongue. Refreshing acidity leaps across notes of salted cashew. **90**

B.R. Cohn 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, North Coast (\$25)

This round, sumptuous red exudes aromas of grilled meat and ripe black fruit awakened by cinnamon. Deep espresso and black olive serve as bass notes on the palate alongside supple tannins; weaving around cedar and briar, they merge with wild cherry toward the finish. **91**

B.R. Cohn 2016 Cabernet Sau- vignon, Sonoma County (\$60)

Intense perfumes of violets, graphite, and black olives meld together in a harmonious bouquet. The elegant tannins are seamless, the dark chocolate pure velvet, and the notes of blackberry and blueberry ripe and divine. It's a decidedly unshowy showpiece of a red. **94**



Where Are They Now?

IN PART TWO OF OUR SERIES, WE HEAR FROM THREE MORE GRADUATES OF THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA'S WINE PROGRAM

by Bob Bath, MS

PHOTO COURTESY OF MILES WHITE



Miles White, co-owner of Graft Wine Shop in Charleston, SC.

FOR THE FIRST installment of this series in our February/March 2020 issue, we caught up with alumni of the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, which launched a graduate-level Accelerated Wine and Beverage certification in 2010 that has since evolved into a Professional Studies in Wine Management program. In part two, we hear from three more graduates who are forging ahead on their respective career paths as a retail shop owner, hospitality director, and sommelier.

Staying Nimble: Miles White

Charleston native and Graft Wine Shop co-owner Miles White made a decision early on to pursue a career in hospitality: "I knew I wanted to be in this industry from a young age, and it's all I've ever done," says White, who attended the College of Charleston, Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, and the César Ritz College in Brig, Switzerland, in addition to the CIA.

"The [Accelerated Wine and Beverage] program taught me things in such a small frame of time that would've taken me years on my own—and even then, it wouldn't have been as substantial," he adds. "When I graduated, I honestly felt like I could walk into any business in the industry and my resume would've stood out."

White says that "learning the business side of the industry has also helped tremendously" when it comes to running a retail shop: "As we enter our second year at Graft, my responsibilities have shifted more toward management of the business, namely running inventory, maintaining the books, payroll, and scheduling," he continues. "With [roughly] 400 labels, we are constantly changing wines, so we're always tasting. My business partner and I still buy all of the wine together."

Harnessing Knowledge: Jessica Edson

Growing up in Gill, Massachusetts, Jessica Edson was all about horses: Under the tutelage of master horseman and riding instructor François Lemaire de Ruffieu, she participated in equestrian competitions around the world before her educational aspirations eventually led her back to her home state, where she received a degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Isenberg School of Management.

Intent on finding the same level of mentorship that she had experienced during her riding career, Edson enrolled in the Accelerated Wine and Beverage Program, which she said was “an eye-opening experience from the start.” “I knew within the first few days that I had an opportunity to open the door to the world that I wanted to be in—I just had to work for it,” Edson adds.

After graduation, Edson was immediately hired at a three-Michelin-starred restaurant “due to the reputation of the program and the credentials [she] had earned as a wine professional,” which she says “have given [her] a distinct advantage in each of [her] positions within the industry.” That includes her current role as Director of Hospitality for Napa Valley's Tuck Beckstoffer Estate, where she runs the direct-to-consumer program. “As a small winery, we wear many hats,” she says. “In addition to the DTC program, my job consists of building lasting relationships with each and every guest who visits the estate as well as those who contact us remotely.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF TUCK BECKSTOFFER ESTATE



Jessica Edson is the Director of Hospitality for Tuck Beckstoffer Estate in Napa Valley.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANNON MCKINLEY



Certified Sommelier Shannon McKinley recently accepted a position as F&B Director at the Montage Laguna Beach hotel in Laguna Beach, CA.

Exploring All Avenues: Shannon McKinley

Shannon McKinley grew up in a small desert town in Southern California. Already equipped with a passion for food at age 17, she left home to attend Le Cordon Bleu in Pasadena and completed the program with an externship in Italy.

McKinley then returned to California and enrolled at the CIA at Greystone, where she graduated with the inaugural class of the Accelerated Wine and Beverage Program. Now a Certified Sommelier, she serves as the F&B Director at the Montage Laguna Beach hotel; prior to her current position, she was Wine Director for The Winery Restaurant and Wine Bar in La Jolla, where she managed a program of more than 500 wines while providing education to the staff.

“You tell people you came from the CIA graduate program and they take notice,” McKinley says. “Having a certification from a top school is a great way to open the door. [That] door has also been held open by a lot of fantastic people I met along the way through my education. The networking aspect of the program and the scope of different avenues that we explored . . . were invaluable—it opened my eyes to all the possibilities that this industry holds and made me want to explore all of them.” SJ

For more on the CIA's graduate programs, visit ciachef.edu/cia-masters-degree-and-certificate-programs.



somm

RELIEF PROJECT

SOMMICON & THE SOMM JOURNAL

Relief

Is on the Way

THE SOMM JOURNAL AND SOMMCON JOIN FORCES
TO LAUNCH **THE SOMM RELIEF PROJECT**

by Lars Leicht

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SommCon, *The SOMM Journal* has established The SOMM Relief Project to provide financial aid to professional sommeliers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the founding sponsor-donor, the Banfi Vintners Foundation has pledged grants that somms can apply toward ongoing education to sustain their careers or that those who are suddenly out of work can use for economic support.

"Our incredibly vibrant community is being put to the test by this crisis," says Meredith May, Publisher of *The SOMM Journal*. "We want to make sure they are able to continue their professional studies and economically sustain themselves during any interruption to their careers."

In addition to financial aid, The SOMM Relief Project will provide tuition-free learning opportunities, including an ongoing webinar series of producer panels that will explore various themes related to winemaking, terroir, sensory evaluation, and more.

"Even if wine jobs are temporarily suspended, education and self-improvement must go on," says Michelle Metter, partner and co-founder of SommCon. "Wine professionals must continue to hone their skills and stay sharp in this rapidly changing environment. It might seem like the world is standing still, but your career should not."

The Banfi Vintners Foundation, a longtime supporter of the sommelier community through its professional enrichment trips to Italy, its Cru Artisan College seminar series, and other activities, was the first to step up by pledging grants-in-aid for The SOMM Relief Project.

"My family has always believed in giving back to the community and supporting continued learning of the many facets of wine culture," says Cristina Mariani-May of the Banfi Vintners Foundation. "In these incredibly challenging days, we stand behind wine professionals as they prepare themselves to face uncertain times ahead."

Requests for grants-in-aid will be reviewed by a task force created by *The SOMM Journal* and SommCon. To access the requirements and application, click on the SOMM Relief Project link at either sommjournal.com or sommconusa.com. SJ

"Our incredibly vibrant community is being put to the test by this crisis. We want to make sure [sommeliers] are able to continue their professional studies and economically sustain themselves during any interruption to their careers."

—SOMM JOURNAL PUBLISHER MERIDITH MAY

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The COVID-19 crisis poses an existential threat to the wine industry, but many organizations and businesses are rising to the occasion of this unprecedented challenge as they mobilize to offer much-needed resources and support: New nonprofits and networks are forming; restaurants are converting into small grocers in addition to offering takeout and delivery; wineries are forgoing shipping costs; and retailers are offering curbside pick-up, among other creative solutions. We're all doing what we can to stop the leaks and prevent our great ship from sinking.

That statement will certainly apply to the SOMM Relief Project recipients, some of whom will be featured in the upcoming June/July issue of *The SOMM Journal*. In the meantime, find more information on upcoming SOMM Relief Project webinars, tentatively scheduled to start at the end of April, at sommjournal.com and sommconusa.com.

{ northern italy }



At the inaugural Barolo & Barbaresco World Opening in New York, tasters could self-pour from stations that were organized by commune and devoted to single-vineyard wines designated as *Menzioni Geografiche Aggiuntive* (MGAs).

The Pride of Piedmont

AN INAUGURAL NEW YORK TRADE TASTING DEBUTS THE 2016 BAROLO AND 2017 BARBARESCO VINTAGES

by Deborah Parker Wong

IN EARLY FEBRUARY, approximately 200 producers presented their 2016 and 2017 vintages to members of the trade in what was billed as the world's largest tasting dedicated to Piedmont. Hosted by the Consorzio di Tutela Barolo Barbaresco Alba Langhe e Dogliani, the inaugural Barolo & Barbaresco World Opening unfolded at Center415 in midtown Manhattan for five hours: a boon for tasters who for once had time on our side.

In a tasting hall positively vibrating with energy and sound, the wines—most of which hailed from the 2013 and 2015 vintages—showed impeccably. (They were likely less affected by bottle shock from being shipped than some of the younger vintages we evaluated the following day at the World's Best Palates tasting at the



PHOTOS: GABRI PORTER

Chef Massimo Bottura speaks to the media during the Barolo & Barbaresco World Opening gala dinner at Eataly Downtown in New York, NY.

PUBLIC Hotel.) Stationed at the center of the room were two tables devoted to 149 Barolo and 150 Barbaresco single-vineyard wines designated as *Menzioni Geografiche Aggiuntive* (MGAs), meaning a geographical marker has been added to the primary appellation to indicate a smaller area.

While those tables beckoned, I devoted

my time to the producers themselves, many of whom rarely travel to the United States. I seized the opportunity to taste with more of them in the span of a few hours than I could visit over a period of several years, and for all intents and purposes, I spent the afternoon in Piedmont.

Tasters also had the option of attend-

ing two seminars on the finer points of the Barolo and Barbaresco MGAs led by Italian author and cartographer Alessandro Masnaghetti, who recently revised his bilingual encyclopedia *Barolo MGA Vol. I and Vol. II*. “After years of research on vineyards, soils, plots, and even rows within the same vineyard, 181 names in Barolo and 66 in Barbaresco have been officially approved as MGAs that can be listed on the wine labels,” said Masnaghetti. “Even if at first sight this looks complicated for the consumer, it’s actually an incredible wine-education tool that will generate even more curiosity about the differences of micro-terroir and increase the value of collectable, rare bottles.”

For the aforementioned World’s Best Palates blind tasting, the Consorzio invited dozens of influential tasters from around the world to assess and score the 2016 and 2017 vintages in panels of four: I led one that included tasters from India, South Africa, Boston, and New York; *SOMM Journal* columnist Laura Donadoni sat on another that was equally diverse (see our tasting notes below).



The gala dinner featured the cuisine of Michelin-starred chef Massimo Bottura and a performance by the Italian operatic pop trio Il Volo.

“This is the first time that many Langhe producers are showing their wines blind,” said Luciano Racca, partner and winemaker at Raineri. “Typically the producer is pouring the wines [and] explaining their nuances and his or her intentions. Without that context, we must rely on the tasters to understand the vintage, quality, and style of the wines.” Third-generation producer Elena Revello of Revello Fratelli added, “It’s a fair way of evaluating the wines, and it benefits the producers for their wines to be considered in this way.”

The most compelling insights came from cross-referencing my notes from the walkaround tasting with the same wines that I also tasted blind. If there was ever a case for broadening one’s horizons, it was demonstrated very plainly here. I had top-scoring wines from every commune, but one in particular—a precise, medium-bodied expression with exceptional fruit purity and minerality from the up-and-coming Ravera MGA—echoed the Consorzio’s message that there’s tremendous potential waiting to be discovered in Piedmont. **S**

Tasting Notes

Piazzo 2016 Barolo Reserva Sottocastello di Novella Walnuts and cinnamon appear on a palate driven by evolved fruit; showing darker spices, tobacco, and characteristically supple tannins. —*Deborah Parker Wong*

Abbona Marziano 2016 Barolo Cerviano-Merli, Novello

From the calcareous soils of Ravera. Intensely aromatic and precise, this medium-bodied wine shows varietal typicity, harmony, and fine minerality. Singularly expressive. —*D.P.W.*

Trediberri 2016 Barolo Rocche Dell’Annunziata La Morra

Among the most accessible, with floral aromas, deep notes of cherry and strawberry, baking spices, and fine, silky tannins. Balanced and fresh. —*D.P.W.*

Salvano 2013 Barolo Riserva Sourced from Barolo, La Morra, Seralunga, and Diano d’Alba. Leads with savory tobacco and cocoa; notes of vanilla and cedar play out on a silky, refined palate. —*D.P.W.*

Raineri 2015 Barolo Santo Stefano, Perno The first vintage re-release of this wine, it shows vinous and ripe aromas as well as cedar, graphite, camphor, and darker fruits with firm, generous tannins and a mouth-filling body. —*D.P.W.*

Giacomo Borgogno e Figli 2015 Barolo, Liste An intense, perfumed, and charming wine to cellar for a decade or more. A masterpiece, with a touch of pink pepper, licorice, light floral notes, and bright red fruit. Unfiltered. —*Laura Donadoni*

Anna Maria Abbona 2015 Barolo, Bricco San Pietro Rhubarb, mushrooms, white roses, and tea leaves make up a complex bouquet completed by elegant tannins and balanced acidity. Multidimensional finesse and structure. —*L.D.*

Oddero Poderi e Cantine 2013 Barolo Riserva, Bussia Vigna Mondoca Powerful yet delicate, with a distinctive nose of cloves, wild strawberries, forest floor, and truffles. Hints of tobacco and leather complete the intriguing character of this collectable Barolo. —*L.D.*

Giovanni Sordo 2016 Barolo, Perno Violets, strawberries, ripe raspberries, cinnamon, and mountain herbs; remarkable sapid finish, bright acidity, and velvety tannins. Graceful with a strong personality and great aging potential. —*L.D.*

Massimo Rattalino 2014 Ottantadue82 Currà Barbaresco Dried roses and charred, smoky notes with gorgeous, lush red fruit and a persistent finish. A contemporary first release for this producer. —*D.P.W.*

Castello di Neive 2016 Barbaresco Albesani Santo Stefano Pink pepper, juniper berries, red currant, and delicate violets on an intense palate. This ready-to-drink Nebbiolo has elevated food-pairing versatility and can age gracefully for another ten years. —*L.D.*

AN EXPLORATION OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

**THE WINES OF SPAIN
AND PORTUGAL
LAUNCH THE FIRST
INSTALLMENT OF *THE
SOMM JOURNAL'S*
GEOGRAPHICAL
DIGEST SERIES**

With hundreds of native grape varieties and a long history of winemaking that dates back to the ancient Phoenicians, the countries of the Iberian Peninsula—Spain and Portugal—are known for their distinctive regional styles.

Today, Spain is the world's third-largest wine producer, with 30% more acreage under vine than France or Italy. More than half of the country's wine regions are classified as Denominación de Origen (DO); only two regions, Rioja and Priorat, qualify for Denominación de Origen Calificada (DOCa)/Denominació d'Origen Qualificada (DOQ) status. Portugal, meanwhile, has 14 regulated regions, including the Douro, the world's oldest wine demarcation.

Largely due to its staggeringly diverse lineup of native varieties, trade and consumer interest in the Iberian Peninsula is on the rise. To capture a comprehensive picture of this vast and influential area, the editors of *The SOMM Journal* tasted through more than 200 wines for the first installment of our new Geographical Digest series. Here are the top picks from our team, sorted by country and then by region. —Deborah Parker Wong

PHOTO COURTESY OF FREIXENET MONNETTO USA



*A view of
the Seguras
Viudas
winery in
Penedès.*

The Quality Wine Regions of Spain



MAP COURTESY OF THE WINE SCHOLAR GUILD

SPAIN



Red Skirt Sparkling Rosé Sangria (\$11) This sangria was a standout among the Spanish expressions, largely due to its delightful nose of exotic flowers, bright cranberry, and red licorice. The palate is dry but the flavors pique the taste buds: Soft bubbles wash over the tongue in tandem with rose petals and raspberries.

MERCADO WINE PRODUCTS

GALICIA

Situated in the country's northwest, Galicia is part of the coastline region referred to as "Green Spain" because of its high amount of rainfall. The soils in this lush area are predominantly granite-based along the western coast, with clay, slate, and shale also present in the inland areas. Galicia's vineyards, which are located along riverbanks and on steep hillsides, are predominantly planted with indigenous grapes like Albariño, Treixadura, Godello, and Mencía. —Rick Fisher

Pazos del Rey 2018 Mencía, Monterrei (\$15) Sourced from slopes along the Duero riverbank in Galicia's southeastern corner, this is an incredibly delicate and feminine version of the Mencía grape. The Mediterranean climate is milder than that of Rías Baixas, with hot and dry summers and cold winters. High-toned acidity joins flavors of raspberry, briar, sweet tobacco, and sour cherry. White pepper dots the tongue.

AVIVA VINO

DO RÍAS BAIXAS

DO Rías Baixas is Spain's westernmost appellation and consists of five subzones. While it's one of the country's newer wine regions (it gained official DO status in 1988), it's quickly become one of the most popular and sought-after. The soils are mostly granite, with some alluvium along the numerous rivers that flow through the region. The maritime climate sees an average rainfall of more than 65 inches annually, and, as a result, the vines are typically planted on pergola systems. The undisputed home of Albariño, Rías Baixas produces high-acid, fresh, and zesty wines. —Rick Fisher

Maior de Mendoza Sobre Lías 2018 Albariño The vineyard sources for this wine, located near the Atlantic Ocean in the Salnés Valley subzone, were planted long before the DO's creation; they're sustainably farmed without herbicides and pesticides and harvested entirely by hand. Aromas of honeysuckle, oregano, and lime give way to salted cashew with a dollop of lemon meringue on the palate. The slick and lean acidity cuts through. ➔

M IMPORTS



CASTILLA Y LEÓN

Situated squarely atop the northern Meseta plateau between the Cordillera Cantábrica and Sistema Central mountain ranges at elevations of more than 2,000 feet, Castilla y León experiences a continental climate with extreme temperature swings. Fortunately, the Duero River and its many tributaries flow throughout the region, providing much-needed relief to the vineyards; the vines, meanwhile, are typically trained in the ancient gobelet (head-trained bush vine) system, which enables the leaves to protect the grapes. Numerous soil types abound throughout, but sand, clay, alluvium, and limestone are the most prevalent. Red wines dominate and Tempranillo is the most-planted grape. —Rick Fisher

Viñas del Cenit 2011 Cenit Tempranillo, Tierra del Vino de Zamora (\$45) The winery's sandy/cobblestone vineyards, all planted in the pre-phylloxera era, range in age from 120 to 150 years. A mature and sturdy teeth-stainer, this inky-black 100% Tempranillo aged in barrel for 16 months and shows incredible depth of character as well as aromas of balsamic and blackberry. Ripe and earthy with grainy tannins, its slate-tinged midsection keeps the sweet black fruit in check.

AVIVA VINO

DO RUEDA

The oldest winegrowing area in Castilla y León, Rueda officially earned DO status in 1980, but it's been producing noteworthy wines for centuries. It's located in the south-central part of the region, with the Duero cutting through its northern section, and is home to one of Spain's largest concentrations of pre-phylloxera vines; the soils are dominated by gravel, stone, and sandy limestone. Known for its whites, which are predominantly made with the native Verdejo grape, Rueda accounts for approximately 40% of the country's white-wine production. —Rick Fisher

Portia 2018 Verdejo (\$19) Salted white flowers join lemon on the nose before sparkling acidity buzzes across the palate with cashew and chamomile. White grapefruit zest appears on the finish.

PACIFIC HIGHWAY WINES

Bodegas Naia 2018 Naia Verdejo (\$15) This 100% Verdejo aged on the lees for four months and was fermented in stainless-steel vats (85%) and French oak tanks (15%) that hold over 2,600 gallons. The fruit was sourced from vineyards ranging in age from 25 to 35 years. Pretty aromas of orange blossom and papaya precede zingy acidity on the palate and a hint of anise and dried herbs.

AVIVA VINO



Portia Winery in Ribera del Duero features a distinctive design.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PACIFIC HIGHWAY WINE & SPIRITS

DO RIBERA DEL DUERO

This DO has one of the highest average elevations of all European wine regions: between 2,500 and 2,800 feet. (Some vineyards actually reach as high as 3,100 feet.) Located in central Castilla y León, it's bisected by the Duero and has an extreme continental climate. The early-ripening Tempranillo, locally referred to as Tinto Fino and Tinta del País, is perfectly suited to these conditions and accounts for 98% of all plantings. Ribera del Duero is home to at least 32 different soil types, but sandy limestone and clay are the most prevalent. Many of the vines planted within its borders are more than 100 years old. —Rick Fisher

Condado de Oriza 2015 Reserva Tempranillo (\$15) With intense tannins and a robust body, this heady wine takes you for a wild ride. Notes of forest floor and dried fruits join gamey and savory flavors threaded with lean acidity. →

FÉLIX SOLÍS AVANTIS

Brisios 2016 Tempranillo (\$26) A great example of subtle power and persistent aromatics, this blend of 90% Tempranillo, 8% Merlot, and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon spent 16 months in both new and one-year-old 300-liter French oak casks. It's luxurious and fruit-forward, with scents of clove, cedar, and red plum as well as great acidity. Orange peel, coffee bean, balsamic, and heather are just a few of the flavors we picked up, but the list could keep going ...

THE SPANISH VINEYARDS

Bodegas Portia 2016 Prima La Encina (\$43) Aged 15 months in French oak, this 100% Tempranillo opens up luxuriously. Cedar-kissed notes of chocolate and blueberries match up well with its Old World acidity, as do the persistent flavors of toffee and ripe cherry. It's a sturdy expression with a high approachability level. →

PACIFIC HIGHWAY WINES

DOCA RIOJA, LA RIOJA/NAVARRA/PAÍS VASCO

DOCa Rioja is one of Spain's most historic and well-known wine regions. Straddling the Ebro River, much of its western portion lies in the shadow of the Sierra de Cantabria range. The climate is predominantly continental, with some maritime influences to the west and Mediterranean influences to the east. Planted in calcareous clay, ferrous (iron-rich) clay, and alluvial soils, the vineyards span the three autonomous regions that make up the DOCa—La Rioja, País Vasco, and Navarra—and range from 1,000 to 2,800 feet in elevation. Subzones Rioja Alta (in La Rioja), Rioja Alavesa (in País Vasco), and Rioja Oriental (in Navarra) are climatically distinct.

Commonly blended with Garnacha Tinta and/or other authorized grapes, Tempranillo is the dominant variety here as well. —Rick Fisher

Bodegas Faustino 2006 Faustino I Gran Reserva (\$40) From what was considered to be a very good vintage in Rioja, this blend of 86% Tempranillo, 9% Graciano, and 5% Mazuelo aged 26 months in American oak followed by an additional three years in bottle. On the palate, teeth-coating tannins encounter red-peppered red fruit, cinnamon-spiced rose petals, and tobacco before a hint of peppermint cools the mouth. This glorious red has flawlessly endured the passage of time. →

PACIFIC HIGHWAY WINES



**Bodegas Campillo
2009 Campillo Gran
Reserva (\$50)**

From Grupo Faustino, this single-vineyard red (90% Tempranillo and 10% Graciano) aged 30 months in French oak, whose presence is apparent on the nose alongside toffee, wild cherry, and cedar. It's a bright, elegant, and white-peppered beauty with balanced acidity.



PACIFIC HIGHWAY WINES

Monteleiva 2011 Reserva (\$20)

Aged 18 months in American oak and 12 months in bottle, this 90% Tempranillo/10% Mazuelo blend macerated for 25 days with daily pump-overs. Spiced cedar and coffee bean persist on the nose, while the palate carries flavors of vanilla, red plum, and cigar leaf. It's a dignified wine with pizzazz, reined-in power, and a finish of white pepper.



THE SPANISH VINEYARDS

Bodegas Obalo 2016 Obalo Crianza (\$20)

In terms of style, this 100% Tempranillo is the most modern of the group, with well-integrated oak, grainy tannins, and dense notes of ripe fruit and dark chocolate. Grown on calcareous clay soils, the grapes come from 45- to 70-year-old vines; the wine itself matured 12 months in French oak. Bodegas Obalo is part of Avante Selecta, whose nine wineries are dispersed throughout Spain's winegrowing areas.

AVIVA VINO

Dating back to the 12th century, Roqueta Origen is one of the oldest wineries in Catalonia.



PHOTO COURTESY OF M IMPORTS

CATALONIA

Catalonia (aka Catalunya) occupies the northeast corner of the Iberian Peninsula. Due to its proximity to the Pyrenees mountain range and the Mediterranean Sea, the area is home to multiple climatic influences, all of which positively impact the wines produced here. Throughout the region, soils range from alluvium and limestone to pockets of granite and slate. Catalonia is one of Spain's most diverse wine regions, and indigenous grapes dominate the landscape, with international varieties reserved mostly for blends. —Rick Fisher

Roqueta Origen Gacha Garnacha 2018 Catalunya (\$14)

This 100% Garnacha is sourced from vineyards planted along the Ebro River on calcareous clay. (The Roqueta family of Barcelona owns the winery and has been linked to Spanish winemaking for more than eight centuries.) Clear-cut aromas of rhubarb, root vegetable, and white-peppered cedar give way to bright flavors of balanced fruit and Old World acidity. Cherry, kirsch, and a hint of clove emerge with textural denseness, resulting in a chewiness that makes this wine all the more interesting.



M IMPORTS

DO CAVA

Cava is the go-to alternative to Champagne for many contemporary consumers, but traditional-method sparkling wine has been produced in Spain for more than a century. The category's home base is Penedès in central Catalonia, where Cava accounts for nearly 95% of all production; it's typically crafted from three local grapes—Macabeo, Xarel-lo, and Parellada—grown on vines planted in calcareous and clay soils at elevations between 300 feet (near the Mediterranean coast) and 2,600 feet.

The DO continues to evolve, adding new quality-focused designations like the Cava de Paraje Calificado (a single-vineyard classification established in 2017) while making adjustments to organic and minimum-aging requirements. —Rick Fisher

Segura Viudas Cava Brut, Penedès (\$12) This blend of 50% Macabeo, 35% Parellada, and 15% Xarel-lo is whole cluster-pressed to retain a fruity character and prevent oxidation; specially selected yeast strains help bring out structure and complex aromas. Aged on the lees in underground caves for 9–10 months on average, it's a labor-intensive wine, with scents of lemon blossom, oregano, and chamomile. Dried herbs dot the palate as light and charming bubbles quickly dissipate, revealing notes of brioche that give way to a stony finish. 11.5% ABV.

FREIXENET MIONETTO USA

Segura Viudas Brut Rosé Cava, Penedès (\$12) Strawberry and pink grapefruit perfume the glass of this gorgeous cava rosado, which aged for 12 months and features 90% Trepat and 10% Garnacha. Defined by decisive flavors of cherry pith, grapefruit zest, and grenadine, it possesses a subtle richness thanks to its refined mousse and textural complexity.

FREIXENET MIONETTO USA

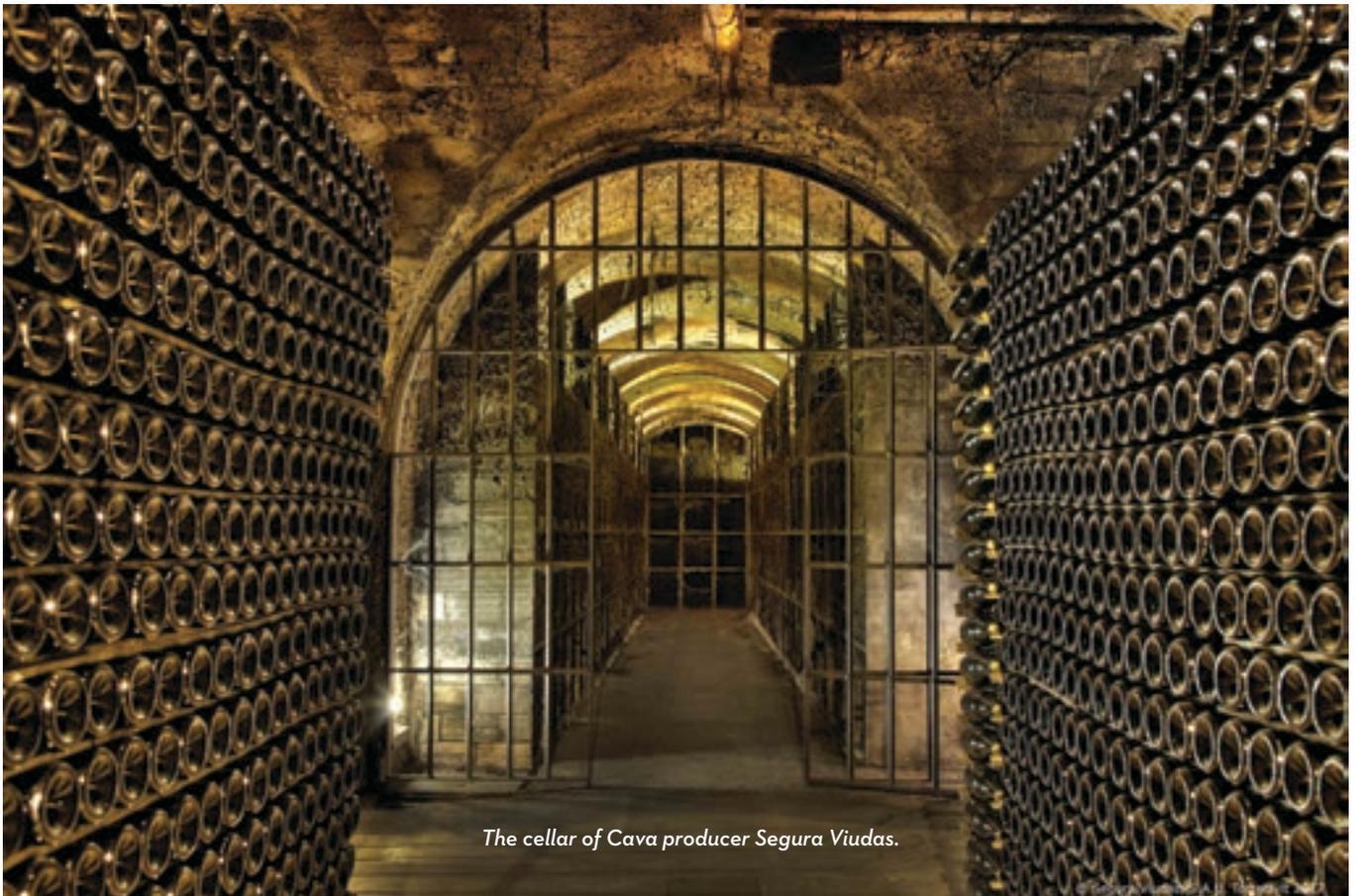
Segura Viudas Reserva Heredad Cava, Penedès (\$30)

This winery's equivalent of a tête de cuvée was three years in the making: It's a refreshing, elegant blend of 67% Macabeo and 33% Parellada made from nine different wines, each of which was vinified in separate tanks and spent 30 months on the lees. Aromas of brioche and lemon verbena intertwine with brine, tarragon, and honeysuckle, entrancing before the first sip. Persistent bubbles pave the way for a floral parade of flavor that's light and airy with a touch of smoke. Minerality ensues on the mid-palate, where it's joined by notes of bread dough, lemon, lime chiffon, and vanilla.

FREIXENET MIONETTO USA



PHOTO COURTESY OF FREIXENET MIONETTO USA



The cellar of Cava producer Segura Viudas.

DOQ PRIORAT

One of just two appellations to earn DOQ status—Spain's highest classification—Priorat has produced wine since the late 12th century, when Carthusian monks inhabited the area. The region stretches southward from the Serra de Montsant mountains in southern Catalonia and has a distinctive continental microclimate. Its vineyards are planted at elevations of up to 2,500 feet in its famed, quartz-rich slate soils, known as llicorella; Garnacha Tinta and Cariñena dominate the plantings and are commonly blended (sometimes with other native and/or international grapes) to produce the highly concentrated, mineral-driven red wines for which Priorat is known.

—Rick Fisher

Cal Grau 2014 Badaceli, El Molar (\$33) This blend of 60% Garnacha and 40% Cariñena aged 14 months in 30% new French oak. It's big, bold, and slightly astringent, with aromas of wild strawberry and slate. High-toned acidity and dried herbs reign on the palate with notes of lilac and salted rose petals. Spicy root vegetables and rhubarb make an impression on the finish.

THE SPANISH VINEYARDS

CASTILLA-LA MANCHA

Castilla-La Mancha occupies the southern portion of the massive Meseta plateau and is bordered by mountain ranges to the north and south; ranging in elevation from 2,000 to 2,500 feet, it's covered throughout by limestone-dominant soils. The region's continental climate sees extreme temperature swings and rainfall as low as 8 inches annually. Heavily agricultural, Castilla-La Mancha has the highest concentration of vineyards of any region in Spain: Fifty percent of the country's vineyards are here.

—Rick Fisher

Prospero Brut (\$12) A blend of Chardonnay, Airén, and Viura with a low ABV of 11%, this Spanish sparkler is a great value. The merry array of aromas includes Newtown Pippin apple, white flower petals, and an herby thread of lemon. The bubbles dissipate quickly, charming the mouth with fine acidity and notes of honeyed cashew and Asian pear.

FÉLIX SOLÍS AVANTIS



MURCIA

Murcia is located south of the autonomous region of Valencia on the Mediterranean coast. Moving inland, where the major wine-producing areas are located, the climate becomes increasingly continental. Rainfall there amounts to just 12–14 inches annually, so the thick-skinned and drought-tolerant Monastrell (aka Mourvèdre) is fittingly the dominant red grape in the region; it's planted primarily in rocky limestone soils prevalent throughout Murcia, especially within its signature DO, Jumilla. —Rick Fisher



Red Skirt 2017 Red Blend, Jumilla (\$11)

Aged four months in American and French oak, this blend of organic Syrah and Monastrell grapes is one of the best values to emerge from Jumilla. Vibrant aromas of cocoa-dipped blueberries precede a palate of dried herbs, tart orange peel, raspberry, and plum, which come alive thanks to vivid acidity and a juicy mouthfeel. Vanilla and toasted caramel make waves on the finish.

MERCADO WINE PRODUCTS



Altos de Luzón, Jumilla (\$19)

A stellar and spirited red blend of 50% Monastrell, 25% Tempranillo, and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon from vineyards located on a high plateau, surrounded by mountains in the northern section of Murcia. Its intense perfume shows off fresh notes of blueberry, coffee, tar, and slate. The mouthfeel is exquisite and the acidity a great match for grilled meats.

AVIVA VINO



Pio del Ramo 2014 Alont, Jumilla (\$25)

A top-notch blend of Monastrell, Syrah, and Cabernet Sauvignon, with scents of black plum and balsamic. The palate is generous, satiny, and ripe, with notes of roasted coffee bean, cinnamon, slate, walnut, and black olive that merge on the lengthy finish.

MERCADO WINE PRODUCTS

PORTUGAL

DOC VINHO VERDE, MINHO

Much like its Spanish counterpart, Green Spain, the cool and rainy Vinho Verde region encompasses miles of lush landscape, in its case along the Atlantic coast of northwestern Portugal. The vines are typically planted on pergolas in primarily granitic soils, which yield wines of regional typicity that are renowned for being crisp and fresh with high acid (and, sometimes, a prickly effervescence). White grapes Alvarinho (aka Albariño), Loureiro, and Trajadura dominate the plantings. —Rick Fisher

Quinta de Azevedo 2018 Azevedo Loureiro Alvarinho (\$11) Vineyards on this property date back to the 11th century, when they were bestowed by royal decree to the Azevedo family. This white blend of 70% Loureiro and 30% Alvarinho matured in stainless-steel tanks and exudes delicate aromas of prickly pear and salted nectarine. As white-floral notes dissipate, a lean acidity takes over, imparting a citrusy tartness on the palate.

EVATON



MAP COURTESY OF DINIZ CELLARS

DOC DOURO

Picturesque mountain landscapes are common throughout the Douro region, which is bisected by its namesake river. It's also divided in terms of climate: The eastern portion is classified as continental while the western end is more maritime-influenced, with considerably higher rainfall. The Douro is one of Portugal's smallest regions, yet it produces more wine than any other in the country. Vines are planted on steep terraces in mostly poor, schist soils, with large expanses of indigenous red and white varieties planted throughout. —Rick Fisher

Quinta das Apegadas 2014 Quinta Velha Reserva (\$29) Aged 17 months in French oak, this blend of Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz (aka Tempranillo), and Touriga Nacional hails from a property in Peso da Régua that originally sold its grapes to Port houses. Aromas of violets, anise, and ripe blackberry leap from the glass. The palate is ripe and rich, with a creamy middle that's edged out by a hint of minerality and cherry pith. Structured and elegant, it's one of the best expressions in its category. ➔

DINIZ CELLARS



LARGELY DUE TO ITS STAGGERINGLY DIVERSE LINEUP OF NATIVE VARIETIES, TRADE AND CONSUMER INTEREST IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA IS ON THE RISE.

Quinta do Portal 2017 Reserva (\$32)

A blend of 45% Touriga Nacional, 40% Tinta Roriz, and 15% Touriga Franca, with notes of chocolate-covered cherries that give way to a deep well of cedar and espresso. Grainy tannins, tree bark, and tilled soil add complexity while imparting a pleasurable mouthfeel. →

M IMPORTS



Casa Ferreirinha 2018 Planalto White Reserva (\$17)

This lovely and unique expression, which melds Viosinho, Malvasia Fina, Gouveio, Arinto, Rabigato, and Moscatel, is one of the Douro's most acclaimed white wines. It's made with grapes grown at high altitudes, with a low ABV of 12.5% that's indicative on both the nose and palate. Greenish in hue, it offers up aromas of key lime, minerality, and honeysuckle. Flavors range from gardenia to kiwi before giving way to a salty finish.

EVATON

Rede Reserva Tinto 2014 Douro (\$15)

From the cool subregion of Baixo Corgo, this stunning blend of Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, and Tinta Roriz shows vivid flavors of coffee bean and wild cherry. Its persistent aromas of heather and leather take it from savory to floral and back again. A deep earthiness is sweetened by a finish of molasses and cedar. →

M IMPORTS



PHOTO COURTESY OF M IMPORTS

Paulo Coutinho is the winemaker at Quinta do Portal in the northern Douro Valley.

Boutique wine producer Quinta da Rede is located in the Baixo Corgo subzone of the Douro region.

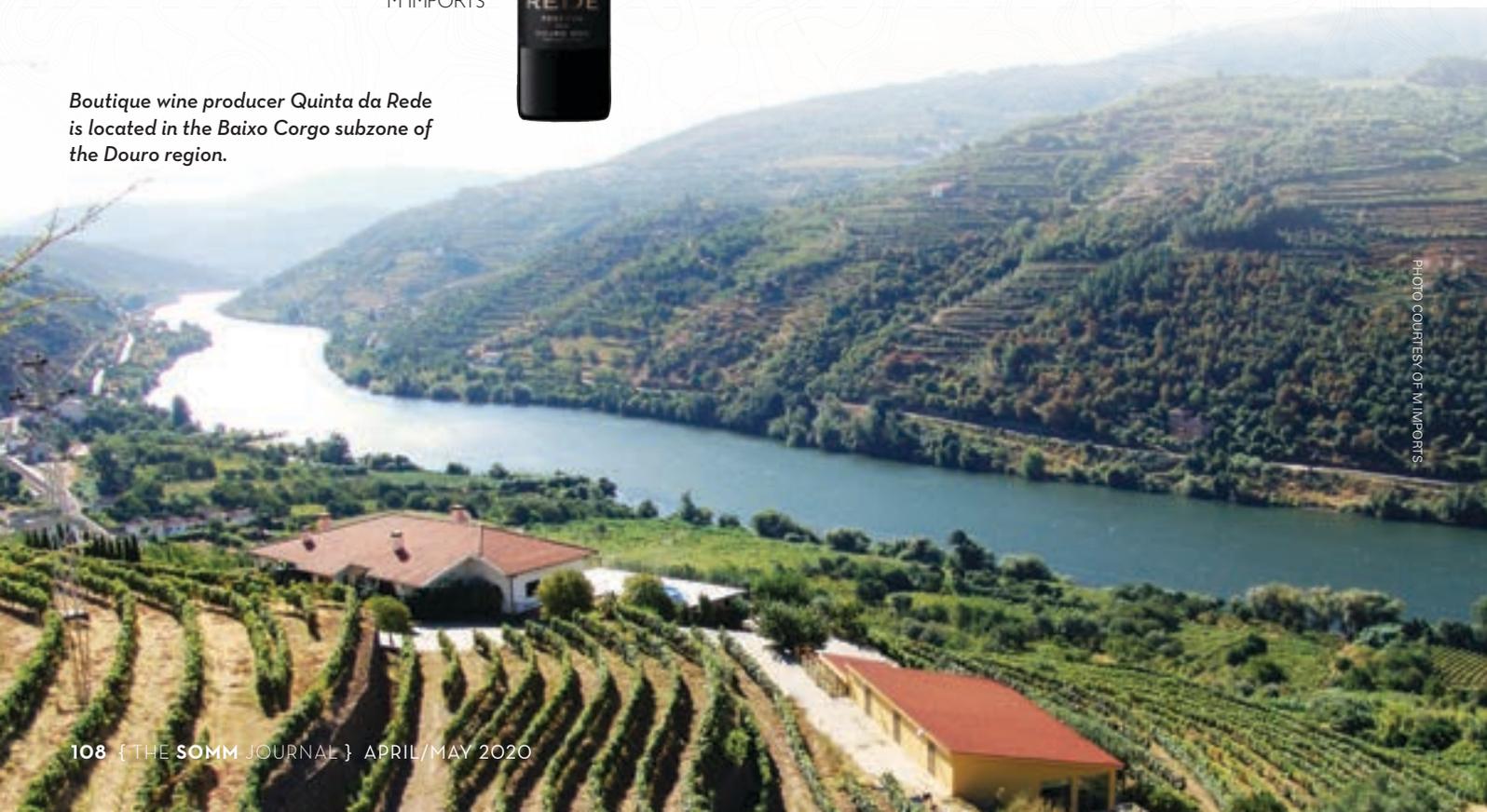


PHOTO COURTESY OF M IMPORTS

DOC DÃO

Surrounded by mountains on all sides, the Dão is located in northern Portugal and sits at the confluence of two climates: maritime and continental. Its vineyards are primarily planted along the Dão River at elevations of 500–1,500 feet in mostly poor, granitic soils. Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz are the star grapes of the region, which largely produces red wines that are often renowned for their ageworthiness. —Rick Fisher

Boas Quintas 2018 Fonte do Ouro (\$13)

From one of Portugal's oldest established wine regions, this lovely white blend of 70% Encruzado and 30% Arinto was grown in granite-based loam soil and aged in stainless-steel vats. On the heels of generous aromas of white tea, papaya, and lime, lithe yet flavorful notes of pineapple, mango, and white flowers are encompassed in great acidity. Minerality emerges on the finish. →

M.S. WALKER



DOC ALENTEJO

Alentejo is located in southeastern Portugal and occupies nearly one-third of the country. Much of the landscape is defined by flat plains and rolling hills, excepting the mountainous area near the Spanish border; and the soils predominantly comprise limestone, clay, schist, and granite. The warmer continental climate is conducive to the production of easy-drinking, fruit-driven red wines; Aragonéz (aka Tempranillo) is the region's the most-planted grape. —Rick Fisher

Duquesa Maria 2017 Superior (\$14) A blend of 30% Alicante Bouschet, 30% Syrah, 20% Touriga Nacional, and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, with beautiful scents of lilac and vanilla that are mirrored on the palate. Pansies, jasmine, and spiced clay add to the bouquet as high acidity imparts freshness on the fleshy texture. Salted raspberry dots the middle of the tongue on the finish. →

DINIZ CELLARS



Dona Maria 2014 Grande Reserva (\$44) This ripe and satiny single-vineyard blend of Alicante Bouschet, Petit Verdot, Touriga Nacional, and Syrah features well-integrated tannins; dynamic aromas of blackberry preserves, espresso, tar, and slate; and some minty astringency on the palate. Flavors of coffee bitters, tobacco, and blackstrap molasses are lathered in blackberry. Big-shouldered and impressive, the wine fermented in ancient marble "lagares" tanks and aged one year in French oak. ←

M.S. WALKER

LISBOA

Lisboa covers a long stretch of land along the Atlantic coast of central Portugal; the coastal vineyards are battered by high winds and rain, making it difficult for grapes to ripen fully. The inland vineyards, on the other hand, are home to some of the region's best wines and are planted in soils predominantly composed of limestone. A considerable number of indigenous and international grapes grow throughout Lisboa, spawning a wide variety of wine styles. —Rick Fisher

Ruelas 2018 Red Reserva (\$11) Vinified in stainless-steel tanks, this blend of Syrah, Touriga Nacional, and Tinta Roriz tastes like it should cost double or triple the price; the grapes were grown on the renowned Quinta do Gradil estate in the western foothills of the majestic Montejunto mountain range. Aromas of olives, soy sauce, and espresso are deep and savory, and on the palate, fruit pops atop a pillow-light texture. Inherent spice persists throughout, melding with desiccated blue flowers, fennel, and bright acidity. A deep core of minerality makes this wine a perfect match for food. →

M.S. WALKER



PENÍNSULA DE SETÚBAL

Located south of Lisboa and west of Alentejo, the Península de Setúbal lies over the Tagus River estuary on Portugal's southwestern coast. It has a Mediterranean climate with dry summers and rainy winters, and while much of the region is flat, most grapes are grown at higher elevations in the mountainous Serra da Arrábida area in predominantly limestone and clay-limestone soils. The region is known for its sweet wines crafted from Muscat of Alexandria as well as for its red wines made from indigenous (mostly Castelão) and international varieties. —Rick Fisher

Casa Ermelinda Freitas 2018 Vinha da Valentina (\$13) A deep, dark, and delicious blend of Syrah, Castelão, Aragonês, and Alicante Bouschet that aged six months in French and American oak; aromas of tilled soil and vanilla lead to a lush palate of cocoa, anise, and spiced figs. Among the many, many expressions we tasted, this was a standout. →

M.S. WALKER



THE 2019 SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION

Last November, more than 50 national wine experts convened for three intense days of tasting evaluations at San Francisco's Hotel Nikko as part of the 39th annual San Francisco International Wine Competition. With over 4,000 wines from 28 countries on hand, a well-coordinated volunteer staff was tasked with uncorking and pouring over 20,000 bottles for the judges to blind taste.

For the first time in the competition's history, a "super-panel" comprising competition founder and chairman Anthony Dias Blue, Kiwi wine consultant Jim Herré, and famed British wine expert/Chief Judge Steven Spurrier reviewed and certified every Double Gold wine.

The leading results of the competition are listed on the following pages. For full results, visit sfspiritscomp.com.

2019 PREMIUM AWARDS

THE TASTING PANEL MAGAZINE WINERY OF THE YEAR:

South Coast Winery, Temecula, CA

ANDRÉ TCHelistcheff WINEMAKER(S) OF THE YEAR: Bird in Hand, Australia

PORTFOLIO OF THE YEAR AWARD: E. & J. Gallo

BEST IN SHOW AWARDS

BEST IN SHOW WHITE WINE / BEST CHARDONNAY

Picchetti Winery 2018 Leslie's Estate Chardonnay, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$55)

BEST IN SHOW RED WINE / BEST PINOT NOIR

Fog Crest Vineyards 2018 Upper Block Estate Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$69)

BEST IN SHOW SPARKLING WINE / BEST BRUT

Champagne Collet 2018 Millésime Brut Champagne, France (\$65)

BEST IN SHOW DESSERT WINE / BEST SHERRY

Rancho de Philo NV Triple Cream Sherry, Cucamonga Valley, USA (\$40)

BEST OF VARIETAL/TYPE

BEST BARBERA

DANCIN Vineyards 2017 Onore Barbera, Rogue Valley, USA (\$39)

BEST BLANC DE BLANC

Champagne Collet NV Premier Cru Blanc de Blancs, Champagne, France (\$49)

BEST CABERNET/SYRAH BLEND

Cellardoor Winery 2015 Aurora Red Wine, USA (\$32)

BEST CABERNET FRANC

Hamilton Cellars 2015 Weinbau Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Wahluke Slope, USA (\$35)

BEST CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Priest Ranch 2016 Snake Oil Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$100)

BEST CHENIN BLANC

Simonsig Estate 2019 Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch, South Africa (\$14)

BEST GAMAY BEAUJOLAIS

Leon Roux 2018 Gamay Beaujolais, A.O.C Beaujolais-Villages, France (\$15)

BEST GEWÜRZTRAMINER

Nepenthe 2018 Winemakers Selection Gewürztraminer, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$18)

BEST ICE WINE

Inniskillin Niagara 2018 Sparkling Vidal Icewine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$80)

BEST ITALIAN WHITE VARIETAL

Settesoli 2017 Grillo, Sicily, Italy (\$12)

BEST LATE-HARVEST RED

VINSELEKT MICHLOVSKÝ 2007 Agni, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$17)

BEST LATE-HARVEST RIESLING

Navarro Vineyards 2018 Cluster Select Late Harvest Riesling, Anderson Valley, USA (\$55)

BEST LATE-HARVEST SAUVIGNON BLANC / BEST LATE-HARVEST WINE

The King's 2018 A Sticky End Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)

BEST MALBEC

Shadybrook Estate 2015 Malbec, Coombsville, Napa Valley, USA (\$95)

BEST MERLOT

Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate 2016 Grand Reserve Merlot, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$25)

BEST MUSCAT

Massolino 2018 Moscato d' Asti DOCG, Italy (\$23)

BEST NATIVE AMERICAN RED

Johnson Estate Winery 2018 Estate Grown Concord, Lake Erie, USA (\$10)

BEST NON-BORDEAUX BLEND OVER \$25 / BEST NON-BORDEAUX BLEND

1924 2017 Double Black Red Blend, Lodi, USA (\$13)

BEST OTHER FORTIFIED WINE / BEST FORTIFIED WINE

South Coast Winery NV Daybreak Muscat, South Coast, USA

BEST OTHER ITALIAN RED

Duchman Family Winery 2015 Oswald Vineyards Aglianico, Texas, USA (\$30)

BEST OTHER RHÔNE VARIETAL

Carol Shelton Wines 2016 Oat Valley Vineyard Old Vines Carignane, Alexander Valley, USA (\$28)

BEST OTHER WHITE VARIETAL .7% R.S. OR BELOW / BEST OTHER WHITE VARIETAL

BV Vinařství 2018 Müller Thurgau, Moravia, Czech Republic

BEST OTHER WHITE VARIETAL .71% R.S. OR ABOVE

Ostrožovič 2017 Special Collection Lipovina, Tokaj, Slovakia (\$29)

BEST PASSITO

Barboursville Vineyards 2015 Paxxito Passito, Virginia, USA (\$32)

BEST PETIT VERDOT

V. Sattui Winery 2016 Petit Verdot, Napa Valley, USA (\$47)

BEST PETITE SIRAH

Jeff Runquist Wines 2017 Salman Vineyard Petite Sirah, Clarksburg, USA (\$28)

BEST PINOT BLANC

AGROPOL MIKULOV 2017 Rulandské bílé, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$10)

BEST PINOT GRIS

Franz Keller 2018 Vom Loss Pinot Gris, Baden, Germany (\$30)

BEST PREMIUM BORDEAUX BLEND / BEST BORDEAUX BLEND

San Simeon 2015 Stormwatch Estate Reserve Premium Bordeaux Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$75)

BEST PREMIUM NON-BORDEAUX BLEND UNDER \$25

Raffaldini Vineyards & Winery 2017 Grande Riserva Proprietary Red Wine, Swan Creek, USA (\$55)

BEST RED RHÔNE BLEND

Robert Oatley Vineyards 2017 Signature Series GSM, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$20)

BEST RIESLING .7% R.S. OR BELOW

Bird In Hand 2019 Riesling, Clare Valley, Australia (\$17)

BEST RIESLING 0.71% R.S. OR ABOVE / BEST RIESLING

Vinařství Libál 2017 Ryzlink rýnský, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$8)

BEST RIESLING 6% R.S. OR ABOVE

AGROPOL MIKULOV 2015 Ryzlink vlašský, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$13)

BEST ROSÉ BLEND

Sunseeker 2018 Rosé, California, USA (\$18)

BEST RUBY PORT

Grape Creek Vineyard NV Ruby Port, Texas, USA (\$33)

BEST SAKÉ

HEAVENSAKE 2019 Junmai Daiginjo Sake, Yamaguchi, Japan (\$90)

BEST SANGIOVESE / BEST ITALIAN RED

Naggiar Vineyards 2017 Estate Grown Sangiovese, Sierra Foothills, USA (\$29)

BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC

Mud House 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$13)

BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC/SÉMILLON BLEND

Bird In Hand 2019 Two in the Bush Sauvignon Blanc Semillon, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$14)

BEST SÉMILLON

College Cellars 2018 Stan Clarke Vineyard Estate Semillon, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$18)

BEST SPANISH/PORTUGUESE/ARGENTINE RED

South Coast Winery 2016 Wild Horse Peak Mountain Vineyards Touriga Nacional, South Coast, USA

BEST SPARKLING ROSÉ

J Vineyards and Winery NV Brut Rosé, Russian River Valley, USA (\$45)

BEST SWEET RED

Grape Creek Vineyard 2018 Grand Rouge Sweet Red Wine, Texas, USA (\$22)

BEST SYRAH

Arrington Vineyards 2017 Syrah, USA (\$27)

BEST TEMPRANILLO

Duchman Family Winery 2015 Salt Lick Vineyards Tempranillo, Texas, USA (\$52)

BEST VARIETAL ROSÉ / BEST ROSÉ

Bird In Hand 2019 Italian Range Pinot Nero Rosé, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$20)

BEST WHITE RHÔNE VARIETAL

McPherson Cellars 2018 Reserve Roussanne, Texas High Plains, USA (\$17)

BEST ZINFANDEL

Miro Cellars 2017 Hemar Vineyard Old Vines Zinfandel, Alexander Valley, USA (\$26)

DOUBLE GOLD WINNERS

Allegretto Wines 2015 Willow Creek Vineyard Ayres Family Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Willow Creek, Paso Robles, USA (\$85)

Alpha Crucis 2018 Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$85)

ArborBrooks Vineyards 2015 Klipsun Vineyard Sydney Semillon, Red Mountains, Washington, USA (\$36)

Astrolabe 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$22)

BV Vinařství 2018 Frankovka Klaret, Moravia, Czech Republic

Barboursville Vineyards 2016 Octagon Premium Bordeaux Blend, Virginia, USA (\$55)

Barefoot Cellars NV Merlot, California, USA (\$7)

Becker Vineyards 2017 Wilmeth Vineyards Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Texas High Plains, USA (\$40)

Becker Vineyards 2018 Tempranillo, Texas, USA (\$15)

Bella Vista Winery 2016 Hill Spring Farms Vineyard Sangiovese, Temecula, USA (\$44)

Bennett Valley Cellars 2017 Pinot Noir, Bennett Valley, USA (\$35)

Benziger Family Winery 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, USA (\$20)

Beresford 2017 Classic Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$17)

Bethel Rd. Winery 2016 Carignan, Templeton Gap District, Paso Robles, USA (\$42)

Biltmore Estate 2018 Limited Release Malbec, USA (\$24)

Bodegas Ysios 2015 Rioja DOCa, Spain (\$34)

Born Premium Sparkling Saké, Fukui, Japan

Born Muroka Nama Genshu Junmai Daiginjo Saké, Fukui, Japan

Born Ginsen Junmai Daiginjo Saké, Fukui, Japan

BUOYANT 2018 Syrah, Santa Lucia Highlands, USA (\$40)

Cameron Hughes 2017 Lot 696 Pinot Noir, Chehalem Mountains, USA (\$20)

Cannonball ELEVEN 2016 Merlot, Sonoma County, USA (\$35)

Caricature 2017 Old Vine Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$15)

Cass Winery 2016 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles Geneseo, USA (\$125)

Castelli Estate 2016 Great Southern Shiraz, Australia (\$23)

Castoro Cellars 2017 ZINFUSION Reserve Zinfandel, Paso Robles, USA (\$24)

Cellardoor Winery 2018 Perfect Stranger White Wine, USA (\$18)

Cellardoor Winery 2018 Vin Doux Naturel Marquette, Maine, USA (\$20)

Champagne Collet NV Art Déco Premier Cru Brut, Champagne, France (\$42)

Château de Pommard 2017 Clos Marey-Monge Monopole Pinot Noir, Pommard AOC, France (\$141)

Chateau St. Croix Winery 2017 Twin Stallion Petite Sirah, USA (\$45)

Chelsea Goldschmidt 2017 Salmon's Leap Merlot, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$20)

Cinder Wines 2016 Reserve Tempranillo, Snake River Valley, USA (\$80)

Cinquain Cellars 2016 Hames Vineyard Petite Sirah, Monterey County, USA (\$50)

Clarksburg Wine Company 2018 Chenin Blanc Viognier, Clarksburg, USA (\$20)

Clarksburg Wine Company 2014 C. Vociferous Red Blend, Clarksburg, USA (\$38)

Colonel and The Merchant 2018 Shiraz Cabernet, Langhorne Creek, Australia (\$15)

Colterris 2017 Coloradeaux Red Wine, Grand Valley, USA (\$24)

Cougar Crest Estate Winery 2016 Estate Grown Anniversary Cuvée Premium Bordeaux Blend, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$40)

Crü 2016 Vineyard Montage Pinot Noir, Santa Lucia Highlands, USA (\$25)

Crü 2018 Sierra Madre Vineyard Clone 828 Pinot Noir, Santa Maria Valley, USA (\$70)

D & L Carinalli Vineyards 2017 Estate Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$25)

DANCIN Vineyards 2017 Danseur Syrah, Rogue Valley, USA (\$37)

Dancing Dragonfly Winery NV Ballet White Wine, USA (\$18)

Dandelion Vineyards 2017 Red Queen of the Eden Valley Shiraz, Eden Valley, Australia (\$200)

Davis Family Vineyards 2017 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$45)

Domaine Chandon NV Rosé, California, USA (\$18)

Domaine Chandon 2013 Vintage Brut, Yountville, USA (\$45)

Double Canyon 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Horse Heaven Hills, USA (\$25)

Dutcher Crossing Winery 2016 Proprietor's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$34)

Dutcher Crossing Winery 2016 Proprietor's Reserve Petite Sirah, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$34)

Dutcher Crossing Winery 2016 Hidden Hill Vineyard Syrah, Alexander Valley, USA (\$45)

Earthquake 2016 Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$26)

Eberle Winery 2018 Estate Chardonnay, Paso Robles, USA (\$24)

Ecluse Wines 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$46)

Eden Grove 2018 Shiraz, South Eastern Australia, Australia

Fleur de California 2018 Carneros Select Chardonnay, Carneros, USA (\$20)

Francis Ford Coppola 2016 Director's Cut Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, USA (\$32)

Franzia NV Pinot Grigio/Colombard, USA (\$17)

Furthermore 2016 Nevina's Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$65)

GAZE NV Blueberry Pomegranate Moscato, California, USA (\$6)

Gina NV Black Brachetto, Piedmont, Italy (\$18)

Girasole Vineyards 2018 Zinfandel, Mendocino County, USA (\$14)

Girasole Vineyards 2018 Sangiovese, Mendocino County, USA (\$14)

GoodMills Family Winery 2015 Petite Sirah, Lodi, USA (\$30)

Heirloom Vineyards 2018 Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$40)

Herzog Special Reserve 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, USA (\$44)

Hindsight Vineyards 2017 20/20 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$40)

Inkblot 2017 Petit Verdot, Lodi, USA (\$35)

Inniskillin Niagara 2017 Vidal Icewine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$50)

J Vineyards and Winery NV Cuvée 20, Russian River Valley, USA (\$38)

J Vineyards and Winery 2016 Pinot Noir, USA (\$25)

J. Lohr 2017 Pure Paso Premium Bordeaux Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$27)

J. Lohr 2017 South Ridge Syrah, Paso Robles, USA (\$15)

J. Lohr 2015 Cuvée POM Red Wine, Paso Robles, USA (\$50)

Jackson Triggs Vintners 2017 Reserve Vidal Icewine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$40)

Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate 2016 Grand Reserve Select Shiraz, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$27)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2017 Fiddlehead Vineyard Malbec, Fairplay, El Dorado County, USA (\$29)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2017 Salman Vineyard Reserve Petite Sirah, Clarksburg, USA (\$48)

Kaesler Wines 2017 The Bogan Shiraz, Barossa Valley, Australia (\$55)

Korbel 2016 Natural, Russian River Valley, USA (\$16)

KORi Wines 2017 San Saba Vineyard Syrah, Monterey County, USA (\$42)

Kulara Estate 2018 Rare Penny Cabernet Sauvignon, Australia (\$9)

Laetitia 2017 Limite Pinot Noir, Santa Maria Valley, USA (\$26)

LANGETWINS Winery 2017 Jahant Woods 02 Vineyard Teroldego, Jahant, USA (\$32)

LANGETWINS Winery NV Dessert Wine, Lodi, USA (\$50)

LATERAL 2016 Merlot Cabernet Franc, Napa Valley, USA (\$49)

Leaping Horse Vineyards 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$10)

Ledson Winery & Vineyards 2016 Bellissimo Estate Red Wine, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$86)

Leeffield Station 2018 Chardonnay, Marlborough, New Zealand

Lost Creek Winery 2016 Echelon Red Wine, Loudoun County, USA (\$55)

Lost Oak Winery 2017 Cabernet Franc, Texas, USA (\$30)

Luna Rossa 2018 New Mexico Pinot Grigio, Mimbres Valley, USA (\$13)

Mahoney Vineyards 2016 Las Brisas Vineyard Pinot Noir, Carneros, USA (\$32)

Malm Cellars 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, USA (\$17)

Malm Cellars 2018 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$20)

MandraRossa 2017 Bonera Red Blend, Sicily, Italy (\$20)

MandraRossa 2018 Timperosse Petit Verdot, Sicily, Italy (\$20)

Marianna 2016 Pozzan Family Reserve Red Wine, Napa Valley, USA (\$50)

Marqués de Cáceres NV Cava Brut, Spain (\$15)

Maryhill Winery 2018 Gunkel Vineyards Muscat Canelli, Columbia Valley, USA (\$17)

Maryhill Winery 2016 Syrah, Columbia Valley, USA (\$28)

Maryhill Winery 2016 Proprietor's Reserve Rosso Granto Red, Columbia Valley, USA (\$38)

Maryhill Winery 2016 Proprietor's Reserve Serendipity Red Blend, Columbia Valley, USA (\$38)

McGuigan 2019 Shortlist Riesling, Eden Valley, Australia (\$22)

McManis Family Vineyards 2018 Estate Grown Certified Sustainable Viognier, River Junction, California, USA (\$13)

Mercer Bros 2017 Horse Heaven Hills Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley, USA (\$20)

Mission Hill Family Estate 2018 Five Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$15)

Monte De Oro Winery 2016 Syrah, Temecula Valley, USA (\$43)

Montemaggiore 2016 Paolo's Vineyard Estate Syrah, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$38)

Montemaggiore 2016 Reserve Syrah, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$48)

Mr. Riggs 2017 The Bolter Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$25)

Murray Street Vineyards 2018 Black Label Shiraz, Barossa Valley, Australia (\$25)

Naggiar Vineyards 2017 Estate Grown Black Beast Red Blend, Sierra Foothills, USA (\$30)

Nk'Mip Cellars 2018 Qwam Qwmt Riesling Icewine, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$70)

Oak Farm Vineyards 2018 Chardonnay, Lodi, USA (\$24)

Oak Farm Vineyards 2018 Estate Grown Malbec, Lodi, USA (\$35)

Orgasmic Wine Company 2017 Oh! Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley, USA (\$80)

Paroa Bay Winery 2015 Syrah, Northland, New Zealand (\$40)

Perinet 2016 Merit Priorat, Priorat DOQ, Spain (\$28)

Picchetti Winery 2017 Arastradero Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Clara County, USA (\$55)

Pra Venera 2017 Reserve Zinfandel, California, USA (\$9)

Pudding River Wine Cellars 2014 Reserve Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, USA (\$36)

RAMONA NV Ruby Grapefruit Zibibbo, Italy (\$19)

RAMONA NV Blood Orange Zibibbo, Italy (\$19)

Redwood Empire 2017 Pinot Noir, North Coast, USA (\$17)

Rojas 2017 Bravo Toro Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$45)

Ron Yates 2016 Friesen Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, Texas High Plains, USA (\$39)

San Simeon 2017 Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$35)

Sand Creek 2018, IGP Setúbal, Portugal (\$12)

Sandeman NV Founder's Reserve Ruby Porto, Portugal (\$19)

Santi 2015 Santico Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG, Italy (\$49)

Scharffenberger Cellars NV Excellence Brut Rosé, Mendocino County, USA (\$26)

GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

1924 2017 Double Black Limited Edition Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi, USA (\$13)

Abacela Vineyards & Winery 2016 Estate Malbec, Umpqua, Oregon, USA (\$30)

ACAIBO 2014 Trinite Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, USA (\$75)

AGRA Horní Dunajovice 2018 Pálava, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$8)

AGRA Horní Dunajovice 2018 Frankovka, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$7)

Alara Cellars 2017 Montepulciano, San Benito County, USA (\$43)

Alpha Crucis 2018 Titan Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$30)

Alto Molino 2018 Alton Molino Cafayate Cabernet Sauvignon, Argentina (\$11)

Angels & Cowboys 2017 Proprietary Red Wine, Sonoma County, USA (\$23)

Angulo Innocenti 2017 Estate Grown Malbec, La Consulta, Uco Valley, Mendoza (\$18)

Apothic 2018 Rosé, California, USA (\$14)

ArborBrooks Vineyards 2016 Origin 1866 Pinot Noir, Chehalem Mountains, Oregon, USA (\$50)

Arrington Vineyards NV Scarlet Sweet Red, Tennessee, USA (\$20)

Artezin 2018 Zinfandel, Mendocino, USA (\$16)

Au Contraire 2017 Mighty Mouse Reserve Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County, USA (\$44)

Augusta Vin Winery 2017 Malbec, Texas Hill Country, USA (\$35)

Augusta Vin Winery 2017 Texas Hill Country Petite Sirah, Texas Hill Country, USA (\$39)

Augusta Vin Winery 2017 Texas Hill Country Tannat, Texas Hill Country, USA (\$39)

Austerity 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$15)

Avalon 2018 Chardonnay, California, USA (\$11)

Avalon 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi, USA (\$11)

Avissi NV Prosecco, Veneto, Italy (\$16)

BV Vinařství 2018 Veltlínské zelené, Moravia, Czech Republic

Babich Wines 2019 Family Estates Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$17)

Baily Vineyard & Winery 2016 Estate Bottled Cabernet Franc, Temecula Valley, USA (\$35)

Barboursville Vineyards 2017 Reserve Cabernet Franc, Virginia, USA (\$25)

Barboursville Vineyards 2015 Reserve Nebbiolo, Virginia, USA (\$35)

Barefoot Bubbly NV Brut Cuvée, California, USA (\$10)

Barefoot Bubbly NV Extra Dry Sparkling, California, USA (\$10)

Barefoot Cellars NV Red Moscato, California, USA (\$7)

Barefoot Cellars NV Riesling, California, USA (\$7)

Barefoot Cellars NV Sauvignon Blanc, California, USA (\$7)

Barossa Ink 2016 Shiraz, Barossa, Australia (\$16)

Barossa Valley Wine Co. 2018 Gravel Track GSM, Barossa Valley, Australia (\$18)

BARRA of Mendocino 2017 Estate Grown Zinfandel, Mendocino, USA (\$20)

Bear Flag 2017 Zinfandel, Sonoma County, USA (\$30)

Becker Vineyards 2017 Farmhouse Vineyards Counoise, Texas High Plains, USA (\$40)

Becker Vineyards 2017 Wilmeth Vineyards Reserve Dolcetto, Texas High Plains, USA (\$30)

Becker Vineyards 2017 Reserve Tempranillo, Texas, USA (\$25)

Becker Vineyards 2017 Claret Red Blend, Texas, USA (\$15)

Belle Joli Winery 2018 Sparkling Rosé, USA (\$45)

Bending Branch Winery 2016 Shell Creek Vineyard Old Vine Petite Sirah, Paso Robles, USA (\$40)

Bending Branch Winery 2017 Tannat, Texas, USA (\$30)

Bent Oak Winery 2018 Tempranillo, Texas High Plains, USA (\$32)

Benziger Family Winery 2017 Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$17)

Bernhardt Winery 2017 Reserve Syrah, Thracian Valley, Bulgaria (\$34)

Biltmore Estate 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, USA (\$19)

Bird In Hand 2018 Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$27)

Bird In Hand 2015 Nest Egg Cabernet Sauvignon, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$68)

Bird In Hand 2015 Nest Egg Shiraz, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$68)

Bird In Hand 2014 Nest Egg Shiraz, Mt. Lofty Ranges, Australia (\$68)

Bird In Hand 2012 MAC Shiraz, Mt. Lofty Ranges, Australia (\$240)

Black Sage Vineyard 2016 Merlot, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$26)

Black Sage Vineyard 2016 Cabernet Franc, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$26)

Black Stallion Estate Winery 2018 Pinot Noir, Los Carneros, USA (\$25)

Blood Brother Republic 2018 Grenache, Blewitt Springs, Australia (\$33)

Bluestone Vineyard 2018 Silver Creek Vineyard Petit Manseng, Virginia, USA (\$25)

Bluestone Vineyard 2015 Blue Ice Traminette Icewine, Shenandoah Valley, USA (\$26)

Bohemia Sekt 2016 Prestige Chardonnay Brut, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$10)

Bohemia Sekt 2015 Louis Girardot Brut, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$18)

Brancott Estate 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$9)

Brennan Vineyards 2017 Super Nero Red Blend, Texas, USA (\$34)

Brockenchack 2015 Single Vineyard Jack Harrison Shiraz, Eden Valley, South Australia (\$45)

Byington Vineyard & Winery 2016 Unfiltered Pinot Noir, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$47)

Cabeça Toiro 2015 Grande Reserva Tinto, DOC DoTejo, Portugal (\$27)

Cacciatore 2018 White Dog Pinot Grigio, California, USA (\$10)

Calabria Family Wines 2017 Pierre D'Amour Shiraz, Hilltops, Australia (\$20)

Callia 2018 Torrontés, San Juan, Argentina (\$10)

Cameron Hughes 2017 Lot 699 Cabernet Sauvignon, Calistoga, USA (\$32)

Cameron Hughes 2017 Lot 701 Cabernet Sauvignon, Oak Knoll District, USA (\$29)

Campo Viejo NV Cava Brut Rosé, Spain (\$14)

Cannonball 2017 Merlot, California, USA (\$16)

Cannonball 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, California, USA (\$15)

Caposaldo NV Prosecco DOC, Veneto DOC, Italy (\$16)

Caposaldo NV Moscato Bianco, Provincia di Pavia IGT, Italy (\$15)

Caricature 2017 Red Blend, California, USA (\$15)

Carol Shelton Wines 2018 Coquille Blanc, Paso Robles, USA (\$24)

Carter Creek Family Winery 2018 White Rhône Blend, Texas High Plains, USA (\$28)

Carter Creek Family Winery 2016 Plateau Red, Texas High Plains, USA (\$30)

Casa di Grazia 2015 1607 Victorya Cerasuolo Di Vittoria, Sicily, Italy (\$20)

Casa Ermelinda Freitas 2017 Reserva Alicante Bouschet, Setúbal, Portugal (\$7)

Casa Ermelinda Freitas 2010 Moscatel Roxo, Setúbal, Portugal (\$21)

Casa Madero 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Valle de Parras, Mexico (\$20)

Casanel Vineyards 2015 Estate White Spark: Casey's Cuvee Chardonnay, Middleburg AVA, USA (\$48)
 Casanel Vineyards 2016 Estate Petit Verdot, Middleburg AVA, USA (\$35)
 Castelli Estate 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Frankland River, Australia (\$26)
 Cat Amongst the Pigeons 2019 Riesling, Eden Valley, Australia (\$20)
 Cavit 2018 Oak Zero Chardonnay, Trentino DOC, Italy (\$10)
 Cavit NV Prosecco, Prosecco DOC, Treviso, Italy (\$15)
 Cellardoor Winery 2018 Queen Anne's Lace White Wine, American, USA (\$18)
 Cellardoor Winery 2018 Ice Wine, Maine, USA (\$30)
 Cellardoor Winery 2017 Riesling, USA (\$18)
 Cellardoor Winery 2017 Chenin Blanc, USA (\$18)
 Cellardoor Winery 2018 Unoaked Chardonnay, American, USA (\$20)
 Cellardoor Winery 2017 The Buoy American Red Wine, USA (\$23)
 Cellardoor Winery 2016 Iron Gate Red Wine, USA (\$35)
 Cellardoor Winery 2015 Prince Valiant Red Wine, USA (\$23)
 Cellardoor Winery 2015 Iron Gate Red Wine, USA (\$32)
 Cerebella 2016 Syrah, Red Mountain, USA (\$40)
 Cerebella 2016 Malbec, Columbia Valley, USA (\$30)
 Chacewater 2015 Merlot, Sierra Foothills, USA (\$26)
 Chacewater 2014 Petite Sirah, Red Hills, Lake County, USA (\$26)
 Chalkboard 2018 Rosé, France (\$10)
 Champagne Collet NV Esprit Couture Brut, Champagne, France (\$120)
 Charles Woodson's Intercept 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$20)
 Chateau Bzenec 2016 Brut, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$8)
 Chateau Souverain 2017 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$13)
 Chateau St. Jean 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$13)
 Cheurlin NV Brut Spéciale, Champagne, France (\$45)
 Cholame Vineyard 2016 The Beautiful One Petite Sirah, Santa Barbara, USA (\$50)
 Clarksburg Wine Company 2017 Seire Vieux Monde Chenin Blanc, Clarksburg, USA (\$28)
 Clearwater Canyon 2017 Phinny Hill Vineyard Carmenère, Washington, USA (\$32)
 Clos LaChance Wines 2017 Estate Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Clara County, USA (\$22)
 College Cellars 2017 Eritage Vineyard Syrah, Columbia Valley, USA (\$25)
 College Cellars 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$35)
 Cormack & Co. 2019 Sémillon / Sauvignon Blanc, Margaret River, Australia (\$24)
 Corner 103 2017 Malbec, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$50)
 Cougar Crest Estate Winery 2016 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$45)
 Craggy Range 2019 Te Muna Road Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc, Martinborough, New Zealand (\$22)
 Crü 2017 Sierra Madre Vineyard Pinot Noir, Santa Maria Valley, USA (\$50)
 Crü 2018 Albariño, Edna Valley, USA (\$20)
 Crü 2018 Aunt May's Chardonnay, Arroyo Seco, USA (\$30)
 Cupcake Vineyards 2018 Moscato D'Asti, Italy (\$13)
 Cupcake Vineyards NV Black Forest Red, California, USA (\$11)
 DANCIN Vineyards 2018 Melange Chardonnay, Rogue Valley, USA (\$32)
 DANCIN Vineyards 2018 Assemblage Chardonnay, Oregon, USA (\$32)
 DANCIN Vineyards 2017 Tribute Barbera, Rogue Valley, USA (\$45)
 Dancing Coyote Wines 2016 dc2 Tempranillo, Lodi, USA (\$20)
 Dandelion Vineyards 2019 Honeyptot of the Barossa Roussanne, Barossa, Australia (\$28)
 Dandelion Vineyards 2018 Lion's Tooth of McLaren Vale Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$28)
 Davis Bynum Winery 2016 River West Vineyard Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$25)
 Davis Bynum Winery 2017 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$35)
 Davis Family Vineyards 2016 CAB 5, Rockpile Ridge, USA (\$65)
 Davis Family Vineyards 2016 Pinot Noir, Rockpile Ridge, USA (\$45)
 Davis Family Vineyards 2017 Hunt and Ryde Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$55)
 Davis Family Vineyards 2017 Soul Patch Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$55)
 Davis Family Vineyards 2016 Soul Patch Syrah, Russian River Valley, USA (\$55)



BEST BARBERA

Onate | 20 | BARBERA | 94 POINTS
 17 | ROGUE VALLEY
 DOUBLE GOLD MEDAL WINNER

Danseur | 20 | SYRAH | 97 POINTS
 17 | SOUTHERN OREGON
 DOUBLE GOLD MEDAL WINNER

Melange | 20 | CHARDONNAY | 91 POINTS
 18 | ROGUE VALLEY
 GOLD MEDAL WINNER

Assemblage | 20 | CHARDONNAY | 91 POINTS
 18 | OREGON
 GOLD MEDAL WINNER

Tribute | 20 | BARBERA | 90 POINTS
 17 | ROGUE VALLEY
 GOLD MEDAL WINNER

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Davis Family Vineyards 2015 Blanc de Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$65)

Dolin 2014 La Encantada Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sta. Rita Hills, USA (\$45)

Dolin 2014 Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Noir, Santa Maria Valley, USA (\$45)

Domaine Carneros 2017 The Famous Gate Pinot Noir, Carneros, USA (\$85)

Domaine Chandon NV Reserve Pinot Noir Rosé, Sonoma - Napa, USA (\$38)

Domaine Chandon NV Etoile Brut, Los Carneros, USA (\$50)

Domaine Chandon NV Reserve Demi-Sec, Los Carneros, USA (\$38)

Dona Ermelinda 2017 Reserva Red Blend, DOC Palmela, Portugal (\$6)

Double Lariat 2016 Jamieson Ranch Vineyards Limited Production Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$50)

Drops of Jupiter 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, South Eastern Australia (\$20)

Drops of Jupiter 2017 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)

Duchman Family Winery 2017 Bingham Family Vineyards Vermentino, Texas, USA (\$22)

Duck Pond Cellars 2018 Chardonnay, Willamette Valley, USA (\$12)

Dutcher Crossing Winery 2016 Proprietor's Reserve Syrah, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$34)

Early Mountain Vineyards 2017 Quaker Run Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Virginia, USA (\$45)

Earthquake 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi, USA (\$26)

Eberle Winery 2017 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$45)

Eco Terreno 2017 Estate Grown Cuvee Acero Sauvignon Blanc, Alexander Valley, USA (\$22)

Eden Hill Vineyard 2017 Wine=C2, Texas High Plains, USA (\$54)

Eden Hill Vineyard 2018 Midnight in the Vineyard Negroamaro, Texas High Plains, USA (\$56)

Effingham Manor Winery 2018 Traminette, Virginia, USA (\$29)

Elaine 2017 Calypte Vineyard Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$50)

Encendido 2014 Buenavintura Vineyard Barrel Fermented Malbec, Uco Valley, Argentina (\$65)

English Newsom Cellars 2018 Roussanne, Texas High Plains, USA (\$23)

Exhuberance by Canihan 2015 Estate Syrah, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$55)

Fifty-Third Winery and Vineyard 2018 Louisa County Chardonnay, Virginia, USA (\$20)

Finca Sobreño 2015 Reserva Tinto, Spain

Firehouse Wine Cellars 2018 La Crescent, Nebraska, USA (\$23)

Flat Creek Estate 2016 Super Texan Sangiovese Blend, Texas, USA (\$25)

Fleur de California 2017 Carneros Select Pinot Noir, Carneros, USA (\$22)

Fleur de California 2016 Suisun Valley Reserve Petite Sirah, North Coast, USA (\$19)

Fleur de Mer 2018 Rosé, France (\$20)

Fort Berens Estate Winery 2018 Chardonnay, BC VQA, Canada (\$15)

Four Vines Winery 2017 Old Vine Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$13)

Francis Coppola 2017 Diamond Collection Black Label Claret, California, USA (\$21)

Francis Coppola 2017 Diamond Collection Merlot, California, USA (\$17)

Francis Coppola 2018. Diamond Collection Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$17)

Frank Family Vineyards 2017 Pinot Noir, Carneros, USA (\$38)

Franzia NV Merlot, Chile (\$17)

Freixenet NV Carta Nevada Brut Cava, Italy (\$15)

Freixenet NV Italian Sparkling Rosé, Italy (\$22)

Fresno State Winery 2018 Grenache Rose, Lodi, USA (\$13)

Fresno State Winery 2017 Papagni Vineyards Alicante Bouschet, Madera County, USA (\$18)

Fuedo Solaria 2018 Kalsa Grillo, Sicily, Italy (\$13)

Furthermore 2016 ALCHEMY Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$85)

Furthermore 2016 Starbridge Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$75)

Garré Vineyard & Winery 2018 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$65)

Garré Vineyard & Winery 2016 Sangiovese, Livermore Valley, USA (\$34)

Gary Farrell 2017 Russian River Selection Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$35)

Geyser Peak Winery 2017 1880 Red Wine Blend, Alexander Valley, USA (\$40)

Gianelli Vineyards 2018 Malvasia Bianca, Tuolumne County, USA (\$32)

Giesen 2014 The August 1888 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$53)

Gina NV Mochetto Moscato Brachetto Blend, Piedmont, Italy (\$18)

Gnarly Head 2018 Chardonnay, Central Coast, USA (\$13)

GoodMills Family Winery 2018 Pinot Grigio, Lodi, USA (\$24)

Gordon Estate 2015 Block 3 Merlot, Columbia Valley, USA (\$30)

Gougé Cellars Winery 2012 Petite Sirah, Suisun Valley, USA (\$45)

Grape Creek Vineyard 2017 Estate The Originalist Red Wine, Texas Hill Country, USA (\$70)

Haak Vineyards & Winery 2017 Touriga Nacional, Texas High Plains, USA (\$35)

Hakkaisan Snow-Aged Yukimuro Junmai Ginjo Saké, Niigata, Japan

Hakutsuruk Superior Saké, Kyogo Prefecture, Japan (\$16)

Heirloom Vineyards 2018 Private Selection Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$60)

Heirloom Vineyards 2018 Touriga, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$40)

Hester Creek Estate Winery 2017 Reserve Block 3 Cabernet Franc, Golden Mile Bench, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$26)

Hester Creek Estate Winery 2016 Garland Premium Bordeaux Blend, Golden Mile Bench, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$56)

Hilary Goldschmidt 2016 Charming Creek Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville, USA (\$50)

Hindsight Vineyards 2017 20/20 Premium Bordeaux Blend, Napa Valley, USA (\$35)

Huia 2019 Pinot Gris, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)

Infamous Goose 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$14)

Inniskillin Niagara 2017 Montague Vineyard Pinot Noir, 4 Mile Creek, Canada (\$25)

Inniskillin Niagara 2017 Cabernet Franc Icewine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$100)

Inniskillin Niagara 2017 Oak Aged Gold Vidal Icewine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$90)

Inniskillin Niagara 2018 Riesling Icewine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$80)

Inniskillin Okanagan 2017 Riesling Icewine, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$52)

Ironstone Vineyards 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi, USA (\$14)

J. Lohr 2017 Seven Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$18)

J. Lohr 2017 Fog's Reach Pinot Noir, Arroyo Seco, USA (\$35)

J. Lohr 2016 Tower Road Petite Sirah, Paso Robles, USA (\$35)

J. Lohr 2015 Cuvée PAU Red Wine, Paso Robles, USA (\$50)

Jacob's Creek Wines 2019 Moscato White, Australia (\$8)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2017 Nostro Vino Vineyard Primitivo, Amador County, USA (\$27)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2017 Damir Ranch Vineyard Petit Verdot, Stanislaus County, USA (\$26)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2017 Three Way Vineyard Graciano, Paso Robles, USA (\$32)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2017 Three Way Vineyard Syrah, Paso Robles, USA (\$32)

Jefferson Vineyards 2017 Jefferson's Own Estate Reserve Viognier, Monticello, USA (\$37)

Johnson Estate Winery 2017 Estate Grown Ice Wine of Vidal Blanc, Lake Erie, USA (\$50)

JOIY 2017 The Gryphon Pinot Noir, Central Otago, New Zealand (\$7)

Jordan Vineyard & Winery 2017 Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$34)

Joto NV Junmai Ginjo Saké, Ibaraki, Japan (\$33)

Joto NV Daiginjo Saké, Hiroshima, Japan (\$45)

Joto NV Yuzu Flavored Saké, Shimane, Japan (\$23)

JOYO 40 Junmai Daiginjo Saké, Kyoto, Japan

Karah Estate Vineyard 2018 Estate Grown Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$20)

Ken Brown Wines 2016 Pinot Noir, Sta. Rita Hills, USA (\$35)

King Chanco 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Central Coast, USA (\$18)

King Chanco 2017 Bandito's Blood Red Blend, Central Coast, USA (\$18)

Korbel NV Extra Dry, California, USA (\$14)

KORi Wines 2017 KW Ranch Vineyard Pinot Noir, Santa Lucia Highlands, USA (\$49)

Kriselle Cellars 2018 Viognier, Rogue Valley, USA (\$23)

Kriselle Cellars 2016 Cabernet Franc, Rogue Valley, USA (\$28)

Krondorf 2017 The Growers Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa, Australia (\$27)

Krondorf 2017 The Growers GSM, Barossa, Australia (\$27)

Kulara Estate 2017 Matilda's Ghost The Constable Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, Australia (\$10)

L.A. Cetto 2018 Chardonnay, Tijuana BC, Mexico

La Chertosa Wines 2018 Don Silvio Reserve Sangiovese, Sonoma County, USA (\$35)

La Chiripada Winery 2017 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Mimbres Valley, New Mexico, USA (\$43)

La Honda Winery 2017 Salinan Block Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$38)

La Marca NV Prosecco, Veneto DOC, Italy (\$19)

Laetitia 2017 Reserve Pinot Noir, Arroyo Grande Valley, USA (\$44)

Lamoreaux Landing Wine Cellars 2018 Round Rock Vineyard Riesling, Finger Lakes, USA (\$24)

LANGETWINS Winery 2014 Lewis Vineyard Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$60)

LANGETWINS Winery 2016 Miller Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Clarksburg, USA (\$32)

Layer Cake 2018 Rosé, California, USA (\$12)

Layer Cake 2017 Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina (\$14)

Layer Cake 2017 Sea of Stones Red Blend, Mendoza, Argentina (\$14)

Layer Cake 2017 Bourbon Barrel Aged Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$18)

Le Bosq 2018 Blanc, France (\$11)

Le Grand Courtâge 2018 Très Chic Rosé, Pays d'Oc, France (\$17)

Leeffield Station 2019 Pinot Rosé, Marlborough, New Zealand

Levrier by Jo Irvine 2014 Peritas Zinfandel, Eden Valley, Barossa, Australia (\$75)

Longhorn Cellars 2016 Viognier, Sierra Foothills, USA (\$22)

Lorimar Winery 2017 Meritage, California, USA (\$59)

Lorimar Winery 2017 Montepulciano, California, USA (\$64)

Louis M. Martini Winery 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, USA (\$30)

Lulu Island Winery 2016 Merlot, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$30)
 Luna Rossa 2013 Reserve Aglianico, Mimbres Valley, USA (\$45)
 Luna Rossa 2015 NiNi Italian Blend, Mimbres Valley, USA (\$23)
 Luna Rossa 2017 Sangiovese, Mimbres Valley, USA (\$16)
 Luna Rossa 2017 New Mexico Cabernet Sauvignon, Mimbres Valley, USA (\$17)
 Luna Vineyards 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Atlas Peak, USA (\$90)
 Luna Vineyards 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$75)
 Lunetta NV Rosé, Trentino, Italy (\$13)
 Lust 2016 Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$59)
 Maboroshi NV Mystery Undiluted Junmai Daiginjo Saké, Japan (\$200)
 MandraRossa 2017 Costa Dune Grillo, Sicily, Italy (\$12)
 Marisco Vineyards Craft Series 2015 Pride and Glory Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$45)
 Marisco Vineyards Craft Series 2016 The Pioneer Chardonnay, Marlborough, New Zealand
 Maryhill Winery 2018 Tudor Hills Vineyards Pinot Gris, Columbia Valley, USA (\$17)
 Maryhill Winery 2018 Riesling, Columbia Valley, USA (\$17)
 Maryhill Winery 2016 Proprietor's Reserve Cabernet Franc, Columbia Valley, USA (\$38)
 Maryhill Winery 2016 Elephant Mountain Vineyards Cabernet Franc, Rattlesnake Hills, USA (\$38)
 Maryhill Winery 2016 McKinley Springs Vineyard Cinsaut, Horseheaven Hills, USA (\$42)
 Maryhill Winery 2016 Elephant Mountain Marvell GSM, Rattlesnake Hills, USA (\$46)
 Maryhill Winery 2016 Les Collines Vineyards Merlot, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$38)
 Maryhill Winery 2016 McKinley Springs Vineyards Petit Verdot, Horse Heaven Hills, USA (\$38)
 Maryhill Winery 2016 Les Collines Vineyards Syrah, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$38)
 Mathis Wine 2016 Grenache, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$32)
 McGuigan 2014 Shortlist Sémillon, Hunter Valley, Australia (\$20)
 McManis Family Vineyards 2018 Estate Grown Petite Sirah, Lodi, USA (\$13)
 McPherson Cellars 2018 Les Copains The Friends White, Texas High Plains, USA (\$14)
 Ménage à Trois 2017 Bourbon Barrel Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$15)
 Ménage à Trois 2017 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$14)
 Ménage à Trois 2017 Silk Red Blend, California, USA (\$14)
 Ménage à Trois 2018 California White Blend, USA (\$12)
 Messina Hof Winery 2017 Paulo Sagrantino, Texas, USA (\$60)
 Metz Road 2017 Riverview Vineyard Estate Grown Chardonnay, Monterey County, USA (\$30)
 Mikami Vineyards 2017 Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$39)
 Mirassou Winery 2018 Pinot Grigio, California, USA (\$12)
 Mission Hill Family Estate 2017 Reserve Shiraz, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$27)
 Mission Hill Family Estate 2018 Reserve White Meritage, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$22)
 Misty Cove 2019 Estate Series Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$13)
 Moët & Chandon NV Impérial Rosé, Champagne, France (\$50)
 Moët & Chandon 2012 Grand Vintage Brut Rosé, Champagne, France (\$85)
 Mohua 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$16)
 Mohua 2017 Pinot Noir, Central Otago, New Zealand (\$24)
 Monte De Oro Winery 2018 Chardonnay, Temecula Valley, USA (\$24)
 Montoya 2017 Chardonnay, Monterey County, USA (\$13)
 Mozelle 2018 Riesling, Mosel, Germany (\$20)
 Muirwood 2017 Reserve Vaquero Cabernet Sauvignon, Arroyo Seco, USA (\$19)
 Mum's Block 2017 Shiraz, Barossa, Australia (\$47)
 Murray Street Vineyards 2018 Black Label Shiraz Grenache Mataro, Barossa Valley, Australia (\$25)
 Murrieta's Well 2017 Estate Vineyard The Spur Red Blend, Livermore Valley, USA (\$35)
 Myles & Moore 2017 Winemaker's Selection Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$13)
 Myles & Moore 2018 Rosé, California, USA (\$13)

DUCHMAN FAMILY WINERY SCORES BIG

Duchman received 2 Double Gold / Best in Class awards at the 2019 San Francisco International Wine Competition:

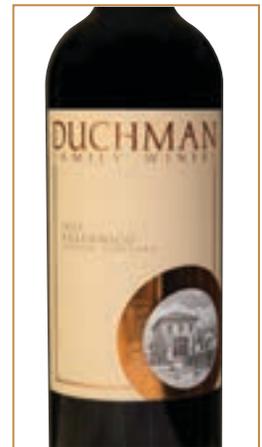


BEST IN CLASS

97

POINTS

Duchman 2015
Salt Lick Vineyards
Tempranillo, Texas



BEST IN CLASS

96

POINTS

Duchman 2015
Oswald Vineyards
Aglianico, Texas

SF INTERNATIONAL COMP:

Duchman Family Winery received 2 Double Gold / Best in Class awards at the 2019 San Francisco International Wine Competition. (Also received 4 Silver Medals and 1 Bronze Medal for other wines entered.)

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE COMP:

Duchman Family Winery also had two DOUBLE GOLD winners in the 2020 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition for the **2018 Trebbiano** and the **2017 Viognier Roussanne blend**. (Also Received 4 Silver Medals for other wines entered.)



For more info, reach out to
info@duchmanwine.com
www.duchmanwinery.com

Narmada Winery 2016 Yash-Vir Premium Bordeaux Blend, Virginia, USA (\$39)

Nassau Valley Vineyards 2017 Laurel's Red, Delaware, USA (\$19)

Navarro Vineyards 2018 Chardonnay, Mendocino County, USA (\$22)

Navarro Vineyards 2018 Gewürztraminer, Anderson Valley, USA (\$24)

Navarro Vineyards 2018 Cluster Select Late Harvest Gewürztraminer, Anderson Valley, USA (\$35)

Nepenthe 2019 Pinot Noir Rosé, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$16)

Nepenthe 2018 Winemakers Selection Grüner Veltliner, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$18)

Nicholson Vineyards 2017 Estate 3 Sisters Block Pinot Noir, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$38)

Niner Wine Estates 2016 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$45)

Nk'Mip Cellars 2018 Dreamcatcher White Blend, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$18)

Nk'Mip Cellars 2017 Qwam Qwmt Merlot, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$30)

Nk'Mip Cellars 2017 Qwam Qwmt Syrah, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$35)

Nk'Mip Cellars 2017 Red Mer'riym Meritage, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$55)

Noble Vines 2018 152 Pinot Grigio, Monterey County, USA (\$11)

Opaque 2016 Darkness Premium Red Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$30)

Oso Libre Winery 2015 Estate Carnal Red Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$44)

Oso Libre Winery 2015 Querida Premium Bordeaux Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$39)

Outlot 2016 Chardonnay, Sonoma County, USA (\$22)

OZV 2018 Primitivo Rosé, California, USA (\$15)

Paul Cheneau 2017 Cava Brut Rosé, Spain (\$15)

Paul Cheneau 2017 Lady of Spain Cava Brut, Spain (\$15)

Pearmund Cellars 2018 South River Vineyard Petit Manseng, Virginia, USA (\$29)

Pearmund Cellars 2017 Virginia Table Wine Ameritage, Virginia, USA (\$29)

Pedroncelli Winery 2017 Special Selection Red Blend, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$22)

Pedroncelli Winery 2017 Signature Selection Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$22)

Perrucci Family Vineyard 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$40)

Pikes 2019 Hills and Valleys Riesling, Clare Valley, Australia (\$20)

Pine Ridge Vineyards 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$65)

Pollak Vineyards 2017 Estate Grown Petit Verdot, Monticello, USA (\$38)

Poplar Grove Winery 2015 The Legacy Red Wine, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$60)

Portalupi Wines 2017 L. Venturi Vineyard Charbono, Mendocino County, USA (\$40)

Pra Vinera 2017 Reserve Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$9)

Prohibido Wines 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$35)

Prophecy 2018 Rosé, France (\$14)

Prospect of the Okanagan 2017 Stags & Bears Cabernet Merlot, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$15)

Prothro Family Wines 2018 Rosé, Clarksburg, USA (\$25)

Prothro Family Wines 2016 Cuvée No.2 Merlot, Napa Valley, USA (\$58)

Pudding River Wine Cellars 2014 Dessert Wine, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$30)

Quails' Gate 2017 Stewart Family Reserve Pinot Noir, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$52)

Raeburn 2017 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$25)

RAMONA NV Meyer Lemon Zibibbo, Italy (\$19)

Rancho Loma Vineyards 2017 The Tempter Reserve Red Blend, Texas High Plains, USA (\$45)

Ray's Creek 2017 Zinfandel, Central Coast, USA (\$10)

Red Rooster Winery 2017 Rare Bird Series Malbec, BC VQA Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$35)

Remy Pannier 2018 Vouvray Chenin Blanc, Loire Valley, France (\$19)

Replica 2018 Retrofit Chardonnay, Carneros, USA (\$20)

Risata NV Sparkling Rose, Veneto, Italy (\$17)

Riverstar Vineyards 2016 Eclipse Red Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$34)

Robert Hall Winery 2016 Cavern Select Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$54)

Robert Hall Winery 2016 Cavern Select Meritage, Paso Robles, USA (\$45)

Robert Hall Winery 2017 Sauvignon Blanc, Paso Robles, USA (\$14)

Robert Oatley Vineyards 2018 Signature Series Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River, Australia (\$20)

Rocky Pond Winery 2017 11 Dams Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley, USA (\$39)

Rocky Pond Winery 2017 Syrah, Chelan County, USA (\$39)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2015 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, USA (\$45)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2017 Chardonnay, Chalk Hill, USA (\$22)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2017 Upshot Red Blend, Sonoma County, USA (\$28)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2018 Upshot White Blend, Sonoma County, USA (\$28)

Roger Roessler Wines 2018 Rosé, Côtes de Provence, France (\$24)

Rojas 2018 Bravo Toro Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$45)

Roth Estate Winery 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, USA (\$30)

Round Pond Estate 2016 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford, USA (\$110)

Saddleback Cellars 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$75)

San Savino Vineyards 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$75)

Sandhill Wines 2017 Terroir Driven Wine Syrah, BC VQA British Columbia, Canada (\$19)

Sandhill Wines 2017 Sandhill Estate Vineyard Syrah, BC VQA Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$35)

Santi 2013 Proemio Amarone della Valpolicella Classico DOCG, Italy (\$77)

Saveé Sea 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$10)

Scharffenberger Cellars NV Excellence Brut, Mendocino County, USA (\$20)

Scheid Vineyards 2018 Estate Grown Sauvignon Blanc, Monterey, USA (\$22)

Schloss Vollrads 2017 Estate Qualitätswein Riesling, Rheingau, Germany (\$20)

SEAGLASS 2018 Riesling, California, USA (\$12)

SEAGLASS 2017 Pinot Noir, Santa Barbara County, USA (\$13)

Sean Minor 2018 4B Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$16)

Sean Minor 2017 Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$22)

Sean Minor 2015 H.Mynors Old Vine Cuvée Zinfandel, California, USA (\$22)

See Ya Later Ranch 2018 Vidal Icewine, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$40)

Segura Viudas NV Brut, Cava DO, Spain (\$12)

Segura Viudas NV Reserva Heredad Brut, Cava DO, Spain (\$30)

Seifried 2019 Winemakers Collection Sweet Agnes Riesling, Nelson, New Zealand (\$19)

Sentivo Vineyards 2014 Estate Syrah, El Dorado, USA (\$34)

Sequoia Grove Winery 2016 Winemaker Series Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford Bench, Napa Valley, USA (\$75)

Sequoia Grove Winery 2018 Chardonnay, Napa Valley, USA (\$32)

Serene Cellars 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon, Pope Valley, USA (\$95)

Shady Lane Cellars 2017 Semi-Dry Estate Riesling, Leelanau Peninsula, USA (\$16)

Shady Lane Cellars 2017 Hennessy Vineyard Grüner Veltliner, Leelanau Peninsula, USA (\$18)

Shadybrook Estate 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Coombsville, Napa Valley, USA (\$125)

Shamwari Vineyards 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$40)

Shaw Wines 2019 Riesling, Canberra, Australia (\$20)

Shottesbrooke 2017 Estate Series GSM, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$22)

Silk & Spice 2018 Red Blend, Portugal (\$14)

Slater Run Vineyards 2016 Roots Premium Bordeaux Blend, Virginia, USA (\$50)

Sodaro Estate Winery 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Coombsville, Napa Valley, USA (\$150)

Solis 2015 Estate Syrah, Santa Clara Valley, USA (\$25)

SŌTŌ Gohyakumangoku Junmai, Niigata, Japan (\$20)

South Coast Winery 2016 Wild Horse Peak Mountain Vineyards Reservoir Block Petite Sirah, South Coast, USA

South Coast Winery 2018 Tempranillo Rosé, Temecula Valley, USA

South Coast Winery 2018 Muscat Canelli, Temecula Valley, USA

South Coast Winery 2016 Wild Horse Peak Mountain Vineyards 4 Block Blend Cabernet Sauvignon, South Coast, USA

Spangler Vineyards 2016 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Oregon, USA (\$59)

Spicewood Vineyards 2017 Tempranillo, Texas High Plains, USA (\$25)

Spielberg CZ 2017 AUSTERLITZ Chardonnay, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$10)

Spinyback 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Nelson, New Zealand (\$13)

Stateland Cellars 2017 Reserve Pinot Noir, Santa Barbara County, USA (\$15)

Steller's Jay 2015 Mountain Jay Brut, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$23)

Sterling Vineyards 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$12)

Stoneleigh 2018 Wild Valley Wild Fermented Pinot Noir, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$12)

Strekovsky Berta 2018 Muškát Moravský, Južnoslovenská, Slovakia (\$9)

Summerland Wine Brands 2017 Central Coast Collection Pinot Noir, Central Coast, USA (\$15)

Sunrock Vineyards 2016 Red Meritage, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$30)

Sunrock Vineyards 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$30)

Sutter Home Winery NV Pink Moscato, California, USA (\$8)

Sutter Home Winery NV Red Blend, California, USA (\$8)

Talbott Vineyards 2017 Estate Grown Kali Hart Pinot Noir, Monterey County, USA (\$26)

Taylors 2018 Jaraman Shiraz, Clare Valley, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$22)

Taylors 2018 Promised Land Chardonnay, South Australia, Australia (\$13)

Taylors 2018 Promised Land Cabernet Sauvignon, South Australia (\$13)

Tempus Two 2016 Copper Shiraz, Gundagai, Australia (\$22)

Tenuta di Nozzole 2016 Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG, Italy (\$30)

Terra d'Oro 2018 Pinot Grigio, Clarksburg, USA (\$16)

The Dreaming Tree 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$15)

The Hess Collection 2017 Allomi Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$32)

The Hess Collection 2016 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Mount Veeder, USA (\$75)

The King's 2019 Desire Pinot Rosé, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$15)

The Seeker 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$14)

The Seeker 2018 Riesling, Mosel QbA, Germany (\$14)

The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey 2016 Cabernet Franc, Colorado, USA (\$30)

The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey 2017 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Colorado, USA (\$38)

The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey NV Sangre de Cristo Nouveau Concord, USA (\$21)

Thirty-Seven 2017 Syrah, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$24)

Three Finger Jack 2017 Eastside Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi, USA (\$20)

Tinhorn Creek Vineyards 2016 Oldfield Reserve Cabernet Franc, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$30)

Tom of Finland 2016 OutStanding Red, California, USA (\$25)

Trentadue 2017 Estate Trentadue Shoestring Sangiovese, Alexander Valley, USA (\$36)

Trione Vineyards & Winery 2015 Flatridge Ranch Zinfandel, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$37)

Trojak Knier Winery 2015 Antinori Family Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Atlas Peak, USA (\$66)

Trump Winery 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Monticello, USA (\$28)

Trump Winery 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Monticello, USA (\$24)

Tsillan Cellars 2017 Estate Syrah, Lake Chelan AVA, USA (\$32)

Tsillan Cellars 2017 Estate Reserve Syrah, Lake Chelan AVA, USA (\$38)

Tsillan Cellars 2017 Estate Sangiovese, Lake Chelan AVA, USA (\$28)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Los Carneros Vineyard Chardonnay, Los Carneros, USA (\$46)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley, USA (\$48)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Entanglement GSM, Napa Valley, USA (\$42)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Quaglia Vineyard Ancient Vine Zinfandel, Napa Valley, USA (\$53)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Zinfandel, Russian River Valley, USA (\$39)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Pilgrim Vineyard Old Vine Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$39)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Black Sears Vineyard Zinfandel, Howell Mountain, USA (\$54)

V. Sattui Winery 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Mt. Veeder, USA (\$92)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Rutherford Dust-Up Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$140)

V. Sattui Winery 15 Year Old Tawny Port, Napa Valley, USA (\$48)

Valley of the Moon Winery 2016 Blend 1887 Red Blend, Sonoma County, USA (\$22)

VARA NV Silverhead Brut, Cava DO, Spain (\$18)

Verraco Ridge 2017 Chardonnay, Monterey County, USA (\$13)

Vilalva 2016 Reserva Tinto, Douro, Portugal (\$9)

Vinařství Baláz 2018 PONTIC Ryzlink vlašský, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$10)

Vinařství Gotberg 2017 Pálava, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$11)

Vinařství HANZEL 2017 Kerner, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$7)

Vinarství Josef Dufek 2018 Ryzlink Vlašský, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$10)

Vinařství LAHOFFER 2018 Neuburské, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$7)

Vinařství Ludwig 2018 Ludwig Culinary Pálava, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$5)

Vinařství Štěpán Maňák 2018 Sylvánské zelené, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$10)

Vinné Sklepy Lechovice 2015 Ryzlink rýnský Icewine, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$14)

Vinné Sklepy Lechovice 2015 Frankovka Icewine, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$14)

Vinoce Vineyards 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, St. Helena, USA (\$60)

VINSELEKT MICHLOVSKÝ 2009 Pálava, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$17)

VINSELEKT MICHLOVSKÝ 2016 Aurelius, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$17)

Vít Sedláček 2017 Dornfelder, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$12)

VJB Vineyards & Cellars 2017 Sagrantino, Mendocino County, USA (\$52)

Wedding Oak Winery 2018 Roussanne, Texas, USA (\$27)

Wedding Oak Winery 2017 Texedo Red, Texas High Plains, Texas, USA (\$27)

Wente Vineyards 2018 Riva Ranch Vineyard Chardonnay, Arroyo Seco, USA (\$22)

Wente Vineyards 2018 Morning Fog Chardonnay, Livermore Valley, USA (\$18)

Westport Winery 2017 Elephant Mountain MV Endeavor Cabernet Sauvignon, Rattlesnake Hills AVA, USA (\$49)

Wild Goose Vineyards 2018 Pinot Gris, British Columbia, Canada (\$17)

Wild Goose Vineyards 2018 Gewürztraminer, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$17)

Wild Goose Vineyards 2018 Stoney Slope Riesling, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$20)

Wild Goose Vineyards 2017 Seacrest Vineyard Merlot, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$23)

Windsor Vineyards 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$32)

Winery at Bull Run 2018 Petit Manseng, Virginia, USA (\$30)

Winery at Bull Run 2018 Petit Verdot, Virginia, USA (\$39)

Yamhill Valley Vineyards 2016 Estate Pinot Noir, McMinnville AVA, USA (\$26)

Yellow Tail 2019 Pinot Grigio, Yenda, Australia (\$8)

Youngberg Hill 2016 Cuvée Pinot Noir, McMinnville/Willamette Valley, USA (\$35)

Z. Alexander Brown 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$18)

ZD Wines 2018 Pinot Noir, Carneros, USA (\$56)

Zilzie Wines 2019 Regional Collection Rosé, Clare Valley, Australia (\$20)

Znovin Znojmo 2018 Veltínské Zelené, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$8)

Zonte's Footstep 2019 Excalibur Sauvignon Blanc, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$22)

Schild Estate Wines 2016 Angus Brae Vineyard Ben Schild Reserve Shiraz, Barossa Valley, Australia (\$30)

Sean Minor 2017 Roberts Road Vineyard Sangiacomo Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$48)

See Ya Later Ranch 2017 Ping Meritage, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$25)

Sequoia Grove Winery 2017 Winemaker Series Syrah, Napa Valley, USA (\$45)

Spangler Vineyards 2016 Petit Verdot, Oregon, USA (\$59)

St Hallett 2017 Faith Shiraz, Barossa Valley, Australia (\$61)

St. Francis Winery & Vineyard 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Sonoma County, USA (\$17)

Sterling Vineyards 2017 Vintner's Collection Meritage, California, USA (\$12)

Stonyfell 2018 The Cellars Shiraz Cabernet, Langhorne Creek, Australia (\$20)

Summerland Wine Brands 2016 Theresa Noelle Vineyard Estate Proprietor's Reserve Pinot Noir, Santa Rita Hills, USA (\$80)

Sutter Home Winery NV Merlot, California, USA (\$8)

Taiyo Shuzo 2018 Junmai Daiginjo Saké, Niigata Prefecture, Japan (\$100)

Takasago Hyo-on Chozo Asahi Kamuy Junmai Daiginjo, Hokkaido, Japan (\$)

Taylor's 2019 St. Andrews Riesling, Clare Valley, Australia (\$32)

Taylor's 2018 Promised Land Shiraz, South Australia (\$13)

Tertulia Cellars 2017 Elevation Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$95)

Testa Vineyards 2015 Italian Heritage Old Vine Zinfandel, Mendocino County, USA (\$40)

The Hess Collection 2016 Lion Tamer Red Wine, Napa Valley, USA (\$45)

The Ned 2018 Chardonnay, Marlborough, New Zealand

The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey 2017 Chardonnay, Monterey County, USA (\$21)

Theopolis Vineyards 2017 Estate Grown Petite Sirah, Yorkville Highlands, USA (\$39)

Thirty-Seven 2016 Reserve Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$40)

Tondré Wines 2016 Grapefield Pinot Noir, Santa Lucia Highlands, USA (\$40)

Trentadue 2017 Estate Bottled La Storia by Trentadue Block 500 Merlot, Alexander Valley, USA (\$28)

Tsillan Cellars 2017 Estate Reserve Malbec, Lake Chelan AVA, USA (\$42)

Unsorted 2017 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$15)

Ursa Vineyards 2017 Silvaspoons Vineyards Mencia, Alta Mesa, USA (\$25)

Ursa Vineyards 2015 Bosque Blend, California, USA (\$35)

V. Sattui Winery 2018 Collina d' Oro Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$48)

V. Sattui Winery 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, USA (\$27)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 La Merica Proprietary Blend, California, USA (\$36)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Collina d' Oro Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$58)

V. Sattui Winery 2017 Pinot Noir, Los Carneros, USA (\$39)

V. Sattui Winery 2016 Vittorio's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, St. Helena, Napa Valley, USA (\$78)

V. Sattui Winery 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$52)

V. Sattui Winery 2016 Paradiso Bordeaux Blend, Napa Valley, USA (\$95)

Valoroso 2017 Red Blend, Setúbal, Portugal (\$12)

Villa Bellezza 2018 Bianco d'Amici, Upper Mississippi River Valley, USA (\$17)

Vinarství Josef Dufek 2015 Ryzlink Rýnský, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$16)

Vinha do Fava 2017 Touriga Nacional, Setúbal, Portugal (\$12)

VINSELEKT MICHLOVSKÝ 2008 Ryzlink Rýnský, Moravia, Czech Republic (\$17)

VJB Vineyards & Cellars 2018 Tocai Friulano, Mendocino County, USA (\$28)

Wairau River Wines 2019 Rose Family Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$18)

Whitestone Winery 2015 Lake Roosevelt Shores Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley, USA (\$19)

Wildwood Oak Winery 2017 Abba Vineyard Mamma Mia Syrah, Lodi, USA (\$38)

Yuki No Boshu NV Cabin in the Snow Junmai Ginjo Saké, Akita, USA (\$40)

ZD Wines 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$75) ■■



Learning Is the Beginning

JEFFRY UNDIARTO, WINE DIRECTOR AT N/NAKA AND WINE DIRECTOR/CO-OWNER AT IKI RAMEN

by Jessie Birschbach

BALINESE NATIVE JEFFRY

Undiarto says that he attributes all of his success to chef Niki Nakayama, co-owner of n/naka, and the veneration is certainly warranted: After a decade, the restaurant is one of the most highly regarded in Los Angeles, and it remains notoriously difficult to obtain a reservation. (The one time I was lucky enough to visit, it was truly one of the most thoughtful and technically perfect dining experiences I've ever had.) "I am where I am today because of [Nakayama]," says Undiarto. "She gave me a chance to seriously study saké and wine [and] even hired a consultant to give me the necessary training."

But surely, deep down, Undiarto must know that what he's achieved over the course of his career is due in part to his reverential approach to his craft. That diligence is on full display at his own well-received restaurant, Iki Ramen, which he opened in L.A.'s Koreatown neighborhood in winter 2018 with a small team of three and support from Nakayama. The ramen is made to order, meaning dishes like the rich and savory burnt garlic tonkotsu might take a little longer, but it's always fresh and hot.

The methods Undiarto has applied to n/naka's and Iki Ramen's respective beverage programs are naturally a bit different. "At n/naka, we wanted to create a

program to complement [Nakayama's] cooking style [through] beverages [that] help create a relaxed atmosphere," he says. "We have maximized our wine storage to make sure our guests have a great yet compact selection of wine and saké to elevate their dining experience." Meanwhile, at Iki, the offerings reflect what Undiarto describes as "a more fun and playful atmosphere." "Our menu includes Japanese craft beer, craft saké, shochu, and even tasty canned wine," he adds. "There is a balanced mix of the familiar with the more unusual."

As for how the restaurants are faring during the COVID-19 pandemic, they're managing to stay afloat while their dining rooms stay closed: n/naka is currently offering bento boxes and kaiseki jubako to go, while Iki Ramen's hours of operation have been modified slightly for takeout orders. "We will overcome this and come out stronger," Undiarto says. *—SJ*



PHOTO COURTESY OF N/NAKA

TOP FIVE PET PEEVES

1. When people don't properly close the lids of alcoholic beverages.
2. Wine delivery during busy service.
3. Broken kitchen appliances.
4. When things are disorganized.
5. The sound of two pieces of Styro-foam being rubbed together.

TOP FIVE FAVES

1. Smooth and enjoyable service.
2. Developing a system or process.
3. Pairing food and wine.
4. Dining out.
5. Time off.

ADVICE FROM A PRO

"Work hard and learn to focus. I started to work in the restaurant industry 15 years ago, and it has been a long and rewarding journey. I now have experience working in almost every position within the industry. I learned from my mistakes and am very lucky to have had good mentors. I still have plenty to learn in life and in the wine world. As [entrepreneur and author] Jim Rohn said, 'Learning is the beginning of wealth. Learning is the beginning of health. Learning is the beginning of spirituality. Searching and learning are where the miracle process all begins.'" —Jeffrey Undiarto



The Man Behind the Brands



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★ EL ★
LUCHADOR



ORGANIC
TEQUILA
100% de AGAVE



TEQUILA[®]
100% de AGAVE

MEZCAL
CRÁNEO



ORGANIC
MEZCAL ARTESANAL
100% AGAVE
OAXACA



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Crafted from **100% natural** ingredients, using artisanal techniques, **L'Aperitivo Nonino Botanical Drink** continues the Nonino family's legacy of excellence and creativity in distillation.

Enjoy it on its own or as part of a new generation of light and refreshing cocktails.



THE ULTIMATE

Rosé

ARCHETYPE

PROVENCE DELIVERS
TYPICITY IN ITS FRESH, DRY,
ELEGANT, AND PALE WINES

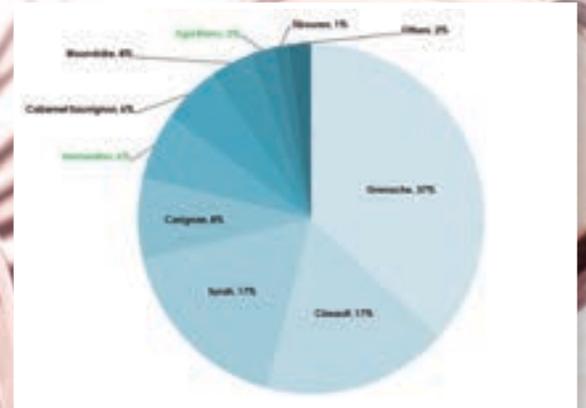
by Christy Canterbury, MW

Despite accounting for just 4.2% of global rosé production, Provence is the reference point for premium rosé. The category dictates 90% of the region's wine production, and its pale-pink expressions continue to garner demand, with export prices increasing by 43% in just the past five years.

So, what is Provençal rosé? In terms of typicity, it's elegant, resolutely dry, and delicately fruited. It's also light in body and fairly low in alcohol—often hovering around 12.5% ABV—but high in refreshment, showcasing crisp acidity.

The top three varieties in the region are Grenache, Cinsault, and Syrah, making up 37%, 17%, and 17%, respectively, of current plantings. However, many other grapes found in Provence can be used in rosé blends; in a blend featuring two grapes, the dominant variety cannot claim more than a 90% share, and the secondary variety cannot comprise more than 50%. Some grapes have a more dominant character than others, be that in flavor, tannin, acidity, or body, so they may be used in lower or higher proportions. Each AOP outlines which varieties may be used and in which proportions.

An important distinction of Provençal rosé is that the grapes are harvested specifically for rosé production. These wines are made almost exclusively by skin maceration and direct press, very rarely by saignée, and typically do not undergo malolactic fermentation.



The top three varieties grown in Provence are Grenache, Cinsault, and Syrah.



PROVENCE AND TERROIR

The large expanse of Provençal vineyards is carved into three major appellations with clearly defined characteristics. The Côtes de Provence makes up 72% of total production, followed by 17% for the Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence and 11% for the Coteaux Varois en Provence.

Because the Côtes de Provence is more spread out and much larger, its terroir is vastly more complex and varied in all aspects. However, all of Provence is influenced by these factors:

- ✦ Powerful sunlight (2,800 hours a year with 250 days of sunshine)
- ✦ Hot and dry climate
- ✦ Poor and well-drained soils
- ✦ Mediterranean grape varieties
- ✦ Mistral wind
- ✦ The proximity of the Mediterranean Sea

See the sidebars for the defining elements of the three Provence AOPs and the terroir designations for Côtes de Provence.

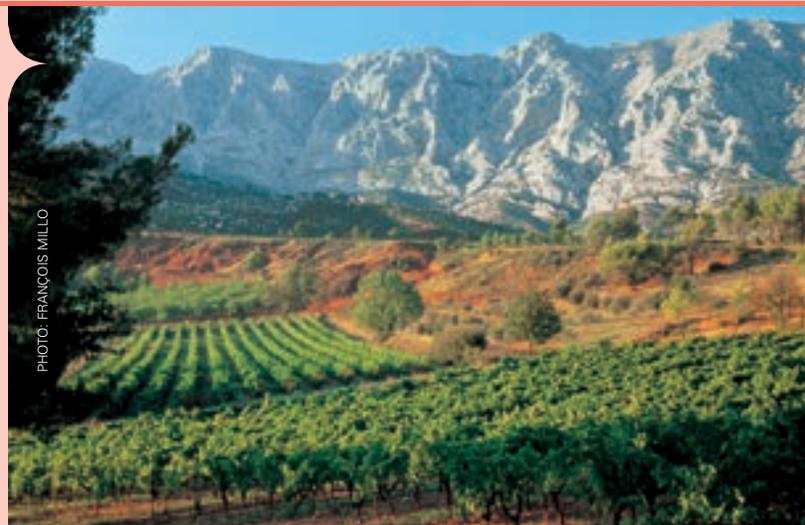
CÔTES DE PROVENCE (90% Rosé Production)

This AOP stretches from the center of Provence to its eastern borders, with vineyards extending right up to the Mediterranean. With 20,100 hectares planted, it covers three departments and 84 villages. The northern and western portions are hillier and defined by limestone soils; heading both south and east, however, the soils are more crystalline or even of volcanic origin. Given the scale of the region, five terroir designations have been defined, all of which also produce red wines. Each designation sets forth even stricter production laws than those of the Côtes de Provence.

Côteaux de Provence Sainte-Victoire

Tucked into the hillsides, the largest of the five designations is protected from maritime influences by the Monts Auréliens and the Sainte-Baume mountain range. It has a continental microclimate that's strongly impacted by the legendary Mistral wind. The warmer summers and limestone soils interspersed with clay and sandstone produce more fruit-driven wines.

PHOTO: FRANÇOIS MILLO





Côtes de Provence Fréjus

Sitting on the eastern rim of the Côtes de Provence region, this is the smallest terroir designation. Due to its strong maritime influence (many vineyards offer a view of the water), it receives more rain than most of Provence while seeing much less temperature fluctuation. The area has three clearly defined soil types: red soil alternating between sandy clay and shale; red sandy clay on tufa and yellow to white loamy clay on marine deposits; and sandy soils derived from the metamorphic rocks of the Massif des Maures. The wines produced here are required to use a high percentage of the temperamental Tibouren grape; they tend to be firmer when young, but they flesh out in the bottle.

Côtes de Provence La Londe

This is the sole of the five in which white-wine production is allowed to be labeled with the terroir designation. Four distinct soils are found here, all marked by slate-like schist: shallow soil on schist; erosion-derived colluvial soil on stony schist; erosion-derived colluvial soil in sunken zones with quartzite, sandstone, and schist; and ancient alluvial soil with quartzite, sandstone, and schist. This area sits near the Mediterranean Sea in the heart of the Côtes de Provence appellation, and while it's similar to Fréjus in its modest temperature fluctuations, it receives much less precipitation. The wines are bone-dry and delicate.

The bayside vineyards of Château Malherbe.

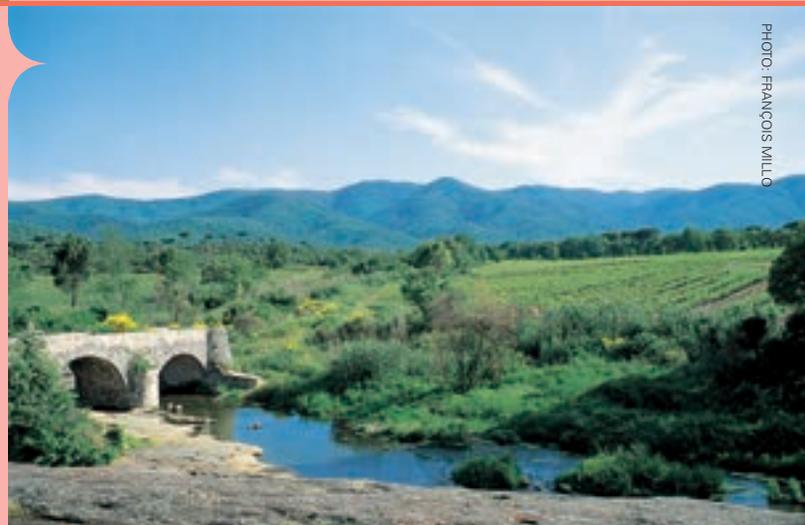


Côtes de Provence Pierrefeu

Pierrefeu sits on the north side of the Massif des Maures range, which separates it from La Londe. The region benefits from both continental and maritime influences, with warmer temperatures imparting riper fruit flavors in the wines; the vineyards, meanwhile, rise up to 400 meters in elevation. Three different soil types characterize this terroir designation: red sandy clay; stony limestone deposits from the plains mixed with red sandy clay; and, on the hillsides, red-brown loamy clay with schist deposits.

Côtes de Provence Notre-Dame-des-Anges

Confirmed just in time for the 2019 harvest, the newest terroir designation sits between the northeastern edge of Côtes de Provence Pierrefeu and the southwestern border of Côtes de Provence Fréjus. The climatic influence of the Mediterranean Sea is mitigated by continental effects, thanks to the Massif des Maures rising between the vines and the seashore. The diverse terroir includes sandstone, schist, sand, limestone, and alluvial soils. These factors create rosés with a sensual texture and fuller mouthfeel lifted by tropical and red fruits.





COTEAUX D'AIX-EN-PROVENCE (82.5% Rosé Production)

The second-largest appellation in Provence in terms of volume, this AOP encompasses 4,127 hectares. Sitting at the western end of Provence, this expansive area—once a favorite subject of French Post-Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne—is characterized by a series of four small mountain chains running parallel to the coast. Vineyards blanket the hills (some with peaks topping 1,000 meters) and descend to the Mediterranean. The soils vary greatly but predominantly comprise clay and limestone with sand and gravel mixed in, depending on the location. The area receives little rain, mostly in the spring and autumn, and is cooled and dried by the Mistral wind. The rosés have a notably generous mouthfeel, with ample and intense flavors of red fruit.



COTEAUX VAROIS EN PROVENCE (90% Rosé Production)

This tiny, high-altitude gem enclosed by cliffs in the center of the Provence region comprises only 2,633 hectares. Its vineyards are tucked into the area's interior, north of the Sainte-Baume range; the elevation ranges from 600 to 1,000 meters, making this the coldest territory for Provence rosé. Not only are these some of the highest vineyards in the region, they're also largely calcareous and east-facing, making the conditions even cooler. There's a considerable amount of fluctuation between not only daytime and nighttime temperatures during the growing season but also summer and winter temperatures. The resulting wines are brisk and lithe, with exceptionally minerally tones.

A Longtime Leader

Provence has been making rosé since Roman times, so it's hardly surprising that the region quickly emerged as an undisputed category leader in the wake of rosé's surge in popularity over the last few decades. It also leads in quality, a status that's vividly evident both by the prices that the top wines command as well as the region's overall export value, which has risen from an average price of €3.70 per 75-centiliter bottle in 2014 to €5.30 in 2019, in accordance with consumers' willingness to pay higher prices for rosé of exceptional quality.

Rosé production also holds a vast amount of cultural influence in Provence, which is known for its idyllic, relaxed lifestyle that largely unfolds outdoors. The standard Mediterranean diet, meanwhile, is tailor-made for accompanying Provençal rosé.

But perhaps the region's success in the marketplace is most clearly exhibited by international winemakers striving to make their wines look—if not taste—like Provençal rosé: It brings to mind the often-repeated phrase "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." As the rosé category diversifies around the world, many examples are made in the Provençal style, a movement that shows a great appreciation and respect for this pioneering region. That said, between the distinctive grapes, soils, climate, and know-how of Provençal producers, nowhere else in the world can replicate these wines' iconic character.

For more on Provence rosé, visit vinsdeprovence.com/en/iconic-provence/intro-to-iconic-provence and follow @WinesofProvence on Facebook and Instagram. More information on Wines of Provence will be featured in the June/July 2020 issue of *The SOMM Journal*.



