

# THE SOMM JOURNAL



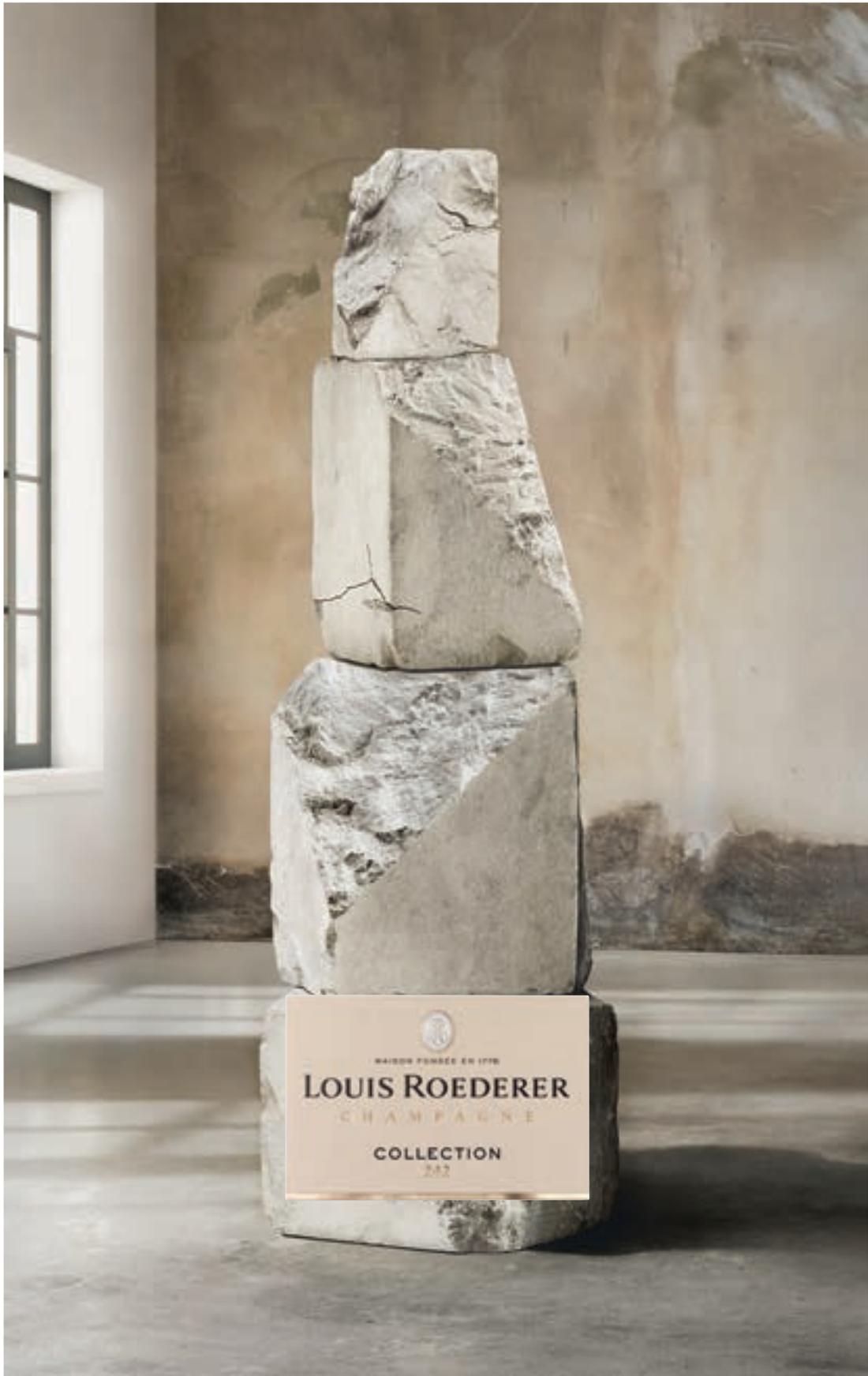
PHOTO: JENNIFER OLSON

## MAKING CHANGE

*Meaningful*

**IN ITS EFFORTS TO COMBAT THE CLIMATE CRISIS, BONTERRA ENTERS A NEW CHAPTER**

Meet the women who are leading the way: Halley Rose Meslin, PR and communications specialist; Hilary Butler, director of marketing; Courtney Cochran, director of PR and corporate communications; Carly Baker, brand manager; and Jess Baum, director of regenerative development and sustainability, pictured in attire by Climate Neutral Certified clothing brands at Forget Me Not in Denver, CO.



**LOUIS ROEDERER**  
HAND IN HAND WITH NATURE

# THE SOMM JOURNAL

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Published six times per year  
ISSN 1944-074X USPS 02488i

The *SOMM Journal* is published bimonthly for \$52 per year by *The SOMM Journal*,  
*The Sommelier Journal*, 6345 Balboa Blvd., Ste. 111, Encino, CA 91316. Periodicals postage at  
Van Nuys, CA, and additional mailing offices.

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE:**  
\$52 one year; \$100 two years  
Single copy: \$10  
For all subscriptions, email:  
subscriptions@sommjournal.com

**POSTMASTER:**  
Send address changes to:  
*The SOMM Journal*  
6345 Balboa Blvd., Ste. 111  
Encino, CA 91316  
818-201-3950

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*Sommelier Journal* USPS 024881, ISSN 1944-074X

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first  press

# THE Sweet SPOT

BETWEEN A STORIED PAST AND A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE, **ST. SUPÉRY** OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO THRIVE IN THE PRESENT

*St. Supéry's dream team: VP of winemaking and viticulture Michael Scholz with his trusty pal, Gus; director of viticulture Michael Garcia; and winemaker Brooke Shenk.*



*Dollarhide Ranch's terraced hills are home to the estate's oldest Cabernet Sauvignon vines, planted in 1982.*



story by Deborah Parker Wong / photos by Alexander Rubin

**D**ollarhide Ranch, a 1,535-plus-acre estate in the northeastern corner of the Napa Valley AVA, is the engine that powers the estate-grown wines of St. Supéry. With more than 500 acres of Bordeaux varieties planted on rolling hills encompassed by the Vaca Mountains' Cedar Roughs Wilderness and Las Posadas State Forest, the property sits between 650 and 1,100 feet—considered to be an “elevation sweet spot”—and is certified as a Napa Green Vineyard in transition. Under the direction of Michael Scholz, vice president of winemaking and viticulture, vineyard practices there are evolving ahead of the certification's requirements despite recent hardships imposed by wildfire.

Only a minuscule amount of Sauvignon Blanc had been harvested by the time two fires converged around the estate in 2020; as they charred the perimeter of the vineyards, burning fence lines and damaging some higher-elevation vines, the crop—just weeks from harvest—was claimed by smoke, eliminating red-wine production for that year. It was the first loss of a vintage for Scholz, who credits a 5-mile fire break and a prescribed burn that helped stop the advancing flames for what was certainly a narrow escape. As the estate recovers, he notes, the significant loss of native flora within its boundaries has driven more wildlife into the areas where a diverse collection of species still thrives.

Biodiversity at the ranch had never been an afterthought; several orchards contain more than 1,200 fruit trees, representing 190



*The Napa Green program certifies vineyards and wineries according to different levels of compliance.*



*Winemaker Brooke Shenk has 15 vintages at St. Supéry to her credit.*



*Guiding Dollarhide's transition to Napa Green certification is director of viticulture Michael Garcia, who joined the winery in 2018.*

different varieties of olives, peaches, nectarines, apples, plums, and pluots. Creeks course through the estate and reservoirs support largemouth bass while providing a habitat for ducks, geese, cranes, egrets, and osprey; they coexist with jackrabbits, foxes, otters, bobcats, and bears, which are being sighted more frequently. Owl and bee populations, meanwhile, are not only beneficial but essential to the estate for pest control and pollination of the fruit trees.

According to St. Supéry vineyard manager Michael Garcia, most of the winery's originally terraced vineyards, which follow the orthography of the rolling hills, now have a permanent cover crop of reseed-

ing native grass and forbs. Thanks to the help of sheep that are brought onto the ranch in the spring, the team has been able to eliminate one tractor pass in the vineyard annually; it's a vital step toward addressing the results of a recent study of the soil types and farming practices here and at St. Supéry's Rutherford estate that indicated that both properties are carbon positive. "We will be conducting further analysis and developing goals to continue to improve this as well," says Garcia.

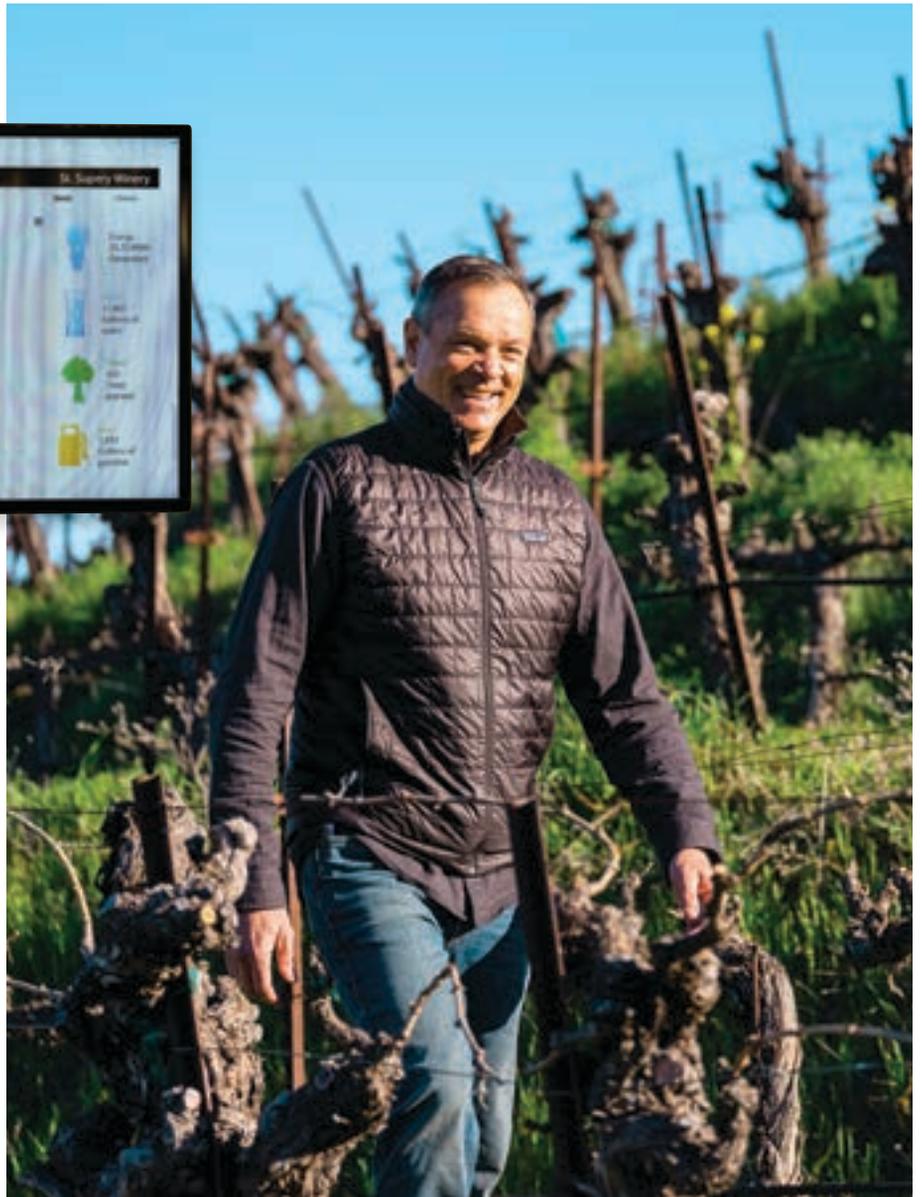
Even in the face of unprecedented change, the early history of both Dollarhide Ranch and the Rutherford estate—which was first planted as early

as 1881—represents a provenance that only a handful of wineries in Napa Valley can claim. The former, named for Andrew Jackson Dollarhide, who settled the land in 1840, is clearly documented on early maps of the Rancho Locallomi Mexican land grant, granted to Julien Pope in 1841. Not much is known about Dollarhide—whose name is likely an anglicized form of de la Hyde, a prominent Irish family name from medieval times onward—other than that he planted grain and ran livestock.

If that site is St. Supéry's purring engine, the 35-acre Rutherford estate, which is graced by the original founders' Queen Anne Victorian home and a centuries-old



*A monitor in the tasting room at St. Supéry's Rutherford estate displays solar energy use in real time.*



*A sixth-generation winemaker from Australia's Barossa Valley, Michael Scholz was winemaker at St. Supéry from 1996 to 2001 and returned to that role in 2009.*

oak tree, is most certainly its beating heart. In a stroke of serendipity, the estate has had a succession of French owners from the 1890s onward: Winemaker Edward St. Supéry, for whom the winery is named, was followed by vintner Robert Skalli, who purchased Dollarhide Ranch in 1982 and built the winery in 1985, and then by the Wertheimer family, who also own Chanel Inc., in 2015.

Today, the giant planters that adorn the entrance to the winery are painted a striking royal blue, the color of the Wertheimer family's racing silks, and the estate grounds are French-inspired, with delightfully espaliered fruit trees and well-shaded

cafe tables scattered across an expansive decomposed-granite patio.

Behind the idyllic scenes, key infrastructure upgrades led by Scholz and winemaker Brooke Shenk have leapfrogged the winery forward: It became Napa Green certified in 2012 and has since continually reevaluated its practices against a checklist that exceeds 120 standards. These include water and energy savings, recycling, composting, responsible purchasing, carbon-footprint reduction, and a commitment to social equity, among others.

Shenk expects that the winery will achieve a 100% offset of its energy use with solar power in 2022. After its 2017

Napa Green audit, it tackled water conservation by moving to steam sanitation for barrels and retrofitted its cellar plumbing to reduce water use by 50%. "Once we were able to identify problem areas, we found solutions that resulted in these significant reductions," she says.

As St. Supéry marks a decade of pursuing eco-conscious practices in Rutherford and shepherds Dollarhide Ranch toward Napa Green Vineyard's Gold Level certification for herbicide-free vineyards, its future looks bright. Said Scholz in his characteristically easygoing, pragmatic manner, "One thing is for certain, from now to tomorrow: change." S|J



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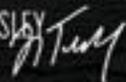
PHOTO: GRACE STUFKOSKY

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# A NEW VINTAGE, A NEW VINEYARD

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# J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines Takes Top Honors at the 90th Annual Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo

**FOLLOWING VICTORY UPON** victory at the 19th Annual Rodeo Uncorked! International Wine Competition in November 2021, J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines ([jlohr.com](http://jlohr.com)) was honored as the Top All-Around Winery and Grand Champion Best of Show during the 90th Annual Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, held from February 28 to March 20. In the competition, which saw 2,862 entries from 17 countries, J. Lohr earned five Class Champion awards, two double gold medals, and six golds, with its 2017 Cuvée PAU winning Grand Champion Best of Show. This is the second time in recent years that J. Lohr has won both the Top All-Around Winery and Best of Show awards, the first being in 2018, when the latter went to J. Lohr's 2014 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon.

The winery also donated multiple

auction lots to the Rodeo Uncorked! Wine Auction and Gala on February 27, including a 2017 Cuvée PAU lot signed by founder Jerry Lohr that sold for a record \$250,000, shattering the previous record by \$18,000. The J. Lohr Top All-Around Winery lot earned an additional \$95,000 for worthy philanthropic causes.

"It is a tremendous honor to be recognized as the Top All-Around Winery twice in five years," says Lohr. "We are especially proud that a Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon and a Bordeaux-varietal red blend have now both taken the Best of Show award for us. When we first planted vines in Paso Robles 36 years ago, we were drawn to the region's ideal soils and climate and [its] remarkable potential for producing world-class Cabernet Sauvignon. We have dedicated ourselves to achieving that potential, and the results



of the Rodeo Uncorked! International Wine Competition are a celebration of the indisputable fact that Paso Robles has earned its place among the world's great wine regions."

PHOTO COURTESY OF SEQUOIA GROVE WINERY

## Sequoia Grove Winery Appoints Jesse Fox as Winemaker

**ONE OF NAPA VALLEY'S** premier producers of Cabernet Sauvignon, Sequoia Grove, has brought winemaker Jesse Fox on board to help fulfill its long-term commitment to producing best-in-class wines expressive of the region's terroir. "The appointment of Jesse Fox to winemaker is the culmination of a six-year strategy of thoughtful, significant investments and measures to ensure our future lives up to the pioneering vision that the winery was founded on in 1979," says Rick Bonitati, president of Sequoia Grove. Since 2016, the company has invested \$25 million in winery renovations as well as vineyard acquisitions and replanting, so "all the pieces are in place for Jesse to hit the ground running," Bonitati adds.

"Achieving balance is the guiding principle in my winemaking," says Fox, an 18-year veteran of the industry who most recently served as winemaker at Amici Cellars in Napa Valley. "It is a privilege . . . to join a team that believes in creating wines that welcome guests into the Napa Valley experience, introducing them to the diverse expressions of Cabernet Sauvignon." For more information, visit [sequoia Grove.com](http://sequoia Grove.com). 



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- ANA MARIA ROMERO  
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by Randy Caparoso

# Serious Rosés for Serious Restaurants

## QUALITY AND AGEABILITY MEET IN LODI-GROWN LORENZA

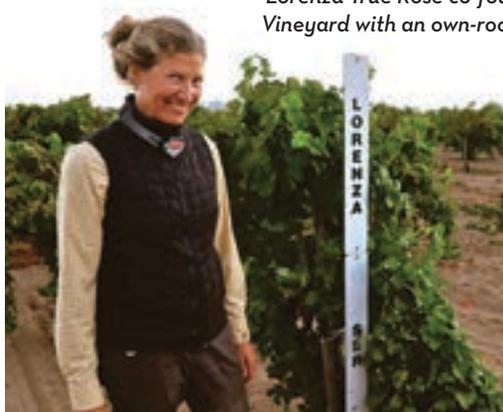
**THIRTY YEARS AGO**, in hopes of enticing interest among guests, I used to list all the rosés on my wine list as “Seriously Dry Rosés.” No dice. We still sold barely half-a-dozen bottles a month, and that included such classics as Domaine Tempier’s Bandol, Charles Joguet’s Chinon, and Clos Sainte Magdeleine Cassis.

Times have changed, obviously: Consumers now harbor a very serious taste for dry rosés—which goes to show that, sooner or later, wine lovers will catch up to a good thing.

In 2008, a veteran Napa Valley wine marketer named Melinda Kearney conceived a project she could do with her daughter, Michèle Ouellet Benson, based on their mutual love of rosé; Benson had discovered the joys of the category while working as a model in Europe, and Kearney had long been obsessed with Domaine Tempier. Together they launched Lorenza True Rosé with the intention of specializing solely in the namesake style.

To follow the Bandol formula, Kearney and Benson were determined to source top-quality Mourvèdre, Grenache, and Cinsaut. But they needed the grapes to be reasonably priced because, back then, dry rosés were not exactly selling like hot-

PHOTO: RANDY CAPAROSO



*Lorenza True Rosé co-founder Melinda Kearney in Lodi’s Bechthold Vineyard with an own-rooted Cinsaut vine planted in 1886.*

cakes. So they introduced themselves to farmers in Lodi, an appellation still known for moderately priced fruit.

One of the sources available to them was Bechthold Vineyard, which harbored own-rooted Cinsaut planted in 1886. This old-vine fruit proved to be so phenomenal that it has remained a backbone of Lorenza to this day. Along with Lodi-grown Mourvèdre and Grenache, the mother-daughter team also found Carignan planted as long ago as 1900, which was simply too good to leave out of the blend. Aiming for a low 12% ABV and crisp acidity, Kearney targeted 20 degrees Brix in her picks. The resulting wines—light, floral, and minerally rather than fruity—proved incredibly popular, attracting the attention of sommeliers and craft retailers in markets from Hawaii to New York.

One of Lorenza’s biggest proponents has been Carlin Karr, wine director for Colorado’s renowned Frasca Hospitality Group, which garnered a 2019 James Beard Award for Outstanding Service. “Lorenza is the quintessential Provençal-style rosé, made with intention and finesse from old vines,” says Karr. “Its fresh, pithy, citrus-driven profile is undeniably refreshing.” It bears mentioning that the Frasca

restaurants specialize in the cuisine and wines of Northern Italy, but they have remained “loyal supporters” of the California-grown Lorenza because of its “consistency and quality,” according to Karr.

Perhaps the most surprising ramification of Lorenza’s emphasis on ancient vines, high acid, and terroir is that this style of rosé actually improves in the bottle. “Four years

ago, we conducted a complete vertical [including the inaugural 2008 Lorenza] with sommeliers in New York on the occasion of our tenth anniversary,” Kearney recalls. “The older wines in particular blew people away—their freshness and balance were totally unexpected . . . at least to these sommeliers.” The experience, she admits, “brought tears to my eyes.”

A recent comparison of the 2010 (39% Mourvèdre, 26% Cinsaut, 24% Grenache, and 11% Carignan) and 2021 Lorenza (30% Mourvèdre, 28% Grenache, 28% Carignan, and 14% Cinsaut) confirmed these findings. While the 2021 is more effusive in red fruit, rose petal, and mineral notes that complement its airy dryness at just 11.4% ABV, the 12-year-old rosé has retained the same acid-driven profile, albeit with more minerality and a matured aromatic intricacy suggesting red berries baked into tarte tatin. Whether young or old, these wines are as “serious” as rosés can get. 

*Randy Caparoso is the author of Lodi!:*

*The Definitive Guide and History of America’s Largest Winegrowing Region, the first book to explore the story behind the historic appellation; it’s currently available for sale on [kitchencincoress.com](http://kitchencincoress.com).*



*Frasca Hospitality Group wine director Carlin Karr, pictured at Frasca Food and Wine in Boulder, CO, features Lorenza True Rosé on her wine lists.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF FRASCA HOSPITALITY GROUP

MARQUES DE CASA CONCHA

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*Mr. Peña*



by Ruth Tobias

# The Anti-Club Club

IN DENVER, **YACHT CLUB** BRIDGES THE HIGH-LOW DIVIDE WITH IRREPRESSIBLE, IRREVERENT STYLE

**THE NAME SAYS** it all. In landlocked Denver, you know a place called Yacht Club is going to exude a sense of humor. It's going to subvert the pretensions of luxury and exclusivity. To that end, it's going to serve Miller High Life alongside 1946 Rivesaltes; elaborate cocktails like the Pencil Thin Chin Strap—combining American single malt, Calvados, coconut, and fig-leaf vermouth—next to the Old Number 7-11, a Jack & Coke with a hot dog; and shaved ices featuring, say, Ganevat Macvin du Jura, raw honey, and flowers as well as cans of White Claw. It's built, in co-owner McLain Hedges' words, to be an "anti-club club."

As his partner Mary Allison Wright explains, between the pre-pandemic closure of the original RiNo Yacht Club and its reopening in the Cole neighborhood, "we spent all this time . . . thinking about what we missed sharing with people and where we missed going. At the end of the day, we're both dive bar fanatics. Obviously we love cocktails, we love natural wine . . . but when we think about where we find ourselves and where we really find a sense of place, [it's] those sticky, weird, out-of-the-way dive bars. We thought, why do they have to be mutually exclusive? If we're thinking about this idea of breaking down barriers and making sure anyone is comfortable . . . why can't we make it so if you're in the mood for . . . a shot and a beer one night, you can [also] come in the next night and get a bottle of wine? Those are the things that we like, so why can't we just merge all of it and create something exciting?"

They've certainly found the right space for it: "The building itself has been there forever," Hedges explains, so it's got this "old, lived-in sort of feel"; noting the juxtaposition of a disco ball with leather and marble furnishings, he adds, "There's a high-low vibe" in keeping with the beverage

program. In the case of the cocktails, "the goal is for them to be crushable . . . but at the same time they should be thought-provoking. We like to push ourselves behind the scenes—[for instance,] we had a drink that just came off the menu where we made a blueberry wine and



*Yacht Club's Vergano Americano shaved ice with pickled blueberries.*

PHOTO: MCLAIN HEDGES



*Yacht Club owners Mary Allison Wright and McLain Hedges.*

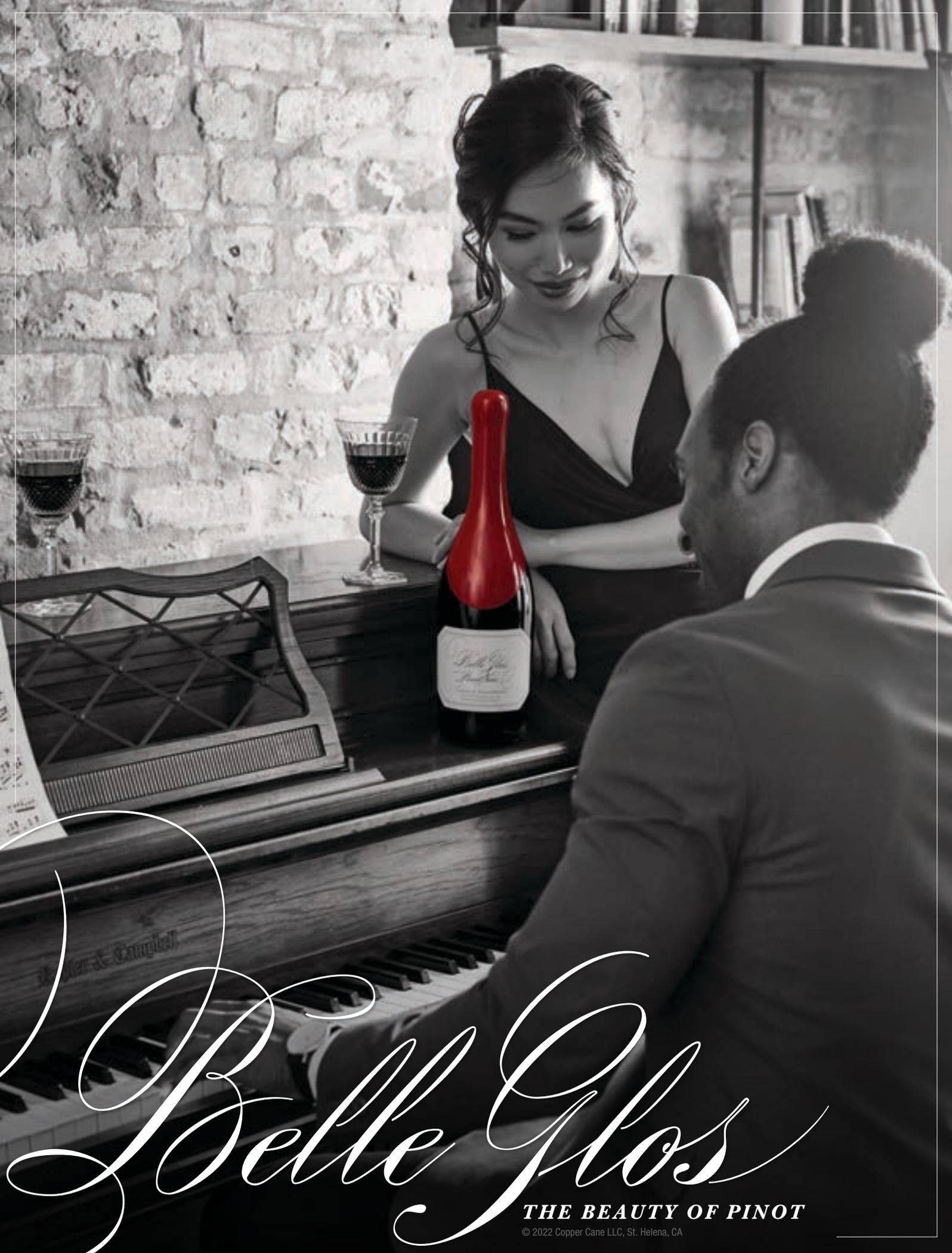
PHOTO: SHAWN CAMPBELL

[then] made a blueberry vinegar from the wine, which was like a six-month process." Or take The Wharf Rat, which Hedges calls "our take on a Sea Breeze. It has a lacto-fermented cranberry-and-grapefruit soda that we make in house. But the menu doesn't read all that complicated—we just say 'grapefruit-cranberry fizz.'"

It also contains Martini Ambrato; in fact, "pretty much every drink on our menu across the board has a fortified wine or a wine of some sort in it—that's always been kind of our thing," Hedges notes, be it Madeira or Fino Sherry. For him, it's a way of showing guests that "this stuff is more versatile than the one way in which it's always been presented to you."

The same could be said of the wine

list itself, where indigenous-varietal pét nat from Catalunya meets amphora-aged Pinot Grigio from the Dolomites meets Biodynamic field blends from Oregon's Hiyu Wine Farm. "A lot of the bottles that we pour by the glass you never see by the glass," Wright points out, from Champagne to Mosse Magic of Ju-Ju—a "delicious, fun" blend of Loire Valley Chenin Blanc and Loin de L'Oeil from Gaillac; adds Hedges, "We also like to open crazy shit—old Burgundy or whatever—and just give an opportunity to dive in by pouring it at cost." After all, "the enjoyment for us is sharing this stuff with people," Wright concludes. "Being able to crack them open and watch people's reactions is the most fun part of the job." 



# Belle Glos

**THE BEAUTY OF PINOT**

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by Wes Hagen

# Through the Pass of the Oaks

## RECAPPING A SHORT TRIP TO PASO ROBLES

**MY PLAN WAS SIMPLE:** visit my all-time-favorite Paso Robles winery, Tablas Creek, for a comprehensive tasting, then check out another winery I'd never been to but had heard good things about, namely Sans Liege. As it turned out, I left with a new perspective on the region and its potential for quality and restraint as well as on the two brands, which are connected by the inspiration they take from the Rhône Valley.

### Tablas Creek

Bridging the traditions of its joint owners—the Perrin family of Château de Beaucastel in Châteauneuf-du-Pape and the Haas family of Vineyard Brands—Tablas Creek produces wines that speak of California sunshine; extraordinary care of the land in the form of cutting-edge viticulture (its vineyard was the first in the world to receive certification from Regenerative Organic Certified for its stringent farming process); and a sense of complexity and balance that is, frankly, sometimes lacking in wines from Paso Robles. The tasting experience here is unhurried, warm, and generous; a trip to Paso is, in my opinion, incomplete without a stop at Tablas Creek.

**Tablas Creek 2019 Espirit de Tablas Blanc, Adelaida District, Paso Robles (\$50)** Proving that Tablas Creek's white-Rhône game is not only strong but perhaps the best in the state, this blend is a stunner. The 2019 vintage is Roussanne-dominant, with supporting roles provided by Grenache Blanc, Picpoul Blanc, and a splash of Picardin. The words "damn close to perfect without losing its soul" were included in my tasting notes. Lemon and lime pith and blossoms, joined by hints of chalky minerality, are evident on the nose. Bright, clean, focused, and sure to age gracefully for a decade, the wine gets my highest recommendation.



PHOTO: HEIDI TOEVS

*Sans Liege winemaker Curt Schalchlin.*

### Sans Liege

The name of this gem of a winery, which I visited on a rainy afternoon at Tin City—a collective of small-production wineries and tasting rooms that's basically Disneyland for the hungry and bibulous—translates from French as "without a master." Fittingly, though winemaker Curt Schalchlin is in love with both Paso's sunshine and the Rhône Valley's history and tradition, he's a slave to neither: The wines are generous but not overtly ripe, crafty but still complex and honest. That best-of-both-worlds approach seems to work very well for the brand. (Special thanks to my buddy, assistant manager Nick Refice, for the ad hoc barrel tasting and unflagging hospitality.)

**Sans Liege 2019 Groundwork Graciano, El Pomar District, Paso Robles (\$20)** It was difficult to choose one wine to celebrate from my deep dive into Sans Liege's portfolio, but the Graciano was so effusive in its tempting primary fruit, with boysenberries and raspberries as well as violets leaping from the glass, that it won my ultimate favor. Delivering vibrancy on the palate equal to its tannic grip, it's also a steal. *SJ*

PHOTO COURTESY OF TABLAS CREEK

*Paso Robles winery Tablas Creek.*



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Garden Bar's Queen Bee features *génépy*, pineapple juice, local honey, egg white, and a garnish of honeycomb and bee pollen.

# A Bar Blooms in the Desert

IN DOWNTOWN PHOENIX, AZ, **KIM HAASARUD** BRINGS THE GARDEN TO YOUR GLASS

"I WANTED TO create the antithesis of the dark and moody cocktail bar," says Kim Haasarud of Garden Bar PHX. The results are charming: A white picket fence surrounds the bright and airy renovated 1914 bungalow in the historic Roosevelt South district of Phoenix, and rocking chairs decorate the front porch. Out back, a patio and seating nooks are surrounded by plantings of fragrant herbs, passion fruit vines, and citrus trees.

setting as a bar, Haasarud—who is also a columnist for *The SOMM Journal's* sister publication, *The Tasting Panel*—enlisted the talents of interior designer Caroline Van Slyke of nearby Boho Farm. Organic elements weave through the distinctively decorated sitting rooms in the form of vintage botanical prints, potted plants, and antique finds.

The decor reflects the garden-to-glass ethos that defines Haasarud's libations,

*Bourbon, Armagnac, rosemary-infused absinthe, and hand-carved ice distinguish the Farmhouse Sazerac.*



Kim Haasarud is the owner of Garden Bar PHX.

Haasarud, a James Beard Award-nominated mixologist, and her husband, Kevin, purchased the property to serve as the office for Liquid Architecture, a cocktail consulting firm, but immediately realized its multiuse potential. To convey its bucolic

which incorporate nature's bounty along with artisanal ingredients. For the Farmhouse Sazerac, for instance, Haasarud updates the New Orleans tippie with rosemary-infused absinthe and a split base of small-batch bourbon and what

she calls "the farmer's brandy," Armagnac: "It's another way to connect the earth and the land." Then there's the Queen Bee, a riff on the classic Bee's Knees made with Heirloom Genepy (an alpine herbal liqueur), Arizona honey, pineapple juice, and egg white shaken to a frothy cap that's then adorned with honeycomb and bee pollen. For the House Margarita, she incorporates a shelf-stable salted citrus cordial in lieu of more traditional sour mix. "It's part of our commitment to sustainability," explains Haasarud, who uses leftover citrus after it has been zested or pressed. Open Thursday through Sunday, the bar also offers grazing platters of cheese and charcuterie during the week, while weekends bring brunch boards and pastries along with frozen Bellinis and cereal-infused Gin Fizzes.

On the days that it's closed, Garden Bar serves as a rental workspace for industry professionals; a setting for private events such as bridal showers and wedding receptions; and the home of The Cocktail Collaborative, a nonprofit arm of the business offering educational tastings and content geared toward enthusiasts. Community involvement is also paramount, as Haasarud works with local organizations such as Phoenix Spokes People to advocate for bike-friendly infrastructure and Absolutely Delightful to support local beekeepers.

"This house has a soul," says Haasarud. "We had such a good feeling when we walked in. And it's turned out to be the garden oasis I envisioned—a respite from the world where we can connect with each other and grow and blossom." ❧

# CELEBRATING OVER 50 YEARS

OF AWARD-WINNING WINEMAKING IN AMADOR COUNTY





# Why I No Longer Use the Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine

**THE FIRST EVALUATION** system I encountered when I was starting out in wine was the 20-point system devised in the 1960s by famous late professor Maynard Amerine at the University of California, Davis. It's been revised since then, but essentially, various aspects of the wine got a certain number of points—color got X points, body/texture got Y points, flavor got Z points, and so on—and it all added up (potentially) to 20. The problem I had when using it was that I'd often add up the scores and discover I'd just given 19 points to a lifeless wine I didn't even like. I figured I was doing something wrong.

Later, the 20-point system was joined by another analytical methodology called the systematic approach to tasting, comprising a checklist or grid of elements to look for. I found myself writing things like: "Pale straw color; medium to low acidity; good body; light apple and lemon flavors; no oak; short to medium finish." Within a month, I could

barely remember the wine. I still felt I must be doing something wrong. The checklists were helpful as a sort of discipline, but something important—or rather some things—were missing.

I've come to see that one of those missing links is emotion. How a wine makes us feel—the emotional level on which we experience it—is never taken into consideration by checklists. Here, it's helpful to consider how the brain works. It used to be thought that the brain operated as a system of three separate parts. There was the "lizard brain" that directed instincts, drives, and appetites; the limbic system that enabled higher emotions; and the cortex, which operated "higher functions"—reason, analytical thinking, language, and so on. But neuroscientists today say the brain is not neatly divided like this: It's hyper-interconnected. So smell for example (a lizard-brain activity) creates and evokes

memories in the cortex, which can pull you right into an emotion.

For the past year or so, I've been tasting wine in a different way than I've ever done before. First, I intentionally try *not* to think about it analytically but just sit and sense it. I try *not* to start writing down descriptors immediately but instead imagine the wine as something sentient. Does it have an energy? Does it have a lit-from-within quality? Does it have a personality? Is it trying to "tell me something" about the place it's from or the years it's seen?

I've found this new approach harder than I thought—and a whole lot more revealing. I've come to see that with wine, learning means *experiencing* emotionally. Everything else is just information. **||**

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

# COMPLEMENTS TO THE CHEF



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# Insta Success

## MEET TWO SOMMELIERS WHO SPARKLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**WHEN THE GOING** gets tough, the tough get social! At the height of the pandemic, when restaurants and bars closed for extended periods of time and their employees were unable to interact in person with customers and colleagues, many sommeliers found solace, support, and a new type of success on social media. Instagram became the platform of choice for them to showcase their tasting skills, wine knowledge, and personalities.

Sommelier Marika Vida (@themomsomm) started hosting Instagram Live sessions about a month after COVID-19 hit U.S. shores. Vida has held many high-profile positions, including wine director at The Ritz-Carlton New York, Central Park, where she developed the acclaimed Phenomenal Femmes program featuring female winemakers from around the globe. She had also spent ten years growing her consulting business but lost 90% of her clients at the start of the pandemic. For Vida, then, Instagram wasn't just for fun: "I somehow had to stay relevant," she says.

Initially, she focused on interviewing winemakers that she knew. "But then I got creative and back to the 'women in wine' background that I have, and I started a very successful Mom Monday series with moms in the wine business," she explains. "I didn't limit it to that, though. I kept interviewing winemakers and winery owners no matter what their gender was. I also started a chef and somm series because during my tenure as a somm I had worked with so many chefs, and I wanted to really showcase that relationship because it's sacred."

The time that Vida has spent building her social media presence has paid off. "It thankfully led to more work in person, which is always my goal," she acknowledges. Recent examples include an appearance at the Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival, where she led tastings and represented wine brands, and the Phenomenal Femmes wine dinner she hosted at The

PHOTO: OLIA MIRRA



◀ Marika Vida is the founder of *The Mom Somm*.

PHOTO: AMBER BROWN



▶ Anna-Christina Cabrales is the founder of *Sommation*.

Yale Club of New York City.

Sommelier Anna-Christina Cabrales, the founder of *Sommation* (@sommation\_live), found strength in numbers when developing her social media strategy. "I started to go on IG Live by myself six days a week starting in March of 2020," she says, "[but] I realized this schedule wasn't sustainable and didn't reflect the spirit of community which means so much to me. I roped in several wine-professional friends to build *Sommation*, which is a safe environment . . . to talk about any topics that revolve around wine." The name *Sommation* is a play on summation, she adds, "where the whole is stronger than the parts."

Joining Cabrales on *Sommation*'s diverse team are seven other sommeliers: Bruno Almeida, Brian Long, Jamie Harrison Rubin, Carrie Lyn Strong, Hai Tran, Stefanie Schwartz, and Kat Thomas. In addition to hosting Instagram Live sessions, their services include beverage programming, front-of-house staff training, and, soon, event hosting.

In building a social media presence, Vida and Cabrales agree that authenticity is essential. "There's a lot of crap on social media, and being honest is key," Vida says. "We don't need more reasons to be on our damn phone, so if you're going to do it, do it well." Cabrales, for her part, advises you to "be yourself and drive your spirit and message clearly. . . I enjoy sharing the joyful moments of my life as I try to be a positive source of energy. But sometimes, harnessing this energy requires taking a break . . . to find your true voice. Don't be afraid to take a break." And don't let algorithms dampen your joy in the process. In Vida's sage advice, "Know who your followers are! I don't think volume matters as much as reaching the people you want to. As a parent, I believe in quality over quantity, and I feel the same way about social media." SJ

*Wanda Mann is a Certified Specialist of Wine and the founder of winewithwanda.com. Follow her on Instagram @winedinewanda.*

# A TOAST TO YOU

The dream of Jordan would never have become a reality without the friendship of so many sommeliers, restaurateurs and distributors who believed in Tom and Sally Jordan's vision of French-inspired wines from Sonoma County. Thank you for your unwavering support throughout the years. The first toast to celebrate our 50th anniversary goes to you.

*As always, proceeds from Jordan wine sales fund the John Jordan Foundation, which works to fight the negative effects of poverty through investments in educational, health and humanitarian causes.*



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# Flavor-Tripping With the Miracle Fruit

## EXPLORING THE UNIQUE SENSORIAL PROPERTIES OF **MIRACULIN**

**EARLY HUMANS ARE** known to have altered their consciousness with practices that some scientists believe sparked the dawn of modern human cognition. The controversial “Stoned Ape” hypothesis suggests that our ancestors may have “eaten their way to consciousness” when they ingested the naturally occurring psychedelic known as psilocybin. As a species, we’ve been eating and drinking to intentionally alter our states of perception ever since.

For generations, the indigenous peoples of the Congo, Nigeria, and Ghana have used the fruit (and leaves) of *Synsepalum dulcificum*, a shrub indigenous to West and Central Africa, in ethnomedicine. The taste-altering properties of this flavorless, bright-red berry—dubbed “the miracle fruit,” it’s about the size of a coffee bean—make for a fascinating sensory experience.

Ghanaians call the berries *asaba* and have eaten them throughout history, but the first documentation of the fruit in Western society wasn’t made until the early 18th century, when the Chevalier Reynaud des Marchais—a French cartographer, navigator, and slave ship captain who traveled extensively along the west coast of Africa—witnessed the berries being consumed by natives before eating a meal. In Ghana, they are traditionally used to eliminate the need for sugar or any sweeteners in items like *koko* (a sour, spicy porridge), *kenkey* (fermented white cornmeal), and palm wine. During the past few decades, Ghanaian farmers have produced *asaba* commercially and sold it through fair trade agreements.

*Asaba* contains miraculin, a taste-modifying glycoprotein composed of glucosamine (31%), mannose (30%), fucose (22%), xylose (10%), and galac-

tose (7%) that chemically is roughly 400,000 times sweeter than table sugar. When we eat *asaba*, the miraculin binds to specific sweet receptor cells in our taste buds, making them easily activated by acidic foods like vinegar, lemons, pickles, and mustard and enabling us to perceive these items as sweeter for about two hours. (Miraculin doesn’t, however, affect our perception of foods with a neutral pH.) For this taster, miraculin makes lemons taste like lemonade, goat cheese taste like cheesecake, and mild red wine vinegar taste like off-dry natural wine.

Beyond tricking our palates, the potential uses for miraculin, which was first synthesized in 1989, are many; it’s currently being studied by Japanese researchers to improve the flavor of less sour foods like tomatoes and strawberries. Its applications in sensory therapy include aiding cancer patients whose taste perception is skewed by chemotherapy, and there are anecdotal accounts that it has helped

people suffering from parosmia as a result of contracting COVID-19.

*Asaba* currently has “novel food” status in the EU, a classification that means a given food does not have a history of widespread consumption in the region and therefore requires a safety assessment before it can be used in food products. And while it’s technically legal in the U.S. to buy whole or powdered *asaba* berries and to sell them in a restaurant or cafe, distributing items that contain miraculin is still prohibited. In a questionable ruling in the 1970s, the FDA classified the miracle berry as a food additive, meaning it would need extensive testing to gain approval for its use in manufactured food products; decades later, that testing has yet to be completed. [S|J](#)



*20 years with you*



**PAGOS  
 DEL REY**

20 ANIVERSARIO

Pagos del Rey – Ribera del Duero celebrates its 20th Anniversary. This winery represents the first step towards the expansion of Felix Solis Avantis into northern wine regions. This arrival in Ribera del Duero was followed by new openings in the most recognizable Spanish D.O. (Denominación de Origen) such as Rioja, Rueda and Toro. After these 20 years, “Pagos del Rey - Ribera del Duero” achieved an outstanding performance, bringing the main two brands: “Condado de Oriza” and “Altos de Tamarón” to the top of national and international distribution. Additionally, the wines have been internationally recognized with prestigious awards, worthy to mention Best Spanish wine 2021 by the ‘Frankfurt International Trophy’.

More info: [www.pagosdelrey.com](http://www.pagosdelrey.com)





# Not All Rosé Is Created Equal

**HAVE YOU EVER** heard the phrase “marketers ruin everything”? The proof lies in rosé, an entire subcategory of wine that has been commoditized and advertised with the same slogan (“Rosé all day,” anyone?) ad nauseam rather than recognized as an agricultural product worthy of respect. Before I went to Provence, I too had fallen into the fallacy that rosé is all the same. But after a week with Jean-François Ott, the winemaker behind one of the best rosé houses of all time, Domaines Ott, I learned just how much time and effort goes into pink wine. Short answer: as much as any other wine in the world.

When you go to Provence, you’re quickly reminded that 1) you should drop everything and move to the French Riviera and 2) there is no other wine region on the planet that specializes solely in rosé production. I’m not saying other regions can’t make great rosé, but I am saying that Provence is laser-focused on that mission—and the competition that results means you’re much more likely to find quality wines.

Let’s dispel a few myths together, shall we?

“Rosé is all the same.” Nope. Rosé is as terroir-driven as any wine out there. In Provence, areas near the breezy Mediterranean water are cooler and yield wines with notes of salinity, while further inland you can find sunny valleys that produce riper grapes. Soils vary from limestone and clay to granite and volcanic. And many producers, including the 18 Crus Classés Châteaux



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIS FOR VINO

*Vince Anter, right, shares a bottle of rosé with Jean-François Ott of Domaines Ott.*

(yes, Provence has them), put as much time and care into their viticulture as those in Bordeaux or Burgundy.

“Rosé must be drunk young!” Wrong again. Entry-level wine? Sure, drink it young and fresh. But the more structured rosés, especially Mourvèdre-based expressions from the Bandol AOC, age beautifully. The Domaines Ott 2009 Château Romassan Bandol Rosé, which I drank on a sun-drenched patio with Jean-François before a long lunch, had the waxy character of aged Chenin Blanc mixed with the smoky, savory character of Spanish Monastrell.

“Rosé is an apéritif wine.” I mean, it is a great starter wine; I’m not disputing that. But its high acidity and the added weight it gains from skin contact means it can pair with

in-between dishes like tomato salad, meaty white fish, and even mildly spicy foods that don’t quite match up with red or white.

There are a few more myths out there about rosé that we bust in our *Vis for Vino* Provence episode, which you can catch as part of our new season in June 2022. While you wait, feel free to dispute yet another fallacy, namely that rosé is only for summertime: Pick up a bottle from Provence to tide you over and imagine warmer weather has already arrived.

*Until next wine,  
Vince SJ*

*Episodes of Vis for Vino are available to view on visforvino.com, Amazon Prime, Roku, and YouTube.*

***Provence is the only wine region in the world that specializes solely in rosé production.***

# ANTIGAL

— WINERY & ESTATES —

## MALBEC CELEBRATES ARGENTINA TERROIR



2018  
**91**  
tastingpanel

2017  
**90**  
Wine Spectator

2014  
**93**  
WINE ENTHUSIAST  
CELLAR SELECTION

2019  
**92**  
tastingpanel

SALES INFO





by Kate Norwell-Smith

# Delicious Intervention

## ON THE LIMITS OF NATURAL WINEMAKING

**ALL WINE IS THE** result of grape spoilage: The path from grape to fermented liquid is inevitable even without human intervention. Wine is the main waste product of yeasts metabolizing the fruit's natural sugars; in the process, bacteria may spontaneously metabolize the grapes' malic acid, converting it into lactic acid, and many other chemical reactions may occur, creating complex compounds that can add or detract from the final product—which can sometimes smell and taste great but often does not. More importantly, then, *delicious* wine is the result of *controlled* grape spoilage: Creating favorable conditions for beneficial yeasts and bacteria to thrive is how winemakers pave the path to quality.

Stepping back and letting a wine “become what it wants to become” is a mantra of sorts among so-called natural winemakers; there is a romanticism associated with wines that are produced with “no input” from humans. But there can be a serious downside too, as sometimes the end product is akin to the emperor's new clothes.

The term “natural wine” famously has no widely accepted definition. This raises the question: What is natural? Is grafting vines together to create a new grape variety and then importing that rootstock from Europe to North America natural? Is pruning natural? Irrigation? How about temperature control in the winery? If the definition of natural wine solely entails

indigenous grapes that have been allowed to grow freely and excludes temperature control in the cellar, then the wine world suddenly shrinks. And most likely stinks.

In this age of wellness, “natural” has erroneously become synonymous with “good for you.” The absence of added sulfites is frequently touted as one of the best reasons to drink natural wine. But hold on: The human body produces sulfites, as do grapes; life on this planet would be unrecognizable without them. Sulfur dioxide—the sulfite form used as an antioxidant and antimicrobial in winemaking—can of course be deadly in high enough doses, but then so can water.

When “natural” winemakers speak about zero-intervention winemaking, they imply that the rest of us are chomping at the bit to manipulate grapes as much as possible, endlessly cooking up ways to mess with our wines. This does responsible winemakers a real injustice. Science enables us to add the minimum amount of sulfur necessary to protect each wine and ensure that it remains as intended until

consumed. It also lets us select the yeasts and bacteria we want to ferment with. As a low-intervention winemaker, I frequently choose to let ambient yeasts and bacteria carry out my fermentations—but I am not afraid to inoculate when the conditions call for it or when I think a more delicious wine will be created as a result. Commercial yeasts and bacteria are mostly naturally occurring strains that were recognized and isolated because of how the wines they fermented turned out.

Much is made of terroir: What could be more natural than a wine that tastes of its terroir? However, acetobacter, the bacteria responsible for producing acetic acid, or vinegar, can stomp all over terroir if not held in check by a few judicious inputs from the winemaker. Frequently “natural” wines taste less of place and more of some kind of vinegar or of a barnyard gone wild—an irony that seems to be lost on its champions.

To be clear, there are delicate, subtle, fun, intriguing, and delicious “natural” wines out there; however, those descriptors belong to many “conventional” wines as well. The world is better off for the variety that winemakers of all stripes bring to it. Let's not put inherent value judgments on any style of wine or wine production; rather, let's let each wine stand on its own merits. **sj**



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BY SARAH GRAYBILL

# Un Nuit in Alsace

AT **BLVD**, EUROPEAN-THEMED PAIRING DINNERS TAKE CHICAGOANS ABROAD

**CHICAGO IS ACCLAIMED** for representing the best of international cuisine. Though an Old Hollywood-themed American steakhouse on Lake Street, BLVD Steakhouse is no exception, especially when it comes to special events like the Alsatian Wine Dinner it hosted in February.

The dinner featured a variety of hearty and comforting foods iconic to Alsace, which borders Switzerland and Germany. It was imagined and executed by BLVD

was made by salt-curing a torchon for three days, freezing it, and shaving it with a microplane zester. That was accompanied by Marcel Deiss 2019 Engelgarten, a blend of five different white varietals.

The third course was *lapin au Riesling*, a rabbit-and-lamb tongue stew with flageolet beans and the namesake wine. It was paired with a Pinot Noir, Domaine Ostertag 2019 Les Jardins, which BLVD assistant general manager and beverage director



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BLVD

*For the first course, choucroute was paired with Domaine Ostertag 2019 Les Vieilles Vignes de Sylvaner.*

those comforts," Rink explains. "With the wine, we tried a lot of different wine producers and varietals as part of the R&D process." Zind-Humbrecht was an obvious producer of choice for him as he had worked with the wines before, while Ostertag and Marcel Deiss were brought in especially for the dinner: The latter is known for championing Alsatian terroir through its white blends, the former for its monovarietal expressions.

The event served as just one example of the kinds of wines BLVD calls attention to on a list that offers around 180 selections at any given time, along with an additional 50–60 labels reserved for special programming. "We have a fairly strong core wine menu; [we] might change a couple wines every few months, depending on availability, vintages that make sense to add, and [the need for] a specific price and profile," Rink says. "[With] a steakhouse concept, Cabernet is king, specifically those offered from Napa. [But] we have plenty of guests that appreciate the options outside of Napa."

Meanwhile, Besch's deep culinary knowledge and enthusiasm for traditional Old World cuisine will be brought to bear on upcoming events that span a variety of themes. "We are working on an Old Hollywood/celebrity favorites-themed dinner for the end of summer," Rink says. "These sorts of events afford us a chance to [transcend] the Chicago steakhouse box we are in and do something highly creative and engaging." ■



*Guests attending BLVD Steakhouse's Alsatian Wine Dinner enjoyed four courses of hearty European fare paired with hand-selected wines.*

chef Johnny Besch, who picked dishes that resonated with him and his background in French technique. The first course was choucroute: Composed of *leberkåse* (sausage loaf), *ingelegter fisch* (pickled cod), beer mustard, and house-baked rye, it was paired with Domaine Ostertag 2019 Les Vieilles Vignes de Sylvaner. Second up was fermented, charred endive with prunes and a topping of "foie gras snow," which

Ted Rink says he chose for its brightly shining cherry notes, making the black pepper in the dish pop. And finally, *bettelman*—an Alsatian bread pudding—was rounded out by Domaine Zind-Humbrecht 2019 Gewürztraminer Roche Calcaire, boasting notes of ripe stone and orchard fruit with a spicy finish.

"The idea of something hearty in winter was a goal, [and] Alsace seemed to offer



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*Clos Wine Shop owners Paul and Juerie Masters.*

# Up Close With Clos

THE SAN DIEGO, CA, WINE SHOP CELEBRATES LOW-INTERVENTION WINES

story by Michelle M. Metter / photos by Rafael Peterson

*Clos Wine Shop in San Diego, CA, offers a wide variety of low-intervention bottlings at an average price of \$24.*



**AT SOME POINT**, we will stop talking about the life-changing decisions made by many aspiring entrepreneurs who, throughout the pandemic, became part of the Great Resignation, leaving the security of corporate jobs to forge new paths with greater autonomy. But now is not that moment.

For married couple Paul and Juerie Masters, the decision meant leaving both their home in New York and their jobs in wine distribution in search of a better quality of life. Compared to New York's fast-paced hustle, San Diego offered them the right mix of great weather and a community that, according to them, seemed happy. In short, the city just felt good.

It's no surprise, then, that the positive vibes should carry over to the first-time proprietors' venture, Clos Wine Shop, which opened in 2021 with the mission of stripping away the pretenses surrounding wine so that novices as well as connoisseurs could relax while discovering the store's wide array of low-intervention bottlings, well priced at an average of \$24.

Some might argue that the couple's singular focus could limit opportunities for growth, but Paul considers it an opportunity to teach consumers to think carefully about the category. "Juerie and I have spent many years [throughout] our careers tasting wines and refining our palates; over time, we found it difficult to enjoy something that tastes lab driven," he says. "Clos Wine Shop is not a natural wine store—I feel that definition becomes murky and often weird. We are focused instead on a clear set of parameters that revolve around farming and [the use of] native yeasts; some evidential sustainability; and for the most part, no use of new barrels. We are not following a trend—we are sharing and drinking what we enjoy." To that end, they also have a wine club: For \$50 a month, members receive two wines per shipment with extensive tasting notes and recipes curated by Juerie.

The word *clos* refers to any vineyard enclosed by a wall, usually of stone, so it is fitting that the shop's patio is also enclosed by a partial stone wall, creating an intimate environment that's enhanced by the embrace you feel when you are greeted by staff upon entering. As Paul notes, "Everyone who walks in the door should feel like this is just a lovely place to stay and hang out for a while. They should have a great experience that is approachable and friendly with no stigma [as they] interact with a team that can speak knowledgeably and passionately about the wines we stock." For more information, visit [closwineshop.com](http://closwineshop.com). **SJ**



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{ winery spotlight }

# A Russian River Valley

# Signature

Thomas George Estates owner Tom Baker with his wife, Stephanie, and their dog, FreeMo.

TOM BAKER INSCRIBES HIS NAME ON THE REGION WITH THE AGED WINES AND GOURMET FOOD OF THOMAS GEORGE ESTATES

story by Liz Thach, MW  
photos by Alexander Rubin

PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS GEORGE ESTATES



*The entrance to the Thomas George Estates aging cave.*



*Thomas George Pinot Noir paired with ravioli.*

*it*

was on his first trip to Burgundy in the 1970s that Tom Baker fell in love with the magic of wine and food. "I drove down a dirt road and knocked on the door of a small winery," reminisces Baker. "Even though I didn't have an appointment, the owner and his wife invited me into their kitchen to taste their estate wines with a home-cooked meal." It was that experience that planted the seed in his mind to someday establish a winery of his own, where he could work to perfect the right rootstock, row orientation, and balance through sustainable practices to showcase the essence of each block; serve humble yet delicious dishes to guests that featured local ingredients; and ensure that his wines were properly aged and released only when they were ready to truly express their terroir, their vines, and their vintage.

But it wasn't until 2008, when Baker discovered that Davis Bynum was selling his winery and vineyards in Healdsburg, California, that his dream reached fruition. "Bynum was a legend," explains Baker. "He was the first Pinot Noir winemaker in the Russian River [Valley], purchasing his grapes from the Rochiols. In addition to buying fine Burgundy whenever I could, I also collected fine old Russian River Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays; in my opinion, Russian River Valley is god's gift to those two varietals."

So from his home base in Canada, where he works in private equity, Baker purchased the property sight unseen and renamed it Thomas George Estates, combining his first name and his father's. (Interestingly enough, today he has nearly ten wine-club customers with the name Thomas George or George Thomas.)

Thomas George  
Estates winemaker  
Nico Cantacuzène.



**Chef Vince Hamilton, formerly of Dry Creek Kitchen, prepares food for tastings at the winery.**

## Respecting Heritage

After purchasing the property, Baker flew down to visit with Bynum, and the two became close friends. In fact, he later established the Davis Bynum Memorial Viticulture Scholarship at Santa Rosa Junior College to honor the pioneer:

"In the beginning, I had plans to establish a grand winery building similar to those in Napa," reports Baker, "but one day, I took another look at the property with its old barn-like buildings. It was then that I realized how special it was. It was honest and authentic—the true spirit of the Russian River Valley." So instead of razing the buildings, he rejuvenated them. "I wanted to maintain its charm and natural

environment," he explains.

Today, when visitors come to the estate, they drive up a winding road through native oak trees and shrubs before arriving at a tasting room in a renovated hop kiln surrounded by a bocce ball court, multiple tables and chairs for relaxing, hiking trails, vineyard overlooks, and a picnic area. The winemaking facility itself is small and tastefully appointed, with separate fermentation tanks for each vineyard block and a stone aging cave dug into the hillside.

Each block of the four vineyards, which are all certified sustainable by Sonoma County Winegrowers, is farmed with its distinctive soil, elevation, and climate in mind to express the terroir; their vigor is enhanced by the attention paid to row spacing, orientation, canopy, and pruning as a means to imparting a balance of texture, structure, palate-driven focus, and inherent complexity in the wines. Cresta Ridge, which is the coolest site, encompasses 14 acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, while Starr Ridge and Baker Ridge cover 23 and 21 planted acres, respectively. The slightly warmer Sons & Daughters Ranch is 39 planted acres, with 21 devoted to Chardonnay; the rest is planted to small amounts of 13 different varieties, including Albariño, Viognier, and some Zinfandel dating to 1885.

## No Wine Before Its Time

"Our main purpose," says Baker, "is to produce wines that are the best expression of Russian River Valley [through] principles espoused by the great winemakers of Burgundy." Accordingly, the estate focuses on single-block Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays that are released only when the winemaking team and ownership believe them to be at their apex, typically after spending between two to five years in bottle. "I believe strongly in the need to age wines and only release them when they are ready to drink," he explains.

Winemaker Nico Cantacuzène, who was born in France and moved to California to study winemaking, agrees. "Perhaps it is because I was raised in France that I am so concerned about wine balance and aging," he muses. "My main concern is expressing what the vineyard has to say and not mess it up."

To that end, every vineyard block is picked by hand and fermented separately. Cantacuzène believes in harvesting early and generally picks Chardonnay at around 22.5 Brix. He also enjoys experimenting with different fermentation vessels, using concrete eggs and square concrete fermenters for some varieties, traditional stainless steel for others. Oak is used judiciously, as he contends that it should only provide a framework for the fruit to express itself.



The range of fermentation vessels used at the winery includes concrete eggs and square concrete fermenters.



### Pairing Is a Priority . . . And So Are Dogs

Because Baker firmly believes that wine should be enjoyed with food, he has employed a chef, Vince Hamilton, formerly of Dry Creek Kitchen. Visitors can schedule special multicourse pairing sessions or keep it simple and order a pizza from an on-site Airstream trailer to enjoy while drinking wine and playing bocce ball. And even the basic tasting of five Thomas George Estates wines includes vegan, gluten-free arancini.

"We developed the concept of the Airstream trailer as a 'kitchen on wheels,'" says Baker, "so that guests can go to selected areas of the estate and have a meal prepared with wine." Other wine-paired culinary experiences by Hamilton that the winery offers include a reserve tasting in the caves, a "safari" through the vineyard accompanied by a picnic lunch, and an overnight stay in one of several luxury houses on the property. Eventually, Hamilton will also be able to prepare meals in the vineyard as the staff of Thomas George continues to refine their intimate hospitality offerings.

Another interesting feature of the estate, which also reflects the relaxed atmosphere that Baker wants to create there, is the integral role that dogs play. "Dogs are an important part of the joy of life," says Baker, "and they are always welcome at Thomas George Estates." FreeMo, a black Maltipoo, is Baker and his wife Stephanie's current furry family member. "We have named all of our vineyard blocks after family dogs," says Baker.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS GEORGE ESTATES



FreeMo, a black Maltipoo, is the canine ambassador of Thomas George Estates.

## TASTING *Notes*

**Thomas George Estates 2016 Sons & Daughters Ranch Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County (\$45)** Rich aromas of lemon cake and wet stone lead to mineral notes that coincide with the charming arrival of peach nectar. The flavors and aromatics combine to create a rich and leesy profile, albeit one with a focused edginess. Aged ten months in 67% stainless steel and 33% concrete egg, with no oak or malolactic treatment, this is a lightning strike on the palate. **95** —*Meridith May*

**Thomas George Estates 2016 Cresta Ridge Vineyard Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County (\$45)** Aged 11 months in (25% new) French oak, this wine is a spitfire, with an entry of startling white pepper lit up by needle-like acidity. Nougat and lemon wedge play off each other amid notes of buttercup, toffee, and lemon bar with a hint of basil. Dynamic and glorious in its balance and reined-in richness. **95** —*M.M.*

**Thomas George Estates 2016 Baker Ridge Vineyard Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County (\$45)** Gentle and refined scents of toasted vanilla-pineapple cake give way to powdered honeysuckle petals that leave behind a featherlike mouthfeel. Burgundian in style and texture, this wine possesses an elegant demeanor that ensures it rises to the top. **96** —*M.M.*

**Thomas George Estates 2016 Starr Ridge Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County (\$65)** Cinnamon and nutmeg with a dash of black pepper make for a prickly, energetic red. Black plum and dark cherry add density as balsamic, tree bark, sweet tobacco, and rhubarb layer up before a finish of mocha and cedar. What a big brooder! **95** —*M.M.*

**Thomas George Estates 2016 Cresta Ridge Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County (\$65)** Estate fruit from the cooler Green Valley AVA adds to a vibrant yet soothing profile of lilac and Luxardo cherry. Juicy, with wild bush fruit bursting from the ground to join tilled soil and a hint of Worcestershire, this complex red ignites a contemplative mood in anyone who tastes it. **97** —*M.M.*

**Thomas George Estates 2016 Baker Ridge Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County (\$65)** Old-vine clones lend gravitas through an earthy perfume of black-peppered pomegranate and sweet tobacco. Bright cherry and spiced red licorice augment the supreme aromatic intensity of roses before this wine's soil-driven character unites with vivacious acidity and a salty finish. **96** —*M.M.*



by Allison Jordan, executive director, California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance, and VP of environmental affairs, Wine Institute

# Getting Down to Earth

ON WINE INSTITUTE'S MONTH-LONG CELEBRATION OF YEAR-ROUND SUSTAINABILITY

## APRIL IS DOWN TO EARTH MONTH,

Wine Institute's annual celebration of the California wine industry's dedication to protecting its land, communities, and livelihoods for future generations. Wineries and growers across the state highlight their sustainable farming, winemaking, and business practices through a variety of in-person and online events and experiences as well as special offers.

to view the current schedule.

Down to Earth Month also provides the opportunity to showcase educational and certification programs that have encouraged and supported the adoption of sustainable winegrowing and winemaking practices by vintners and farmers for decades. In fact, 80% of the wine made in California—the fourth-largest production region in the world—comes from a

**Honeybees and other beneficial insects are an important part of sustainable winegrowing.**



sociations, other supporters of the Down to Earth campaign include restaurants, retailers, distributors, and hotel partners in California and throughout the U.S. that join the celebration by featuring sustainably produced wines on their lists or hosting special winemaker dinners. Meanwhile, each year, the California State Assembly has adopted a resolution to officially declare April as "California Wines: Down to Earth Month."

In short, April is an ideal time to check out California wines grown and made according to sustainable practices. Open a bottle and raise a toast to the community's commitment to a green industry from grapes to glass. 



A vineyard tour at Benziger Family Winery during Down to Earth Month.

Examples of past offerings include special discounts on wine and shipping fees, virtual discussions, live concerts, and pairing experiences. Livestreamed videos and winery-led hikes provide the opportunity for viewers and visitors to see such sustainable practices as the use of cover crops, bird boxes, and sheep up close and in action. Some producers have hosted cooking demonstrations featuring locally and sustainably grown produce, while regional wine associations have held sustainability-themed festivals and tastings. Check out [discovercaliforniawines.com/d2e](http://discovercaliforniawines.com/d2e)

Certified California Sustainable Winery. In addition, over half of the state's vineyard acreage is certified by one or more of the following: Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing, Fish Friendly Farming, LandSmart, LODI RULES, Napa Green, and SIP Certified. Producers may also be certified Biodynamic, Organic, and/or California Green Business. The extensive participation in these programs demonstrates the California wine community's deep commitment to sustainability. Learn more at [californiasustainablewine.com](http://californiasustainablewine.com).

In addition to wineries and regional as-

*Authored by Wine Institute contributors, The Inside Sip on California Wine provides an insider's look at the latest developments in California's wine community. Wine Institute is an advocacy group of 1,000 California wineries and affiliated businesses that initiates and advocates for state, federal, and international public policy to encourage the responsible production, consumption, and enjoyment of wine. The organization works to improve the economic and environmental health of the state by leading sustainable winegrowing efforts via the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance and by showcasing California's wine regions as ideal destinations for food and wine travelers.*

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*August*

AUGUST SEBASTIANI  
Proprietor



# Variety Show

MERLOT IS  
(ONCE AGAIN)  
POISED  
TO HAVE A  
MOMENT

by *Maeve Pesquera*

We all know what the Judgment of Paris did for California wine—and we also know what the “Judgment of *Sideways*” did for California Merlot. While the former put our state on the global wine map, the latter wiped one of its key varieties right off it. But it was not just the humorous swipe that *Sideways* took at the grape that put it in the penalty box—it’s that the swipe was perfectly timed.

When the movie premiered in 2004, California Merlot was already ripe for a take-down—overplanted, oversaturated, and too often questionable in quality. Producers of bulk Merlot were asking for trouble, which is what they got. Unfortunately, they took the reputation of this prestigious Bordeaux variety down with them.

But nothing lasts forever, and, for the past several years, talk has been growing of Merlot’s triumphant comeback. We are not entirely there yet, but we’re getting close. The truth is, California Merlot never really went away. It just underwent a hard reset.

The grape’s magic bullet is terroir. Winemakers have long talked about Pinot Noir as a finicky grape that can only excel within a narrow band of favorable conditions, but Merlot is much the same. This means that its comeback will be driven not by a surge in quantity but rather by a transformation of public perception, which paves the way for more producers to invest in making great Merlots from the right terroirs.

So, what is the state of California Merlot in 2022? Where are we on the comeback curve? What does the future hold? To answer these questions and more, I reached out to two of my trusted wine contacts.

*DAOU Family Estates in the Adelaida District of California’s Paso Robles region is among the wineries driving Merlot’s comeback.*

PHOTO: ACACIA PRODUCTIONS



*Alex Poreda is director of sales at ABC Fine Wine & Spirits.*



PHOTO: LILA PHOTO

*Virginia Philip, MS, is wine director at The Breakers Palm Beach and owner of Virginia Philip Wine Spirits & Academy.*

Alex Poreda is the director of sales at ABC Fine Wine & Spirits, where he oversees a talented Florida-based team involved in all aspects of sales, including merchandising, product selection, shelf sets, and marketing. His 35-year career includes 19 years in food and beverage service; working for restaurants, bars, hotels, casinos, and nightclubs on the East Coast, he found himself drawn to fine-dining establishments and their wine programs. "I was fascinated by food and wine pairings and increasing my knowledge," Poreda recalls of the journey that would lead him to pass the Certified level with the Court of Master Sommeliers. He then pivoted from on-premise to distribution with a stint at Southern Glazer's, and after eight years, he landed his current position at ABC Fine Wine & Spirits.

Master Sommelier Virginia Philip, for her part, grew up in an Italian household where wine was on the table for many family occasions. She went on to study restaurant management at Johnson & Wales University, honing her early exposure to wine with an honorary doctorate in enology in 2015. When she moved to Aspen, Colorado, to pursue a full-time career at renowned property The Little Nell, she studied wine at every chance: "I wanted

to travel the world and learn why food and wine are so integral to one another," she says. In 1999, when her twin sister got married at The Breakers Palm Beach in Florida, Philip decided to interview at the famed resort and has been there ever since, currently as wine director. In 2002, Philip became the 11th woman to earn the Master Sommelier accreditation and was named "Best Sommelier USA" by the American Sommelier Association from 2002 to 2006. In 2011, she fulfilled a longtime dream to open her own store: Virginia Philip Wine Spirits & Academy.

**Tell us about your businesses, their wine programs, and your consumers.**

**Poreda:** ABC Fine Wine & Spirits has been in business for more than 85 years and is one of the country's largest family-owned and -operated alcohol-beverage companies. We have more than 120 locations and pride ourselves on our selection of wine, spirits, beer, and any other celebratory beverage. Working for a family retailer allows us to be nimble and to react quickly to consumer needs. Ultimately, our guests decide our selection and how our team is performing.

Our wine team consists of a dedicated group of 11 of the most knowledgeable wine professionals in the business that

meet monthly to review and taste all new wines for authorization. These meetings also include shelf-set reviews, category performance, and consumer trends. In addition, we have a fleet of educated sales consultants in our stores that assist our customers and provide feedback or needs from the field. All attend classes monthly, focusing on new wines and featured items. We also invite guest speakers who have included winemakers, winery owners, and master distillers from around the globe. Product knowledge and continued education are a top priority for ABC.

**Philip:** I started at The Breakers in November 2000 with one sommelier: me! Gradually, I expanded the wine collection as well as the team and hired Juan Gomez, MS, to be my first addition in early 2001. In 2003, I was promoted to wine director. Today, the team comprises six sommeliers, [and we have] more than 50,000 bottles in the collection, [with] 2,400 SKUs and more than 15 separate wine lists and programs at the hotel.

I am incredibly thankful for our consumers and clients who make both The Breakers and my shop viable. I opened my shop in November 2011 in West Palm Beach and then relocated it to Palm Beach in November 2017. We sell wine and spirits at the store and have a dedicated class-

room for education. Wine education and mentoring are very important aspects for me, [as] I believe that everyone should be able to learn [about] and consume wine at all levels and price points.

**Tell us about your personal experience with Merlot. Was there a moment that shaped your view of the variety? And how has that view evolved over the years?**

**Poreda:** Bigger red wines are popular in my house, and Merlot has always been included. My “Merlot moment” was more of a connect-the-dots realization over time that a lot of the Cabs and Bordeaux-style blends that I enjoyed had Merlot as a component. It is one of the varieties that shows well standing alone or blended.

**Philip:** I enjoyed quite a bit of Napa Merlot and Left Bank Bordeaux, but it simply was a grape that was a staple on any wine shelf and [in] any BTG wine program in a restaurant. Merlot produces some of the best wine on the planet. . . . My advice to producers is that if you are going to make it, do it well so your customers think, “What a great glass of red wine.”

**What are the common attributes of terroirs that produce the best Merlots?**

**Poreda:** Long, sunny days and cool nights!

**Philip:** The ability for the grape to ripen fully [when planted] in areas [that provide] enough hang time to retain the acid but not overblow the alcohol. Merlot ripens early, [but] if picked too soon, it can be green and abrasive. The vineyard manager has to work hard to get it just right. Clay soils tend to make some fantastic Merlot.

**How have you brought Merlot to life for your guests and customers?**

**Poreda:** As a team, we have had numerous discussions and [made] multiple attempts to shift to growth with exciting new wines, but [to] no avail. Under \$20, Bordeaux has performed exceptionally well during the same time, and many are predominantly Merlot.

**Philip:** I left Merlot as a staple on every BTG menu but committed to fewer cases and tried to incorporate examples from the best regions producing it.

**There has been growing talk of a Merlot comeback in the past few years. Is it still coming back, or was it never gone? What is Merlot’s potential going forward?**

**Poreda:** Merlot sales have been flat to down over the past five or more years. It appears that our guests who love Merlot are just shifting around the category. I still believe that the category has room for growth, and we will continue to taste and add in new wines to keep our selection fresh.

**Philip:** Merlot definitely took a beating after *Sideways*. However, I think those who enjoyed it still consumed it, although perhaps a bit more quietly. In many cases, people are drinking Merlot and do not necessarily realize it—think blends from California, Bordeaux, Chile, and Washington State, to name a few.

**What appeal does a great Merlot hold for the consumer? What are the varietal qualities that set it apart and make it marketable to your customers?**

**Poreda:** The greatest allure for me personally is the value that Merlot offers, and I assume that appeals to our guests as well. In addition, the varietal can show different taste profiles, from soft and rounded to austere and bold, depending on location and winemaking style. It keeps things interesting.

**Philip:** Most consumers consider Merlot the “in-between grape”—heavier than Pinot Noir but lighter than Cabernet Sauvignon. A hint of black pepper; fleshy and grippy tannins, [and] dark and red fruits usually hit the right palate buttons.

**Nearly 60% of the Paso Robles AVA is planted to red Bordeaux varieties today, and at DAOU Family Estates, winemaker Daniel Daou is doubling down on Merlot with a wine called Sequentis. Where do you see Paso Robles in the future scheme of California Merlot?**



PHOTO: ACACIA PRODUCTIONS

Maeve Pesquera is the senior vice president of strategy and business development at DAOU Family Estates in the Adelaida District of Paso Robles, California. Prior to joining DAOU in 2016, she was the national director of wine, beverage, and culinary innovation at Fleming’s Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar. Pesquera is on the board of directors of the Paso Robles CAB Collective and the Wine Institute. She is certified by the Court of Master Sommeliers, Wine & Spirit Education Trust, and Society of Wine Educators and is a frequent speaker and lecturer on industry panels.

**Poreda:** The stars seem to have aligned for Paso over the past five to ten years for multiple reasons, including people like Daniel Daou, who has elevated recognition of the AVA [among] wine consumers. I think Cabernet will always be king in Paso Robles, but second place still gets a trophy!

**Philip:** I am excited to try the wine. The climate and soils are certainly well suited for Merlot. I believe that the Daou family never produces a wine that they are not proud of. Everything they do is with significant consideration and with the objective to produce the best wines possible. ❧



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# The Next Generation Comes of Age

KNOW US,  
LOVE US,  
EMPLOY US

by Lacie Johns,  
marketing specialist at  
Solterra Strategies

**WITH NEARLY HALF** of the country's workforce being made up by millennials and Gen Z, my generation is entering an established, booming wine industry. So how do we hit the ground running? There isn't a step-by-step guide to the top. We have to define success by carving our own paths and climbing our own ladders, smashing glass ceilings along the way. We're here to challenge social norms, evolve traditions, and modernize corporate constructs. We aren't interested in a seat at a table that wasn't built for us; we want to build our own.

At the beginning of my career, I asked everyone I met, "How did you get here?" Every path was different, but all were forged by a willingness to take chances and a little luck. A person's network is their biggest asset: Success is based on relationships, hard work, and personal experiences. My generation is learning that most of our dream jobs don't yet exist. It's so early in our careers

that we're all chasing horizons that have yet to be seen.

Priorities for younger generations have shifted. We're seeking happier lives, getting the most out of our PTO and finding balance in an industry where everyone's always on the clock. At the same time, a job is more than just a paycheck; for us, the labor of love that is the wine industry is fulfilled with emotional gratification. We look for companies that believe in sustainability and social equality as well as for employers that offer educational opportunities and promises of advancement.

Raised in a digital age, millennials have their finger on the pulse of new ideas. We're resourceful and more educated than ever. Key to the longevity of businesses is to invest in talent now to shape the leaders of the future. Find our strengths and leverage us to your advantage.

Ask us questions, listen, and be open

to adapting with us. How is your business managing generational shifts? The pandemic taught us to evolve our businesses or crumble: Everyone turned to digital tools to stay afloat, and wineries were suddenly monitoring the latest TikTok trends to catch consumer attention. It challenged everyone to try things they never would have tried before.

My first job in the industry was at Ancient Peaks Winery. They had never had an intern before, and with zero experience in hand, I helped develop an internship program that has now serviced dozens of students, helping them get a foot in the door.

My advice to my peers: If you can't find a path, create your own. It's easy to compare your career to the tracks we see others following, but this industry is so diverse that everyone's experience is different. Stay motivated, keep focused, and be ready for doors to open. 

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# For the Amore of Amarone

TRADITION SPARKS INSPIRATION AT ALLEGRINI ESTATES by Wanda Mann

## WHETHER SHE'S STROLLING HER

family's historic vineyards or hosting a feast at their 16th-century Renaissance palace, Marilisa Allegrini, CEO of Allegrini Estates, is surrounded by the traditions and treasures of Valpolicella. Where others might feel bound by an Italian viticultural legacy that spans five centuries, she finds inspiration: "Tradition is not immobility," she points out. "When accompanied by true respect for a territory, there is always something to discover, interpret, and see in a new light."

Amarone is Valpolicella's signature wine, and Allegrini is one of its most revered producers. Marilisa's late father, Giovanni Allegrini, is celebrated as a viticultural visionary who took *appassimento*, which involves air-drying the grapes off the vine for several months before crushing, and therefore Amarone to new heights: His contributions to viticulture in Valpolicella include fine-tuning the *appassimento* process so that the fruit would not be compromised by botrytis, which destroys the skin of the grapes and robs Amarone of desired tannins and complexity.

The Allegrini 2013 Fieramonte Amarone Classico Riserva DOCG is a prime example of the family's winemaking approach—today overseen by Marilisa's brother Franco—which Marilisa describes as being "linked to the past and moving toward the future." Fieramonte was created in the 1960s by her father as their first single-vineyard Amarone, but production ceased in 1985 because the vines had been ravaged by *esca*, a disease affecting their trunks; they were ripped out and replanted in 2001. "To have complexity and longevity, it is not wise to make Amarone from young vines," explains Marilisa, so they waited a decade for the plantings to develop character. Fieramonte was relaunched in 2017 with the 2011 vintage; the 2013 vintage marks the return of the wine to the United States.

The grapes for the most recent release—a blend of Corvina Veronese,



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLEGRINI ESTATES

Marilisa Allegrini is CEO of Allegrini Estates.

Corvone, Rondinella, and Oseleta—were naturally dried until they lost 40–50% of their weight, intensifying the flavors at the heart of Amarone's rich profile. Fermentation occurred in stainless steel and the wine aged 48 months in French oak barriques, followed by another year in bottle, before release. Says Marilisa, "Fieramonte communicates the signature of Allegrini. We are always focused on creating food-friendly wines with freshness and drinkability." Only 5,000–7,000 bottles of Fieramonte are produced each vintage, making it a coveted acquisition for Amarone lovers.

Though some argue that *appassi-*

mento inhibits Amarone's capacity to express terroir, Marilisa vehemently disagrees: "Amarone is made with an artisanal technique, but the terroir plays an important role." The diversity of altitudes, exposures, locations, and microclimates in Allegrini's organically managed vineyards positively contributes to what Franco describes as "the integrity of the fruit" in Amarone della Valpolicella. A blend of Corvina, Corvone, Rondinella, and Oseleta, the Allegrini 2017 Amarone della Valpolicella Classico DOCG is "a standard-bearer for a modern and clean style of Amarone," in Marilisa's words. Aged for 18 months in *tonneaux* and large Slavonian casks, it has the structure, complexity, and acidity needed to "easily age for 30 years," Marilisa proclaimed.

For those who want to flirt with the Amarone style but aren't ready to commit, the Allegrini 2018 Palazzo della Torre Veneto IGT is a fantastic option as one of the producer's most famous and accessible wines. Of this blend, which also includes Corvina, Rondinella, and Sangiovese, only Corvone goes through *appassimento*; the dried grapes add roundness and a hint of raisin, but the wine does not have the robust structure and complexity of Amarone. Marilisa describes it as "a great introduction to Valpolicella and [its] indigenous grapes."

Inspired by tradition and unafraid to embrace innovation, Allegrini's wines are an enduring and evolving portrait of Valpolicella. *sj*

## Tasting Notes

**Allegrini 2018 Palazzo della Torre Veneto IGT, Italy (\$23)** Juicy and fresh red berries with soft tannins and subtle hints of raisins, dates, and herbs.

**Allegrini 2017 Amarone della Valpolicella Classico DOCG, Italy (\$93)** Rich, dark berry flavors with an earthy undercurrent, smooth tannins, and threads of spice.



**Allegrini 2013 Fieramonte Amarone Classico Riserva DOCG, Italy (\$350)** Intense and sultry black-cherry flavors meld seamlessly with velvety tannins and pops of pepper, clove, and herbs.

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# Gianni Vietina

CO-OWNER AND EXECUTIVE CHEF, BIANCA, CULVER CITY, CA

by Michelle M. Metter



PHOTO: BILL BENNETT

**GIANNI VIETINA'S FAMILY HISTORY** in the hospitality industry goes back—way, way back, from Italy to the U.S. In fact, his restaurant Bianca in Culver City, California, is named for his grandmother, who serves as inspiration for its approach to cuisine, wine, and hospitality.

**Q: You wear a lot of hats these days—chef, winemaker, educator, restaurateur, and sommelier. Which is most important to you and why?**

I like being a chef because I love the kitchen and cooking. I was just making ribs here at Bianca and even though the restaurant is very busy, it relaxes me. I also love making [my own brand of Armagnac,] *Cyrano*, and educating people about Armagnac. Being a sommelier is my passion, and my history as an educator gives me a chance to connect [more deeply] with people. If I were

only doing one of these things, I would be bored. So if I am choosing one, I think I would say restaurateur, because it allows me to do all these others too. With all these hats combined I am a better businessman and a happier person.

**Q: What inspired you to bring Bianca to life?**

The smell of baked bread. Our restaurant is named after my *nonna* Tina, whose real name is Bianca. In Forte dei Marmi, she had a huge wood-burning oven outside her house. . . . Nonna Tina would invite women to come twice a week to bake bread with her. She taught them and helped them build their own skills and business. That smell of fresh-baked bread in the air reminds me of her. It's that smell that takes me back to Forte dei Marmi. But this is just one-third of the story: My partners, Federico Fernandez and my brother, Nicola, have their own stories. And that's the beauty of Bianca—like her, our restaurant is full of stories to tell.

**Q: With cuisine that reflects Italian, Argentinian, and French influences, how do you focus your wine list?**

"Focus" is a tricky word here. The menu is always evolving at Bianca, reflecting my drive for diversity and change. And the same goes for our wine program. You see, our menu starts at Italian, Argentinian, and French, leading into all different types of cuisines. So the best way to explain our wine program is that it is responsive. . . . currently [including] wines from South Africa, California, Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, [and] Lebanon.

**Q: Do you have any advice for wine buyers about sourcing Italian wines?**

If you're reading *The SOMM Journal*, then you likely know a lot about wine, so my best advice is to trust your instincts. That's what will make your selection unique. This doesn't mean buy all the wine you like, but rather buy the wine you need on your list. . . . And don't buy when you taste. Take a few days to remember the wine. Maybe [you'll find] you don't need [it] on your list but rather it [would] be a nice addition to your personal collection.

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

I'm drinking Vega Sicilia Unico—1998, 2004, 2006, 2009, they are all fantastic—with my wife, Erica, and my daughters, Rocio and Camilla, who are starting to learn about wine. *Salute!* 

*San Diego-based wine journalist Michelle M. Metter is the co-founder and director of SommCon USA. The SOMM Journal and The Tasting Panel are proud supporters of SommCon and its mission of continuing education and training for the global wine industry. Follow Metter on Instagram @michellemettersd.*

*Stags' Leap*

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# Covering Ground

by Andrea Moore, CSW

## A CROSSWORD PUZZLE FOR THE WINE-INCLINED

### ACROSS

1. With 2 across, you might ring them for 6 a.m. Mimosas
6. See 1 across
10. Embarrassing sort
14. Negative battery terminal
15. Tom Sawyer performer
16. Brit's buttocks
17. \*Sancerre's flint
18. Not supporting
19. Labor or Memorial Day event
20. Some winery houses
22. \*With 51 across, a hint to this puzzle's themed entries
24. His, en français
25. Makes a run for it
28. Clad in wool
29. Agency with a lot to say in 2020 (abbr.)
32. \*Bordeaux's gravelly plateau
36. Neither's partner
37. Mythological mother of life (and homonym for a noted Barbaresco producer)
38. The "R" in REM
39. U.K. corporation (abbr.)
40. \*With 6 down, Pomerol's iron pan
41. Meeting minute bullet
42. Propel on water
43. \*Southern Rhône's river rocks
44. Salt-N-Pepa want to talk about it
45. Like Vinho Verde
47. \*Condrieu's decomposed mica
48. Chat
51. \*See 22 across
54. Luau mainstay
57. Sing praises
58. Seeing to the task
61. Large part of a turbine
62. Baddie
63. Yen
64. Bakery supply
65. You might smell them in Sauvignon Blanc
66. Gift attachments
67. \*Bordeaux's limestone slopes



### DOWN

1. Bottles are often sold in them
2. Tasting note in a Sazerac
3. Leaves in a flash
4. "I think I just . . . yeah, I just had an \_" (*Dumb and Dumber*; 1994)
5. To ensue
6. \*See 40 across
7. Something you might do for your life
8. Winter setting in Ohio (abbr.)
9. Talk down low
10. Point of origin
11. Difficult testing structure
12. Norway's capital
13. It's what's for dinner
21. Congers or morays
23. Heavyweight desk reference
26. Innermost (or in Loire, easternmost)
27. Sole Atlantic catch?
28. Catered
29. Casual eatery
30. Losing strategy
31. Kids bump them while adults try not to
32. Grey in France, and maybe Oregon
33. Charge for services
34. Highest point
35. Great enthusiasm
37. Styling option
39. Rural passageway
40. Pops
42. Seep from within
43. Uncool one
45. Agency monitoring reactors (abbr.)
46. Squatting will make them sore
47. Sight east of Aconcagua
48. "Capiche?"
49. Venerable Heart tune
50. Masses of ice
51. Film failure
52. Go off the rails
53. A certain "je ne sais quoi"
55. Too much of this acid causes gout
56. Mental state after a liter of mezcal
59. They stand for arms (abbr.)
60. A test for antibodies (abbr.)

Solution on page 106

*“One is never disappointed with the very best!”*



Proof Awards 100%



BEST BRANDY OF THE YEAR  
John Barelycorn



BEST EAU-DE-VIE BRANDY  
Ascot Awards



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# MAKING CHANGE

## *Meaningful*

IN ITS EFFORTS TO COMBAT  
THE CLIMATE CRISIS, **BONTERRA**  
ENTERS A NEW CHAPTER



Bonterra's Halley Rose Meslin, PR and communications specialist; Carly Baker, brand manager; Hilary Butler, director of marketing; Courtney Cochran, director of PR and corporate communications; and Jess Baum, director of regenerative development and sustainability, pictured at Forget Me Not in Denver, CO, in attire by Climate Neutral Certified clothing brands.

PHOTO: JENNIFER OLSON



**"AS WE  
LIKE TO  
SAY, YOUR  
EMISSIONS-  
FREE WINE  
IS FINALLY  
HERE."**

*Rachel Newman is Bonterra's VP of marketing.*

**BONTERRA ORGANIC ESTATES** has undergone a brand realignment that is at once an acknowledgement of its past as a U.S. industry leader in organic and sustainable wine-growing for over 30 years and a vision of the world's present and future. "In many ways, the wine business is at the front lines of the climate crisis," says Jess Baum, Bonterra's director of regenerative development and sustainability. "This is something we cannot wait to address."

Rachel Newman, Bonterra's VP of marketing, points to the brand's recent Climate Neutral Certification as symbolic of this acceleration of purpose: "We're taking bolder action now, not a few years or decades down the road. Climate Neutral Certification is at the heart of these efforts, allowing us to capture Bonterra's entire carbon footprint for the first time—and, crucially, for the consumer—to communicate it at the per-bottle level." Newman sees the partnership between brands and consumers as critical to advancing everyday climate action. "Now, when you pick up a bottle of Bonterra, you can know exactly what emissions were created in its development and that we've verifiably offset those emissions while committing to further reducing our carbon intensity. As we like to say, your emissions-free wine is finally here."



IMAGES COURTESY OF BONTERRA

*Like the others found in this article, this advertisement reflects Bonterra's commitment to not only climate action but transparency.*



Tracking a winery's carbon footprint from grapevine to glass manufacturing and from the winery to the marketplace can be a tall order, especially for one as large as Bonterra, which currently produces about a half-million cases annually for international distribution. In 2020—the year for which Bonterra earned its first Climate Neutral Certification, announced in 2021—Bonterra disclosed that 37.2% of its emissions derived from packaging and materials, 25.2% from shipping, 16.5% from production, 16.1% from farming and grapes, and 5% from employee commuting and travel; meanwhile, Bonterra offset 110% of its 2020 emissions by supporting carbon-reduction projects in Brazil, China, and Myanmar.

Hilary Butler, Bonterra's recently appointed director of marketing, explains that this forward-looking approach is all about "meeting consumers where they are, and right now the number-one concern for many of them is climate change." This concern, of course, grows from the increasingly deleterious impacts of the crisis, as the planet—not to mention the California wine industry—is challenged by continuous droughts, frequent wildfires, record-breaking temperatures, and more.

According to Newman, "A brand's beneficial practices may not have been the priorities of consumers before, but today's consumers are clamoring for brands to demonstrate that their goodness isn't just at surface level but rather something that runs deep and penetrates every aspect of a business and its supply chain. Instead of alluding to the climate crisis, we're saying that we're walking hand in hand with consumers. To communicate this, we are deliberately utilizing mass media tactics through television advertising, Hulu and Amazon Prime, radio in key markets, and ads in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Sunday New York Times*."



*Hilary Butler (right) is Bonterra's director of marketing; at left is brand manager Carly Baker.*

## THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PURPOSE

Bonterra's notable recent initiatives were conceived by women such as Baum, Newman, Butler, and director of PR and corporate communications Courtney Cochran, among others. Butler underscores the significance of women driving the brand's message: "Clearly, we've reached a tipping point where the climate crisis has to be confronted. It's a matter of communicating not just our purpose in this area, but also who is *behind* the brand—those who represent the kind of people most people want to see, people who are just like them. In my own case, not just a woman, but a woman of color."

Bonterra's breakthrough Beyond Clean

campaign, which launched in early 2021, was conceived in a conversation between Cochran and Baum as the two women contemplated the producer's place in the burgeoning clean-wine movement. Baum insisted that, given Bonterra's regenerative farming practices (which prohibit synthetic pesticides) as well as its B Corp status and Zero Waste certification, the brand had the green chops to claim that it's clean both inside and outside the glass. This insight led to the development of its Beyond Clean standards, which are designed to elevate transparency through ingredient listings and the presentation of information on circularity and beneficial farming, supply-chain transparency, and climate-advocacy work.

Under Baum's stewardship, in November 2021, Bonterra's Mendocino County vineyards were certified by the vanguard Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC) at the Silver Level, taking the brand's commitment to transparency a step further still: Thanks to stringent provisions for farm-worker fairness built into the ROC certification, Bonterra continues to extend both its purpose and its proof thereof.

In addition to leading the way to Bonterra's Climate Neutral and ROC certifications, Baum also oversaw parent company Fetzer Vineyards' B Corp recertification, which led to a 37% jump in its B Corp score. "You can't manage what you can't measure and verify," she says. "The comprehensive analysis

behind these certifications collectively helps us determine a roadmap while simultaneously bringing stakeholders and consumers along with us. For those who can be easily overwhelmed by the jargon behind many sustainability certifications, Climate Neutral is a particularly powerful metric."

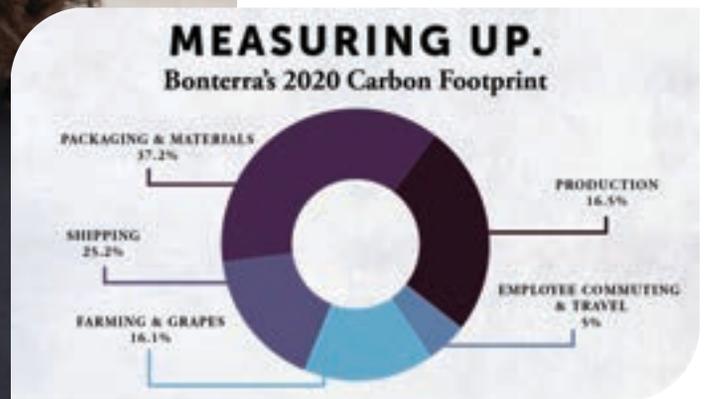
Today, over 300 brands are Climate Neutral Certified, including REI, Allbirds, Kickstarter, Numi Organic Tea, and Nomad Foods. "We believe this is how climate action should be done and communicated today," notes Cochran. "We will continue building impact into our products, bringing consumers along on the journey—effectively making them the heroes of our sustainability story."

## CHARTING A NEW PATH

"All of the things that Bonterra has been doing for years have now become so critically important in today's culture," says Butler, referring to growing demand for products that represent real, accountable action on issues such as climate change. The Climate Neutral certification and Beyond Clean campaign follow a strategic shift that Newman initiated in 2020 with the release of the award-winning "Tastes Like Saving the Planet" digital ad spot, which humorously raised awareness for the brand's climate action; to date, it has been seen by more than 23 million viewers. Newman also greenlit brand participation in the Amazon Prime series *It Starts With Wine*, which brought Bonterra's regenerative farming practices to life for a broad base of viewers.

What's next? Cochran says that Bonterra will continue to deepen its commitment to climate action by moving from reduced-tillage to no-till farming; electrifying its tractor fleet; expanding on-site renewable energy; looking at more innovative ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and setting Science Based Targets (SBTs), a model that private companies can use to reduce emissions in line with the Paris Agreement goals. Baum notes that Bonterra will tailor its plans to fit the targets as of this year. "We're creating the roadmap to the future that we need, laying down each piece of the puzzle as we learn what's working, and embracing emerging standards and best practices," she says. "In a way, it's like *Back to the Future*: Where we're going, there aren't roads. We're OK with that." SJ

PHOTO: JENNIFER OLSON



Jess Baum is Bonterra's director of regenerative development and sustainability.

# Vegan FOR A PURPOSE

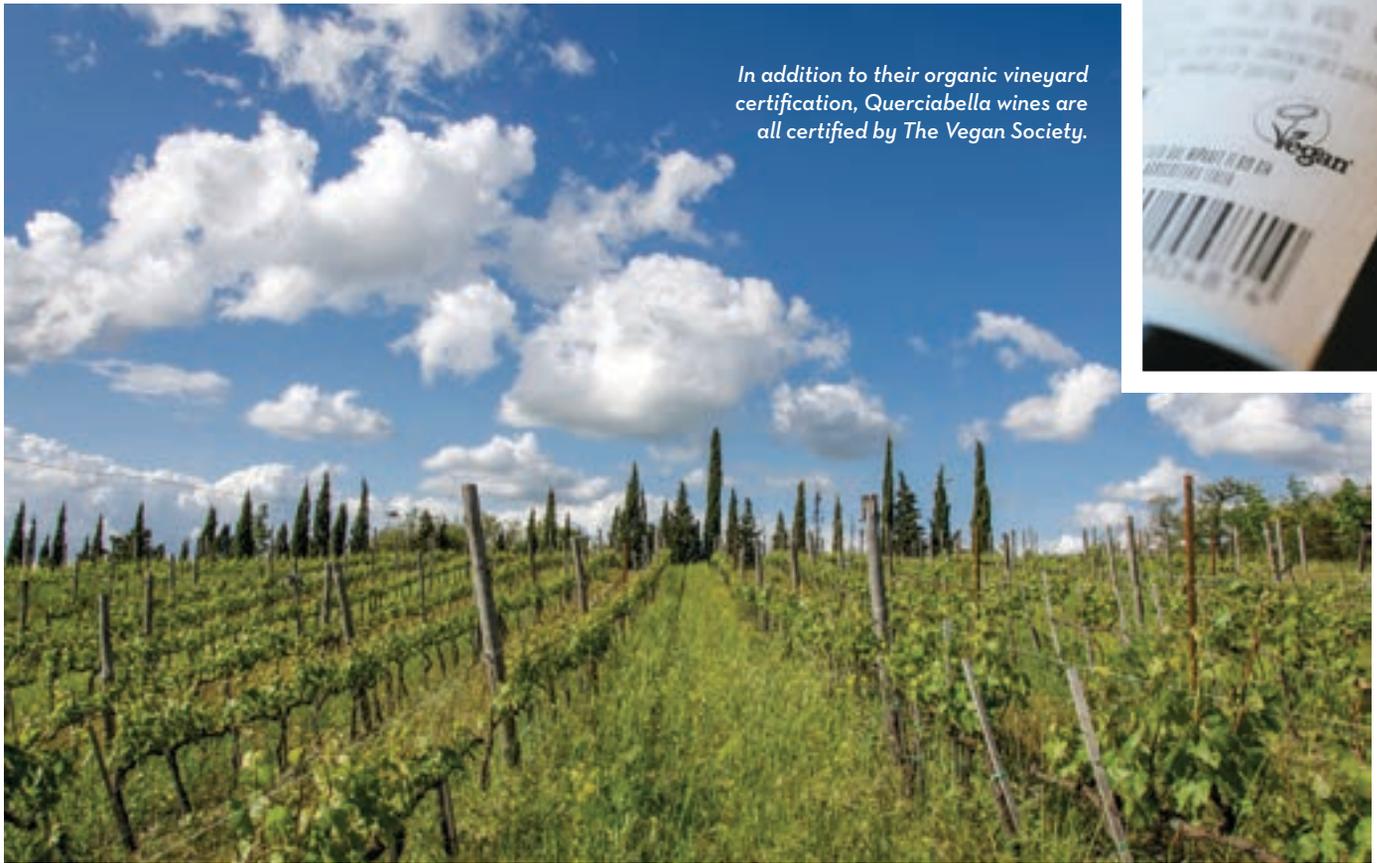
**QUERCIABELLA WALKS  
THE WALK WITH A PLANT-  
BASED APPROACH TO  
BIODYNAMIC FARMING**

story by Michelle Ball  
photos by Jeremy Ball

*The United States  
brand director for  
Querciabella, Sunny  
Gandara, Dip WSET,  
CWE, IWS, FWS,  
poses for a photo in  
the dining room of  
BAIA, a plant-based  
Italian eatery in San  
Francisco, CA.*



*The lineup for a recent luncheon  
featuring Querciabella wines  
included bottlings from the winery's  
current portfolio along with two  
library selections: the 1998 Chianti  
Classico and the 2011 Batàr.*



*In addition to their organic vineyard certification, Querciabella wines are all certified by The Vegan Society.*

*Spring at one of Querciabella's exceptional Sangiovese vineyards on a hillside in Greve, Tuscany.*

**Over the past two years,** millions of people have reassessed their careers, especially in the service industry. For some, it's about stability, but for others, it's about values, with the goal being to find a job that is truly meaningful to them. For Sunny Gandara, this realization arose in 2019, shortly before the pandemic hit. A professionally trained chef, WSET Diploma holder, and certified wine educator with extensive experience in both the food and beverage industries, Gandara sought a career at Querciabella out of admiration for the Tuscan winery's principles, which she first encountered shortly after adopting a vegan lifestyle in 2013. While its wines are certified both organic and vegan, Querciabella undertook a bold mission in 2010 to replace its traditional biodynamic methods with its own set of plant-based biodynamic practices after owner Sebastiano Cossia Castiglioni, a longtime vegetarian, converted to veganism.

Having communicated with Castiglioni for years online, Gandara mentioned that she would love to work for the winery if its team ever needed help in the States

and was soon hired as the brand director for the U.S. "I wanted to seek out a company that was in line with my values," says Gandara, who adds that her motivation was: "How can I make a difference in the world? How can I inspire someone? [How can] I inspire someone to go vegan through wine?"

We sat down for an interview prior to a luncheon at vegan Italian eatery BAlA in San Francisco, where we tasted through Querciabella's portfolio. Her first trip from New York since the beginning of 2020 was an opportunity for Gandara to connect in person with some of the Bay Area's elite wine directors and sommeliers. BAlA, which opened in the summer of 2020, is run by celebrity chef Matthew Kenney; a graduate of the French Culinary Institute, Kenney is known far beyond the vegan community for his innovations in plant-based cuisine, demonstrating that it is much more than just veggies and tofu. Castiglioni, an investor in over 65 plant-based companies, is one of Kenney's main partners. Therefore, Gandara's vast wine knowledge is put to great use in her

complementary role as the global wine director for all of Kenney's restaurants, including BAlA.

During her opening remarks at lunch, Gandara highlighted Querciabella's versatility with food—especially plant-based food—while sharing personal insights from the winery, reinforcing that its ethos is not a marketing push. "We are vegan for a purpose," she said, adding, "What we say is actually what we do."

## GOING BEYOND ORGANIC

In 1974, Sebastiano's father, top wine collector Giuseppe Castiglioni, purchased a small vineyard in Greve in the Chianti Classico DOCG. Named for Mount Querciabella, meaning "beautiful oak" after the trees that dot the region, Querciabella released its first wine in 1979 and has expanded its plantings from a single hectare to over 100 hectares throughout both Chianti Classico and Maremma. Sebastiano shared his father's love for fine wines, traveling with him on visits to Bordeaux and Burgundy, and developed a palate at a young age.



*Top row, left to right: Claude Rouquet, district manager for the San Francisco Bay Area, Maisons Marques & Domaines USA; Nicole Upshaw, business associate, Salt Partners Group; Greg St Clair, Italian buyer, K&L Wine Merchants; Gianpaolo Paterlini, wine director, Acquerello; Tonya Pitts, sommelier and wine director, One Market Restaurant; and Mark Guillaudeu, beverage director, Commis. Bottom row, left to right: Cyprien Roy, communications manager, Maisons Marques & Domaines USA; Sunny Gandara, United States brand director, Querciabella; Giovanni Cerrone, wine buyer, The Wine Spectrum; and Hillary Younglove.*

His work as an animal rights advocate also started in his youth. At 15, the young Castiglioni was handed a pamphlet protesting vivisection; his horror led to research on the mistreatment of animals that made him a vegetarian overnight. In the 1980s, his drive to protect nature merged with his entrance into the family's wine business, permanently changing the direction of Querciabella.

As the story goes, he convinced the vineyard team to use only organic treatments in the vineyards and later approached his father with an appeal for organic viticulture. Giuseppe dismissed the idea as infeasible until Sebastiano revealed that the vineyards had already been organic for a couple of years. Querciabella became one of the first wineries in Italy to be certified organic in 1988, and Sebastiano took the reins around that same time.

In 1997, he expanded Querciabella's estate holdings south to the shores of Maremma, at the time an unproven region that nonetheless showed great potential

for the varieties he wanted to produce. Its drier Mediterranean climate was also well suited for organic agriculture because disease pressure was lower. Curious as to the effects of biodynamic farming, whose holistic approach to viticulture appealed to him, Castiglioni chose to implement it from day one in Maremma. The trial proved successful, and in 2000, biodynamic practices were implemented at all the family's sites throughout Tuscany.

Although they started with traditional biodynamic protocols, that changed in 2010 when Castiglioni went vegan and made the decision to do the same at the winery. Instead of animal-derived preparations such as cow manure, which is often trucked in from factory farms, they employ "green manure": This compost is made from a meticulous blend of diverse cover crops, generally a mix of 32–36 different plants depending on the soil profile, varietal, and vigor of the vineyard. These not only benefit the vines nutritionally but also encourage a broader ecosystem of

plants, beneficial insects, and birds to thrive. "We are farming with nature, as many people say, but we also want to give back to nature and leave it in a better place than we found it. It's not enough for us to just respect it," explains Gandara. Yet because many of the applications in biodynamic farming require the use of animal products, this also means they can't be certified. One can't help but see the irony: Though the vision statement of Demeter, the only certifying body for biodynamic farming, is to "heal the planet through agriculture," a plant-based approach to its methodology doesn't qualify.

Nevertheless, Gandara noted that the vineyards have never suffered from the changes in protocol, and the proof is in the wine: "We have proven that you don't need animal manure to produce world-class wines. Our wines have never received higher scores, [even] from traditional wine lovers and critics who are not worried about the vegan aspect. It's just about good wine."

## TRANSPARENCY IN THE WINERY

Querciabella's painstaking approach to viticulture is mirrored in the winemaking facility. South African winemaker Manfred Ing, who joined Querciabella in 2010 after working a harvest in Barolo at the historic Vietti winery, works diligently to accentuate the team's attention to detail in the vineyard. Since he started, the winery has significantly dialed back its use of new oak and barriques while relying more heavily on 500-liter and 3,000-liter *botti*. According to Gandara, Ing particularly loves the quality of tannin that results from employing these sizable casks, and even has a 5,000-liter *botte* on order. In addition, he uses only extra-fine grained French oak from select coopers, including Baron, Sylvain, Taransaud, and Marc Grenier: "I think with Manfred taking over and with us really understanding the land year after year, it's about how [we can] coax maximum expression out of the fruit and let the oak be a supporting factor," explained Gandara.

markable value for by-the-glass programs, being universally recognized by numerous critics as overdelivering for the price. It's composed primarily of Sangiovese (50%) with equal parts Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, all from Querciabella's vineyards in Maremma. Bright red, prickly fruit; plum-skin tannins; and faint hints of fresh bay leaf surround a medium-bodied core, making the wine an ideal match for pizza and pasta. The first vintage of Mongrana Bianco, meanwhile, is made from 100% Maremma Vermentino and vinified in stainless steel to preserve freshness. With only 5,000 bottles made for the inaugural release, it offers a zingy lemon and orange-blossom profile marked by savory minerality reminiscent of the coast.

The winery's namesake Chianti Classico, Querciabella, uses primarily neutral oak to showcase a lively palate of bright red cherry, while the Riserva employs a touch more new oak for a more concentrated, broodier black-cherry profile laced with

blue and black fruit with herbal notes; with age, it maintains its dark red-fruit core with distinct juiciness but also shows dustier, more savory characteristics and hints of rosemary.

Lunch finished with an overview of Batàr, a white Super Tuscan made from 50/50 Pinot Bianco and Chardonnay. The Chardonnay, which is grown at a higher elevation of 1,300–2,000 feet, provides acidity, minerality, and freshness, while the Pinot Bianco offers the flesh. First made in 1988 for friends, it was designed to demonstrate that Tuscany could produce ageworthy white wines rivaling those of Burgundy. The 2011 proved as much while highlighting the warmth of the vintage with its rich flavors of stone fruit and tangerine as well as savory notes of chanterelle mushroom and brie rind.

The 2019, on the other hand, showed verve in the form of crunchy white peach mingled with flint, cardamom, racy citrus notes, and tremendous lift on the finish.



The buyers at the luncheon observed that Querciabella's offerings were indeed more energetic and less dense than their traditional counterparts. "The wines were fabulous and had a vibrancy that can certainly be attributed to the strong dedication they have to a 100% vegan practice and philosophy," said Nicole Upshaw, business associate for Salt Partners Group, which includes B-Side at the SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco.

The 2020 Mongrana Bianco (\$21) made its debut appearance at the event, reflecting the longtime success of the Mongrana Rosso. First released in 2005, the 2019 Mongrana Rosso (\$23) is a re-

leather and tobacco. "The testament to the life of the wine was being able to taste the 1998 Riserva," noted Tonya Pitts, sommelier and wine director for One Market Restaurant, which carried the vintage on its release. "The 1998 Riserva today is supple, elegant, and like silk on the palate. It's sublime. It proves the promise of aged Chianti Classico and Chianti Classico Riserva."

A side-by-side tasting of the 2008 and 2017 Camartina (\$137), Querciabella's flagship Super Tuscan made in only the best vintages from 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Sangiovese, followed. In its youth, the wine delivers fresh, vibrant

"People don't necessarily think of Pinot Blanc as something that can age, but we've totally proven them wrong because in that combination, it's pretty unique," explained Gandara, who added, "But I think it's also our understanding of the land." Over the years, the winery team has employed gentler contact with the lees as well as reduced the amount of new oak used throughout their portfolio to elevate their meticulous efforts in the vineyard. The result is a liveliness across the lineup, joined by an unquestionable purity of fruit that's reflective of their reverence for nature and desire to leave the environment better than they found it. *SJ*

# Ex-terroir-estrial

CHARTING OUR “RISING STARS OF THE WINE WORLD” WEBINAR by Jessie Birschbach

In the wine industry, there have always been risk-takers like Madame Clicquot—whose riddling table was a precursor to the *pupitre*, an invention that enabled Champagne producers to decrease the time needed to eliminate yeast—and clever chaps like Robert Mondavi, who in 1968 decided to label his dry, oak-aged Sauvignon Blanc as what would become the wildly popular Fumé Blanc. It's luminaries like these that inspired *The SOMM*

*Journal's* “Rising Stars of the Wine World” webinar.

As our VP of education and moderator for the Winery Close-Ups webinar series, Lars Leicht, said, “The wine world is rich in its traditions, history, and iconic figures, but its true spice, we like to say, is the advent of something or someone new—an innovation or innovator. So what we've put together here is a panel of people who, in their own way, each bring some-

thing new to the table.”

In attendance to help Leicht was Greg Van Wagner, piloting his SommGeo wine-map platform to carry the audience virtually around the globe. Also with us was chief operating officer Lynn Fletcher of SommFoundation, which offered a year-long subscription to SommGeo, a copy of *The Sotheby's Wine Encyclopedia*, and cash prizes to audience members via both a random drawing and short essay contest.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PATRIMONY ESTATE



## Producer: PATRIMONY ESTATE

**Star Power:** This Adelaida District pioneer recently released a “California first-growth” wine label.

**Presenter:** Daniel Daou, winemaker/proprietor

Introduced as the “prince of phenolics” by Leicht, Daniel Daou has worked tirelessly for years to make world-class Cabernet Sauvignon in the Adelaida District of Paso Robles at DAOU Vineyards, receiving both commercial and critical success as a result. And his pursuit of excellence in Bordeaux-varietal winemaking continues with the creation of his Patrimony Estate label. Daou anticipates that by 2024, Patrimony's winery and tasting room—located on a mountaintop adjacent to DAOU—will be LEED Certified and fully operational with net zero emissions. The new facility will source from DAOU's estate until Patrimony's own vineyards mature in the coming years.

*A row of Cabernet Sauvignon grows at an elevation of roughly 2,000 feet on DAOU Mountain.*

“Patrimony is meant to do two things,” said Daou. “One, it’s meant to reach the potential for phenolics for Bordeaux varieties. We’ve measured 700 Bordeaux wines, and arguably Patrimony is up there with [some] of the darkest and highest phenolics. Two, we’re presenting the purest expression of our terroir in the glass; this is the only vineyard we know of that grows Bordeaux varieties at 2,200 feet only 14 miles from the cold Pacific Ocean.”

Planted on steep slopes at a 65% grade, the vineyard sources for DAOU and Patrimony actually range from 1,500 to 2,200 feet; even more importantly, according to Daou, they sit on calcareous clay, a common feature of the most revered European regions. “Be it the Mosel, Champagne, [or] Tuscany, in all of them you’ll find calcareous soil,” he noted, adding that it contributes to the minerality and acidity of a wine, while the clay component provides increased texture and aromatics. As a result, Daou doesn’t need to acidify any of the Patrimony Estate wines. He’s also able to dry farm or at least deficit irrigate, depending on the year.

The concept of dry farming in Paso might be surprising to some, but “Paso is often misunderstood for climate,” said Daou, who added that although “I have yet to go through one week without someone saying Paso is hot,” the reality is that its average temperature sits between that of Bordeaux and St. Helena: “It’s basically equivalent to Oakville in most years.” And the Adelaida District is a few degrees cooler still.

While these conditions produce great fruit, the winemaking regimen is also responsible for Patrimony’s high levels of phenolics. All the wines are made with 100% free-run juice, “which allows us to have silky and integrated tannins that come from the skins,” said Daou. And they’re 100% fermented with Daou’s own D20 native yeast, which he and his team isolated and developed ten years ago.

The 2018 Patrimony Estate Cabernet Sauvignon was presented as evidence of the producer’s ability to reach the zenith in terms of phenolics, which according to Daou translates to “freshness, balance, elegance, and food-pairing ability—but the best part to me is that we’re able to achieve power without sacrificing class.”

## Producer: CONCHA Y TORO

**Star Power:** Concha y Toro has released a label geared to appeal to millennials.

**Presenter:** Isabel Mitarakis, winemaker

“Unrated reflects a disruptive attitude in packaging and wine to provoke new consumers and challenge the traditional wine industry,” said Concha y Toro winemaker Isabel Mitarakis of the company’s new label geared toward millennials (at 36 years old, Mitarakis is a millennial herself). “We’re looking for people who reject rules—people who rebel against established expectations and standards.”

Mitarakis, who has worked with Concha y Toro since her first harvest for brand label Don Melchor in 2013, is today one of Chile’s most celebrated up-and-coming winemakers: a success attributed to experiences in Franciacorta, Mendocino, and Bordeaux. She happily agreed when Concha y Toro approached her to make Unrated. “My only limit was Chile, so the freedom to express my country was amazing,” she said.

Just as Unrated’s label—depicting a person donning a leather jacket—is unconventional in its design, so is the winemaking process, at least from the perspective of Concha y Toro’s sourcing practices. Mitarakis selected from three different regions within Chile’s Central Valley, where Cabernet Sauvignon takes up more than half of the vineyards: Maule Valley, Maipo Valley, and Cachapoal Valley.

In the Maule Valley, Concha y Toro’s Cauquenes Vineyard sits on red clay peppered with granite. It’s located 19 miles from the coast, so there’s a cooling influence on the Mediterranean climate. Meanwhile, the Maipo Valley’s hotter and drier Puente Alto and Maipo sites, located on the Andean terrace, offer loamy, stony alluvial soils. Finally, nestled between mountain ranges is Concha y Toro’s Requinoa Vineyard in Cachapoal, which offers a semi-arid climate and alluvial loam soils that provide good drainage. “Cauquenes gives the energy and power. Puente Alto gives the elegance and finesse—very soft [and] sweet. And Requinoa is a bridge between these expressions,” said Mitarakis.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONCHA Y TORO



### Unrated 2018 Xtra Cabernet Sauvignon, Chile (\$20)

Isabel Mitarakis, the 35-year-old superstar winemaker for Concha y Toro, sourced fruit from three different regions in Chile to create this wine: the Maule Valley, Maipo Valley, and Cachapoal Valley. “I made this without any rules or limits,” she explains. “The only dictate was that I make [it] in Chile.” Comparing the liquid to Lady Gaga’s full-bodied voice, Mitarakis created a deep, black-hued red with rustic tannins and finesse in terms of flavor and texture. Chocolate, spare rib, ripe blackberry, roasted coffee bean, and a garden of violets gratify the palate. Dense and meaty, with gobby fruit, it leads to a long finish of maple and cedar. (Incidentally, also like Lady Gaga, the packaging is provocative.) —Meridith May

FETZER VINEYARDS

## Producer: LLOYD CELLARS

**Star Power:** A seasoned winemaker who specializes in Chardonnay releases another well-received label.

**Presenter:** Rob Lloyd, winemaker/proprietor

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LLOYD CELLARS



"I like big Chards and I cannot lie," replied winemaker/proprietor Rob Lloyd when Leicht commented that Lloyd is beloved in the industry for his big, rich California Chardonnays. The Sir Mix-a-Lot reference might have gone over some attendees' heads, but they certainly did not miss Lloyd's background: Over the past few decades, the University of California, Davis, master's grad made wine for the likes of Cakebread, Rombauer, and La Crema before establishing Lloyd Cellars and his own consulting business with his wife, Bonnie, in 2008.

Based in Napa, Lloyd Cellars offers a small but mighty portfolio of wines sourced from Sta. Rita Hills, Alexander Valley, Carneros, and Clarksburg. For his presentation, Lloyd stood in a breezy vineyard just outside of Coombsville to introduce his Prescription Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. Despite the lush beauty of the

real-life Zoom background, the first thing Leicht noticed was the label. Lloyd explained that the old-timey font and filigree design is a nod to the days of Prohibition: One had to have a prescription to legally drink alcohol back then. Also, "prescription" is another term for "recipe." "People are always asking, 'Do you know the recipe for making big Chards?'" said Lloyd with a smile. Hidden in the ornate label is the name James Reamer of Reamer Farms—a testament to Lloyd's respect for the grower:

In fact, it's Reamer's vineyard in Clarksburg that is the source of the Prescription Chardonnay. "I love working with growers that get balance," said Lloyd. Thanks to an underground water table that feeds cooling water channels throughout the vineyards, the Chardonnay from Clarksburg comes in only about one week ahead of the much cooler Carneros. "[Reamer is] using the Robert Young clone, which I really like for his area. It just gives those really tropical flavors," he added. Leicht noted the "spring-like freshness in the Chardonnay," which Lloyd attributed not only to the area but to an "extremely slow fermentation process" that preserves much of the natural CO<sub>2</sub>.

Lloyd's winemaking prowess is also in full effect when it comes to the Prescription Cabernet Sauvignon from the Alexander Valley. "I love this vineyard. Up at about 1,700-foot elevation, it's on an extreme hillside and almost looks like the top of a volcano," he said. "So the yields are very small. The berries are ridiculously tiny." Though he had heard that prior buyers "had a hard time taming the tannins . . . we have [accomplished that] with lots of oxygen during the ferment."

Leicht noted that Lloyd's rich yet bright signature style was obvious in both wines. Blushing, the winemaker said, "You're tasting what I love doing. It's fun to make the stuff and even more fun getting to drink it."



### Lloyd Cellars by Robert Lloyd 2019 Pinot Noir, Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County (\$50)

The carmine hue is deep and inviting, and scents of heather and forest woodsiness are sensual. Full and generous, the palate is lathered with huckleberry and dark chocolate-covered coffee bean. Layers of tilled soil and dried flowers keep it exciting and complex. Brown sugar and cinnamon go deep on the finish. **94** —M.M.

### Lloyd Cellars by Robert Lloyd 2020 Chardonnay, Carneros (\$40)

Creamy notes of toasted vanilla meet a surge of cookie dough, ripe melon, kiwi, and peanut brittle. This wine caresses the palate with a sumptuous touch. **94** —M.M.

### Prescription Vineyards 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, Sonoma County (\$30)

Grainy tannins fulfill their mission to coat the teeth with blueberry compote. This dynamo of a wine overflows with plump plum, powdered cocoa, and blooming lavender—it's really an over-the-counter cure for disbelievers of the Alexander Valley's potential for textural lushness. Winemaker Rob Lloyd overdelivers on some amazing medicine for the soul. **93** —M.M.

### Prescription Vineyards 2019 Chardonnay, Clarksburg (\$20)

Enhanced by notes of chervil, oregano, and chamomile, luscious lemon meringue defines the mid-palate. Crushed stone, white pepper, vibrant minerality, and a spark of acidity amount to just the right Rx for great food pairing. **92** —M.M.

Oak Ridge Winery oversees 2,500 acres of vineyards throughout the Lodi region.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF OAK RIDGE WINERY

## Producer: OAK RIDGE WINERY

**Star Power:** Lodi's oldest operating winery launches its first super-premium wine.

**Presenter:** Laura Chadwell, chief winemaker

Laura Chadwell has been Oak Ridge Winery's chief winemaker for less than a year, but it already seems as if she is perfectly suited for the position. Born and raised in the Lodi area (specifically Galt), she started her journey in wine as a harvest intern at Jessie's Grove in Lodi while pursuing a bachelor's degree in viticulture and enology at UC Davis. Eventually she was promoted to assistant winemaker before taking a detour to work at Woodbridge Winery in Acampo, California, which led to a stint as a new product development winemaker for Constellation Brands in Napa.

Lodi, often misperceived as too hot an area for growing classic grape varieties, is directly east of the Sacramento River Delta, and as a result experiences cool breezes from the Pacific Ocean. Of Lodi's seven sub-AVAs, Mokelumne River is not only its largest, representing 42,000 of its 100,000 total acres under vine, but also considered the winemaking epicenter of the region, where most of its top producers are located. It's here



you'll find Oak Ridge Winery, the oldest operating winery in Lodi.

Arriving in 1906 from Genova, Italy, Angelo and Louisa Maggio first planted cuttings in 1928; six years later, a cooperative production facility named East Side Winery was built in Lodi, and the couple's descendants eventually purchased it in 2002, renaming it Oak Ridge Winery and implementing massive improvements—heralding the family's transition from grape growers to winemakers. Today it's run by Angelo and Louisa's three great-great-granddaughters, who also oversee 2,500 acres of vineyards throughout Lodi; they're certified by LODI RULES, the country's first sustainable wine program, which covers such practices as drip irrigation, crop cover, and the use of owl houses.

The Lodi region harbors the largest concentration of old vines in the country, and Mokelumne River is no exception: The vines sourced for the Chardonnay Chadwell presented averaged about 20 years of age, with some exceeding the threshold of 30

years. "The [Maggio Estate] Chardonnay gets about 60% of its grapes from the Mokelumne River sub-AVA, with the remainder from [smaller sub-AVA] Jahant," said Chadwell. The soil-based classification of Lodi's sub-appellations is evident in the producer's holdings, she explained: Oak Ridge's "K&M Delta is our Jahant AVA vineyard, with clay/loam soil. [By contrast,] Destino [Vineyard] is in Mokelumne River [and features a] sand-dominant soil, which provides great drainage and causes the right amount of stress on the vines. It also lowers vine vigor and crop size, which gives higher intensity of fruit flavors and higher acidity than other sub-AVAs in Lodi."

Along with the newly released Maggio Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, the Maggio Estate Chardonnay represents Oak Ridge's first foray into the super-premium wine category. "We wanted the grapes to speak for themselves and really show the appellation as much as possible," said Chadwell. "We [fermented] some [lots] in steel, some in American oak, some in French oak, and we chose the best of the best from these lots in this wine."

## Producer: AS ONE CRU

**Star Power:** This new, approachable wine brand is backed by an experienced founder sourcing high-caliber fruit from Napa Valley.

**Presenter:** Chris Radomski, proprietor

"I think I'm a little too old to be a rising star," joked Chris Radomski, proprietor of Napa-based wine brand As One Cru. Although his youthful demeanor might suggest otherwise, Radomski does have the experience to support his quip: After traveling the world to produce wines from Argentina, Italy, France, Spain, and California, Radomski partnered with Ethan Wayne to create Duke Kentucky Straight Bourbon. The whiskey has experienced a level of success on par with other well-performing brands Radomski would later develop after founding Legends Spirits in 2018, among them La Adelita Tequila.

That said, his most recent endeavor, As One Cru, is only just getting started. As he explained, "I have this great group of friends: chefs and somms and others, even a hockey player. We have all different backgrounds. And as I was developing this project—working to source amazing fruit in the Napa region—I asked them if they wanted to become part of it." They said yes; the label's name, he added, derives from "the nickname we gave ourselves: 'The Crew.' We're a very welcoming, open group that sort of acts as one. And that's what our brand is about: bringing people together. . . . Now, [that's] even more important." In 2021, As One Cru launched its first wine, a 2018 Pinot Noir from Stanly Ranch in Carneros.

A self-professed Cabernet Sauvignon drinker, Radomski remarked upon the wine's relatively full body: "I love meatier wines—I wanted to reflect the true nature of Pinot but with a little more oomph to it." According to him, the profile was achieved through a longer hang time; the higher alcohol that results (the 2018 vintage was 15.3% ABV) is tempered by fermentation and aging in French oak.

More recently, As One Cru released its 2017 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon after selling out of all 200 cases of the 2016. "I've been given access to some great vineyards in the north [of Napa]: great fruit from Howell Mountain, above the fog line, and from some valley-floor vineyards in St. Helena," said Radomski, who (along with Van Wagner) noted the differences in the character of the fruit from these two very different yet equally classic Napa terroirs. "When you put them together, it allows you to produce a wine that has the tannic strength, the power of [the higher elevation], but also the body and balance of what you get from the valley floor. . . . I'm a huge proponent of single-vineyard wines, but I think that combination works very, very well together."

The result, he added, is "understandable and approachable but [also] good. It's been amazing for me to make these wines. It's interesting to bring [in] an opinion from a great chef, great somms—you get a lot of different opinions. But ultimately for wine to be successful, it needs to be loved by a lot of different people."



PHOTO COURTESY OF AS ONE CRU



## Producer: BANFI

**Star Power:** A leader in the semi-dry sparkling category is set to redefine it once again.

**Presenter:** Dino Altomare, education director

Many know the Marianis, proprietors of Banfi Vintners, as the family who helped to bring worldwide attention to Brunello di Montalcino, but they have another saga to tell involving a different grape in a different region that, literally speaking, is even sweeter:

In 1979, John and Harry Mariani purchased a mid-18th-century winery, originally named Bruzzone, in Piedmont; by 2001, Banfi had made its first release of Rosa Regale, a semi-dry Brachetto d'Acqui, "which the world quickly fell in love with—it was our style that brought this wine and this grape to a whole new level," said Dino Altomare. "We're very fortunate to see Brachetto be embraced by the world." As Banfi's education director, he attributed the wine's success to its naturally soft, versatile profile as well as

to the trend toward sparkling alternatives to Champagne over the past few years, including their application in mixology.

The fruit comes from the Brachetto d'Acqui DOCG, where Banfi's relationships with growers go back decades. "It's truly a magical area," said Altomare. "We have clay/rock/tuffaceous soil . . . at the foothills of the Alps, [where] the climate can be very harsh in winter and very hot in summer, with considerable difference in day-to-night temperatures—which of course is so, so important when we talk about fruit development and sugar content. And this diurnal shift is partly how we retain those beautiful aromatic compounds we find particularly in Brachetto."

It's not just the weather that gives Rosa Regale its balance, however: It's also a matter of how the wine is made. "For us the



important thing is harnessing that natural acidity and that tannic structure. I know tannin in sparkling wine sounds like a crazy thing, but when you taste Rosa Regale, there's always this beautiful strawberry character but also this strawberry-seed note that helps balance [the sweet fruit]," said Altomare. Those light tannins are due to the brief skin contact Banfi allows when it ferments the Brachetto via the Charmat method in temperature-controlled stainless-steel tanks.

As a counterpart to the Brachetto, last spring Banfi launched the Rosa Regale Sparkling White, made with 100% Moscato Bianco in the DOCG Asti zone. There are also plans to release a Rosa Regale Brachetto Rosé. Altomare anticipates that Banfi will do for these wines what it did for Brunello and Brachetto: "We're grateful to have driven this relatively unknown category and excited to light up the region. Moscato is known as a sweet wine, so again it's about harnessing the grapes to take this to a well-balanced and fully sparkling wine. For us, it's a matter of finding these varieties and regions that are fairly unknown and giving them new life on the world stage as rising stars." SJ



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BANFI



*The Banfi Piedmont winery.*



# *the Prince of*

# PICPOUL

EXAMINING FRAN  
KYSELA'S LOVE  
AFFAIR WITH  
PICPOUL DE PINET

by David Ransom

*the* southwest coast of France is a cornucopia of wine regions that includes the tiny AOC Languedoc Picpoul de Pinet, which sits on the Bassin de Thau, a lagoon on the Mediterranean just north of the Cap d'Agde. Like much of the surrounding coast, this area has a history of wine production that dates to Roman times and today grows a variety of different grapes, among them Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, and Grenache.

But it's the white grape Picpoul (also known as Piquepoul) that yields what is probably its most famous wine, Picpoul de Pinet, for which the AOC is named. Known for its freshness, acidity, and easy drinkability, Picpoul de Pinet is sometimes referred to as the "Muscadet of the South" and as such is a popular accompaniment to the region's seafood-based cuisine.

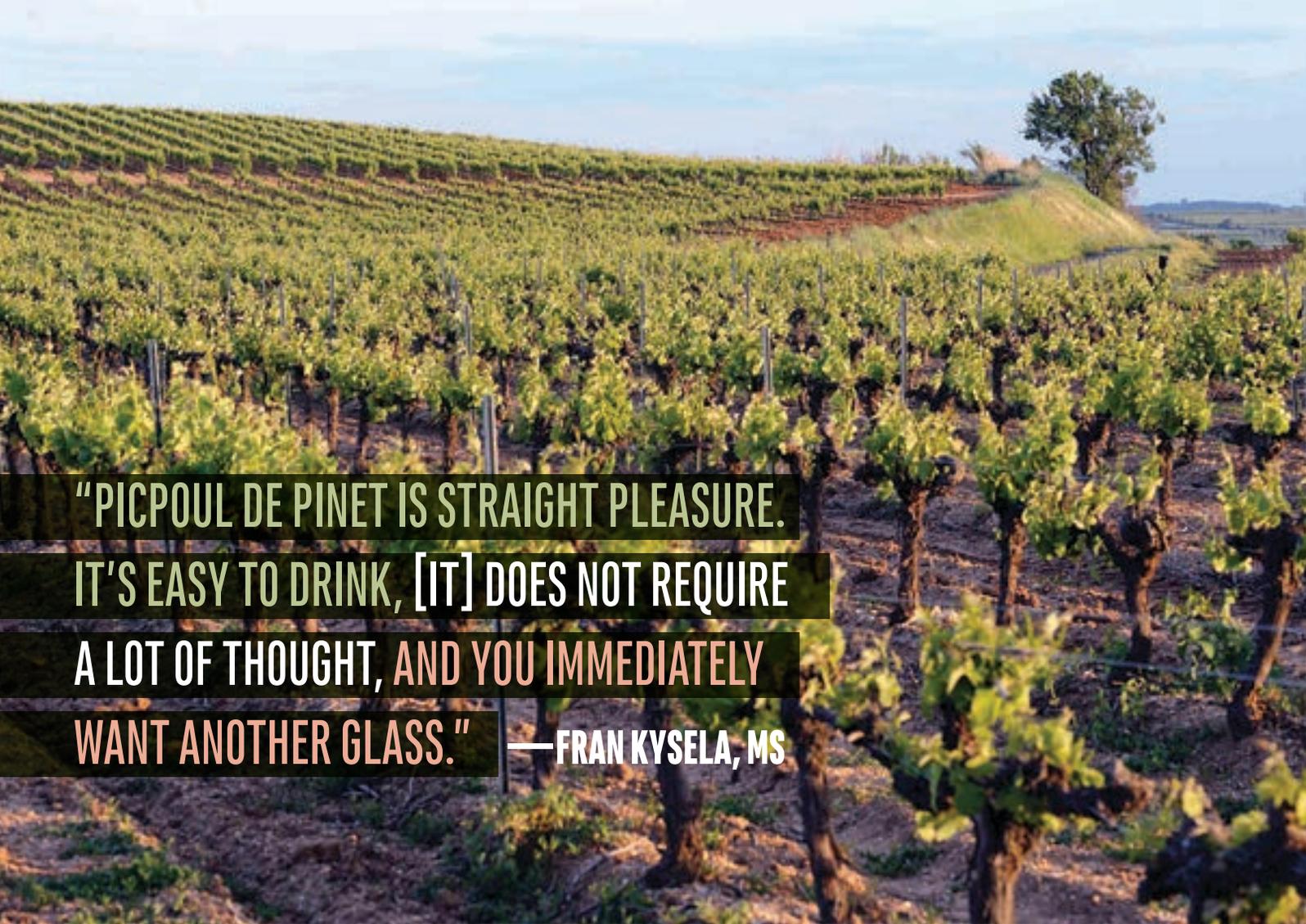
*A vineyard on the Bassin de Thau.*





*An aerial view of Les Costières de Pomérols in the Languedoc-Roussillon commune of Pomérols.*





**"PICPOUL DE PINET IS STRAIGHT PLEASURE.  
IT'S EASY TO DRINK, [IT] DOES NOT REQUIRE  
A LOT OF THOUGHT, AND YOU IMMEDIATELY  
WANT ANOTHER GLASS." —FRAN KYSELA, MS**

The U.S. market has had a complex relationship with this aromatic and delightful wine, which has long served as a bridesmaid to more popular varietal whites such as Albariño, Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, and, of course, Muscadet. Yet recently, Picpoul de Pinet has seen a spike in favor among American consumers and restaurateurs. That's thanks in large part to Fran Kysela, MS.

Kysela, founder of the Winchester, Virginia-based import company Kysela Pere et Fils, Ltd., imports 85% of all Picpoul de Pinet sold in this country and has made it his mission to enlighten American consumers about its charms, namely an appealing flavor profile that allows it to be sold in a wide variety of scenarios by sommeliers and savvy retailers. "Picpoul de Pinet is straight pleasure," he says. "It's easy to drink, [it] does not require a lot of thought, and you immediately want another glass."

Which isn't to imply there isn't plenty to learn about this storied appellation, starting with the terroir: "Picpoul as a region is fascinating to me," says Kysela. "First, it's coastal, and to me, coastal regions, with their cooler climates and maritime influence, are ideal for producing white wines of excellent varietal character and good acidity. Add in garrigue [herb-rich scrub] to the limestone and clay-covered calcareous soil that is predominant in the region and lends minerality and complexity, and you've got wines of great character."

Kysela, who became a Master Sommelier in 1989 and founded his eponymous company in 1994, partnered with one of the region's most renowned producers to make his AOC Picpoul de Pinet and other wines under the Le Jade and HB labels, all of which he brings to the U.S. market. Founded in 1932 in the commune of Pomérols, Les Costières de Pomérols gets

its fruit from local growers who cultivate roughly 2,100 hectares of vines, of which about 450 hectares are designated as AOC Picpoul de Pinet. "Les Costières de Pomérols is the premier cave coopérative in the region . . . [which] produces both whites from grapes grown in the coastal area along the [Bassin de Thau] and reds grown further inland and in the Côtes de Thau," says Kysela. "I've found them to be a great partner in creating these wines, as they do their part to [guarantee] quality. This includes working with their growers, most of whom [tend] small vineyards, to make sure they supply the winemaking team with top-notch fruit. It shows in the wines, which are full of personality and . . . varietally true to type."

The wines of Les Costières de Pomérols imported by Kysela Pere et Fils include those on the facing page; for more information, visit [kysela.com](http://kysela.com) and see page 86. **SJ**



**Le Jade Viognier, Côtes de Thau IGP, France (\$15)**

This 100% Viognier comes from some of the region's best vineyards, whose clay and limestone soils lend mineral and chalky notes. Night-picked fruit receives extended skin contact prior to partial cold fermentation in tanks (with a small percentage fermented in oak) and subsequent aging on the lees in large vats. No malolactic is done, which helps the wine retain its freshness as it presents the ripe tropical fruit, citrus, and apricot that define its profile along with a round, harmonious texture and floral notes such as rose petal. Pour it by the glass as an apéritif, or pair it with seafood dishes or a good blue cheese like Roquefort.



**Le Jade Sauvignon, Côtes de Thau IGP, France (\$15)**

Made from 100% Sauvignon Blanc that sees extended skin contact prior to pressing; the juice is then cooled to 59 degrees Fahrenheit for fermentation. Aged on the lees prior to filtering and bottling, this wine is vinified without malolactic fermentation or oak treatment. The result is fresh and vibrant, with a light straw color and crisp acidity. Wonderfully fragrant with citrus on the nose while showing gooseberry on the palate, it's a summer sipper built for serving with bouillabaisse or bourride—both specialties of the region—or even with fruit.



**HB Chevalier Rosé, Côtes de Thau IGP, France (\$15)**

This 100% Grenache from 15- to 20-year-old vines is direct-pressed and cold-clarified for 48 hours before undergoing skin maceration to extract fruit intensity. Slow fermentation at 59 degrees Fahrenheit and aging on fine lees give it depth and intensity. On the nose are notes of ripe citrus and strawberry, while the palate brings peach, red currant, and strawberry within a well-structured mouthfeel, followed by a long, round finish. Packed with freshness and good acidity, the wine would be a perfect apéritif or accompaniment to an al fresco meal, perhaps including cheese drizzled in honey; the stunning packaging and attractive SRP also make it an eye-catching option for retailers to stock in summer.



**Kysela Pere et Fils LTD HB Picpoul de Pinet AOP, France (\$13)**

Kysela's bestselling wine is made from 100% Picpoul that is hand-harvested at night to help preserve its intensely aromatic character. Gently pressed and settled under inert gas for 48 hours prior to temperature-controlled fermentation, it's then aged on the lees to add creaminess and depth, even as malolactic is eschewed to highlight the racy acidity for which the varietal is known. With a bright, light straw color; it offers grapefruit and Mediterranean herbs on the nose as well as a palate rich with tropical flavors of mango and lime, backed by underlying minerality. As for pairings, think oysters, oysters—it's a seafood lover's dream. Off-premise, its price makes it a great hand sell to curious customers.



{ spain }

# Always Improving

ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY, SPANISH WINERY **FÉLIX SOLÍS AVANTIS** REFLECTS ON ITS RISE TO GLOBAL STARDOM

by Amanda M. Faison

AS **FÉLIX SOLÍS AVANTIS** celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, the Spanish company is naturally reflecting on its evolution over the course of seven decades from a small family winery to the world's seventh-largest producer of still wines. This is what it looks like to fulfill a mission statement that runs through the veins of three generations: to make the best wines at the best price so everyone can enjoy.



*Félix Solís*  
AVANTIS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FÉLIX SOLÍS AVANTIS

The second and third generations of Félix Solís from top to bottom: Manuel Solís Yañez, Juan Antonio Solís Yañez, Félix Solís Ramos, and Pedro Solís Yañez. Standing is CEO Félix Solís Yañez.

## 1950s

The family-run business takes root in 1952, when Félix Solís Fernández and his wife, Leonor Yañez, move to the city of Valdepeñas from a nearby village and buy a local winery.



Félix Solís Avantis founder Félix Solís Fernández and his wife, Leonor Yañez.

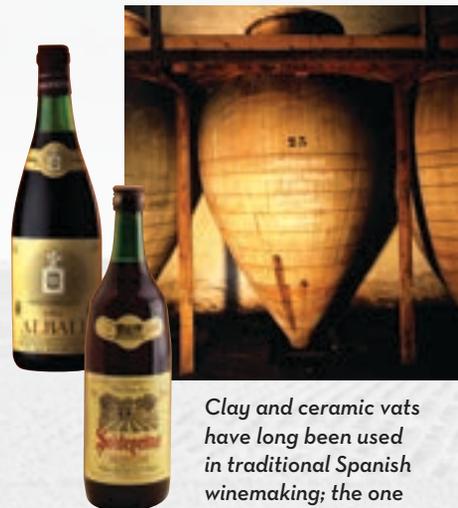


## 1960s

Initially, Félix and Leonor focus on making wines to be sold locally before developing their sales in other cities. In 1962, they buy a bottling facility in Madrid, where they bring wine in barrel from Valdepeñas, hand-bottle it, and distribute it by van to bars and restaurants. This is the beginning of their flagship brand, Viña Albali, which is created to reflect the "pleasure-loving, life-affirming spirit of the Spanish people," per the website; Félix chooses the name Albali because it's the brightest star in Aquarius.

## 1970s

The 1970s mark the arrival of the next generation, as Félix turns the company over to his son, Félix Solís Yañez. The winery, which has outgrown its former headquarters, Casa Bataneros, moves operations to a new facility that is not only the largest in Valdepeñas but one of the largest and most technically advanced in Europe, built to meet the demand by a growing Spanish middle class for DO wines and, in turn, an evolving distribution channel made up of international firms in search of reliable suppliers.



Clay and ceramic vats have long been used in traditional Spanish winemaking; the one pictured above stored 5,000 liters.

# 1980s



In 1985, Viña Albalí and Los Molinos become top-selling wines in Spain, establishing Félix Solís Avantis as a market leader at a time when large-scale modernization of the Spanish wine industry is ramping up and the Valdepeñas DO is growing rapidly; today, it's the second-largest DO by volume.



# 1990s

*Tempranillo on the vine in Valdepeñas.*

During this decade, Spain becomes the world's top exporter of wine: Despite domestic consumption declining 41%, production across Spain increases and exports grow 265%. Eyeing the global market, the company establishes Shanghai Félix Solís Winery Co. Ltd. in China in 1998 and opens Félix Solís CZ in the Czech Republic a year later.

# 2000s



*Built in 2002, the Pagos del Rey winery features a panoramic view of the Ribera del Duero vineyards—specifically those in the town of Olmedillo de Roa.*

Félix Solís Avantis expands its wine-making beyond Valdepeñas and

exports take off. In 2001, the winery invests in a robotically controlled 50,000-pallet warehouse; in 2002, it expands into Ribera del Duero and begins producing Altos de Tamarón and Condado de Oriza, which are now bestselling reds, with the former being number one in volume for the DO. And there's more growth on the horizon as the company expands into Rueda in 2005 and Rioja in 2006. Two years later, Félix Solís purchases and refurbishes Viña Bajoz in Toro, turning it into the most modern facility in the region complete with automated production equipment, a new bottling line, the acquisition of more than 10,000 American and French oak aging barrels, and packaging machinery to accommodate a wide variety of formats. A new brand, Pagos del Rey, gathers the momentum from this expansion to make wines in Spain's most renowned DOs, with operations in Ribera del Duero, Rioja, Rueda, and Toro. Meanwhile, the company continues to think globally and opens offices in France, Germany, Japan, and the United States.



# 2010s

*Félix Solís Avantis' main production site in Valdepeñas.*

Félix Solís invests heavily in the future of the business, pouring €50 million into the winery in 2012; developing a new project, Viña Casa Solís in Chile, in 2015; making a three-year, €30 million investment into Valdepeñas in 2016; and opening an office in Mexico in 2019.

# 2020s



*Félix Solís Avantis' new automated barrel warehouse will be home to 150,000 American and French oak barrels.*

In 2020, even as a global pandemic decimates all manner of industry, Félix Solís doesn't slow down, instead investing €54 million in an industry-leading automated barrel cellar with an advanced system that can identify the location of each and every barrel and move it with robotic assistance as aging demands. In short, Félix Solís Avantis is proof that a desire to lead, represented by a commitment to growth and state-of-the-art technology, can pave the way to great success. Today, it has a presence in six DOs, distributes wine to 122 countries, and is a household name across Spain. SJ

{ italy }

# *Noble* GESTURES

FOR **MARCHESI DI BAROLO**, RESPECT IS THE KEY BUILDING BLOCK OF A BAROLO DYNASTY



*Anna and Valentina Abbona represent the fifth and sixth generations of their family, respectively, to run Marchesi di Barolo.*



by *Lars Leicht*

As the Abbona family gathered in the early evening on International Women's Day for a webinar hosted by *The SOMM Journal*, their home and those surrounding it in the village of Barolo sat dark in the night. It was a stark contrast to the scene at the beginning of the pandemic lockdown, when homes and castles were bathed in light—at times the national tricolor—as a sign of hope. Now, a self-imposed blackout signified solidarity with the people of a besieged Ukraine.

Such a gesture is indicative of the Abbonas' approach to their life and work within and beyond Barolo. Their deep respect for the history, tradition, ancestors, neighbors, soils, vines, and wines of this special place distinguishes the representatives of Marchesi di Barolo at home and abroad.

"We are very lucky to be here," said Valentina Abbona, sixth-generation proprietor and export and marketing director at Marchesi di Barolo. "Our town is very little; we're only 600 people, yet it is known all over the world because of the great wine that we are able to make here—not just because we are good at what we do but because of what our terroir allows us to do."

She described Barolo as inimitable thanks in great part to its soils and microclimate. A subregion of the Langhe, which translates from ancient Italian into "strips of land," it lay under the sea millions of years ago. As the hills started to rise, they exposed dramatically different soil types within short distances. "There's not one hill that is identical to the other; even though they are very close by, we still find great differences because of their age, composition, exposure, altitude, and, of course, the specific microclimate that characterizes each one of them," she said.

Despite that natural blessing, winemakers in Barolo up until the 18th century did not know how to complete the natural fermentation of their grapes to yield a dry wine, a technique finally brought to the region from France by Juliette Colbert after she married Marchese Carlo Tancredi Falletti. "When she moved to Barolo to follow love, she realized the potential [it] had in terms of



*Nebbiolo on the vine.*



winemaking,” explained Valentina. The new marchioness built fermentation cellars and transformed the local wine from sweet and fizzy to the dry and full-bodied Barolo we know today.

She was also an early marketer of Barolo. When King Carlo Alberto, head of Sardinia and Piedmont’s royal family at the time, inquired after the wine he had heard about, she responded by sending him 325 barrels from her various vineyards. The gesture was doubly respectful due to the symbolic number of casks: “One per each day of the year except for the 40 days of Lent,” as Valentina explained it, “because as a true Catholic she only counted the drinking days for the king, sending him a message: ‘You are my king, so you can ask me for something and I shall do it for you, but you too have somebody that you must pay respect to.’”

Because the Fallettis had no heirs, the winery was left to a charitable organization. In 1929, the Abbonas, already neighboring winemakers, were able to acquire the estate. “We are today still a family business . . . running the winery with the same dream that Marquise Juliette had back in the 1800s,” said Valentina.

Today with her brother, Davide; father, Ernesto; and mother, Anna, Valentina reverently merges the region’s production tradi-

tions with a modern sensibility. “In these two centuries, the winery has of course been growing in terms of experience [and the] opportunities and tools that we have nowadays to work in a cleaner and finer way to reach that tradition in winemaking,” she said. “The idea is to combine history and tradition with what contemporary tools and know-how allow us.”

Davide recently took on the full-time role of vineyard manager, where he takes a similar approach: “We combine organic techniques with conventional methods in order to obtain quality in a healthy wine,” he said, adding that the application of organic practices varies according to vintage conditions and the needs of each vineyard, with the end goal of providing maximum expression of its individual terroir. He described the use of selective cover crops to enrich the soil and spoke of the challenges of tailoring their farming techniques to the “variation in soils and microclimates” in an area where irrigation is not permitted: “We cannot have a blanket approach—we have to address every situation individually.”

Of course, the Abbonas’ success brings people to their doorstep, and they have developed an especially user-friendly hospitality program as a result. Like most producers in Italy, they encourage reserva-

tions for tours and dining experiences—but unlike most, they welcome walk-ins at their tasting room and wine bar. Valentina said a focus on hospitality was a dream of Anna’s, who described the winery restaurant she opened as “her baby”: “It is important to have a special place to welcome people who come from all over the world to visit us, pairing the right wine with a special dish prepared for them,” said Anna, who developed the recipes and initially did the cooking herself. “I think it is the best welcome we can offer.”

Valentina concurred that the dining room is the most appropriate atmosphere in which to enjoy the wines of the surrounding vineyards. “What is crucial in tasting the wine is time,” she said of the importance of savoring them with a meal. “We cannot taste these wines in a vacuum. We need to allow ourselves to be patient with them—even the most simple of the wines that we produce.” As an example, she cited Peiragal, a Barbera from a vineyard located in the middle of Barolo, where noble Nebbiolo reigns and Barbera is considered most suitable for everyday consumption. Anna pointed out that the decision they made decades ago to replant the vineyard to Barbera was a bold one, not least “from the economic point of view, as Barolo is of course a more profitable wine.”



But with the risk came great reward, Davide explained, as the resulting wine shows many characteristics more commonly associated with Nebbiolo than Barbera, such as spice and tannins. At the same time, Peiragal's compact clay-limestone soils highlight the inherent character of Barbera, namely its color and acidity. "What [our family] really wanted to do is show people that it is the terroir that makes our wine so special," said Davide. "Nebbiolo from Barolo is great thanks to the soil, and we prove that by intentionally using Barbera in that same soil."

Tasting the Peiragal with fortunate audience members who received samples through SommFoundation, Davide pointed out that "the only thing we do in the cellar is to highlight the characteristics of the soil by using the right tools." He explained that after malolactic fermentation, one-third of the single-vineyard production is aged in barriques to stabilize tannins, color, and polyphenols, while the remainder goes into large, neutral casks that ensure balance when the lots are blended: "This shows how interesting Barbera can be." Webinar participants agreed, commenting that the wine was aromatic and elegant yet lush with dark fruit, supported by great tannins. One described it with the classic description of "iron fist in a velvet glove."

Moving to Nebbiolo, Valentina noted that when poured side by side with Barbera, it can seem lighter—deceptively so: "All of the power of Nebbiolo is in its tannins, in its acidity."

She presented the 2020 Sbirolo, a Nebbiolo from the broader Langhe region, mainly Roero, where the soils are generally lighter clays and more sand. "If we have diversity just within Barolo, imagine what you have when you go outside the borders of the subregion," she said. *Sbirolo* loosely translates as "rascal," or an outgoing personality for a young man—and sure enough, she said, "It's the loudest Nebbiolo we have. Usually Nebbiolo is a more shy grape that takes time before you can actually address it and become intimate with it. Here, the sandier soils give it that extroverted personality." Yet despite the "exuberance" of this young wine, it is already showing signs of being well built for aging: While more

fruit forward than Barolo, it displays the distinct tannic structure of its variety.

Presenting their Barolo del Comune di Barolo, the Abbonas tightened their focus to concentrate on the village of Barolo in the center of its eponymous appellation, where the 11 different vineyards for this wine are located. "Generally speaking, we can divide Barolo into two: We have the north/northwestern part where there are sandier soils, while in the southeast you have more compact and stony vineyards," Valentina said. The village lies lower than the surrounding area, and in fact its name translates to "low place"; the surrounding hills protect the vineyards from excessive winds and other climate extremes.

"This is where we have the greatest diversity," Valentina continued. "Those 11 vineyards are all within walking distance from each other yet are so different in their single expressions. With this wine we wanted to go beyond the concept of a single vineyard and show our tradition as winemakers in Piedmont—to blend our Barolos from the different locations to show the region's overall complexity as well as the winemaking style of the house. With the single vineyards, we can show the particularities of that specific terroir; with the blends, we can show Barolo in all its complexity and shades and, [in so doing, show] ourselves."

Valentina shared soil profiles of just three of the 11 vineyards to demonstrate the extremes: the super-sandy Coste di Rose; Cannubi, more compact on stony clay and silt; and the rocky Sarmassa. "This is the most iconic expression of Barolo for what our family's history is, coming only from the town of Barolo but still a blend of the many situations we can find even within our little village," she said. "It shows what we see every day when we look out the window—all the different hills, exposures, soil types synthesized in one wine."

She added that it was a great time to be tasting the 2016 vintage: "This is a vintage that allows you to understand it is ready now. Barolo is a wine that can never bore you. Right now you feel these notes; the more it ages, the more these will develop and grow together with you. It will continue to grow, just like a person who, [with] aging, becomes wiser and deeper in their knowledge and what they share." Stated, as usual, with true respect. SJ



Three of many different soil types found in Barolo: Cannubi, Coste di Rose, and Sarmassa.

# History Writ Large

## THE BRICKYARD AND THE HIDDEN HOUSE MELD LOCAL LEGACY WITH MODERN HOSPITALITY IN CHANDLER, AZ

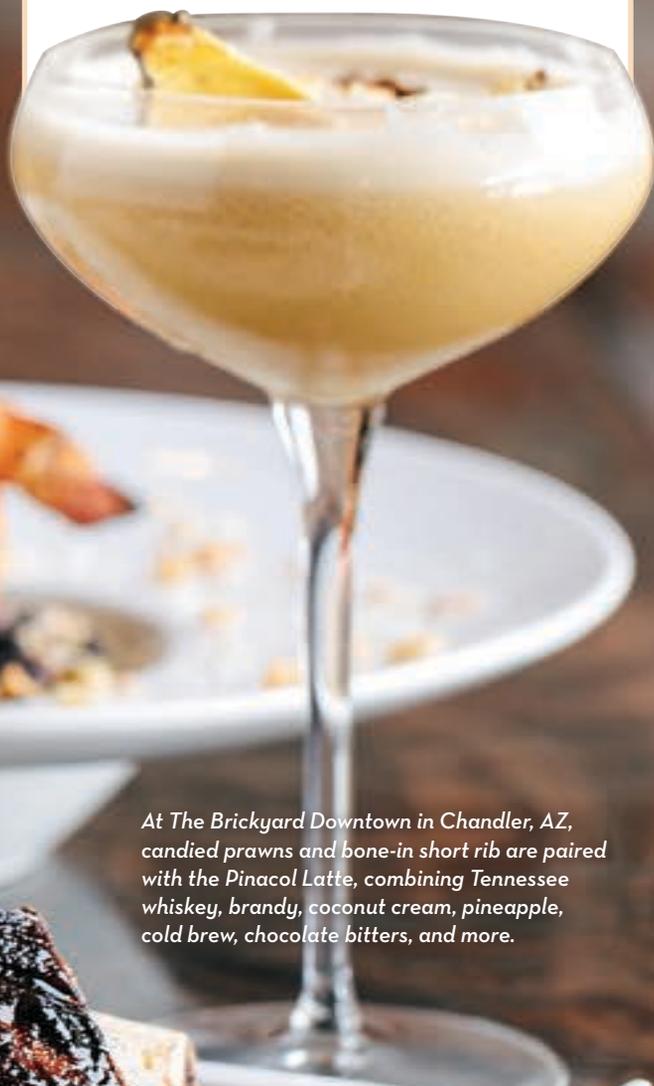
story by Christina Barrueta / photos by Grace Stufkosky



*Brickyard mixologist Michael Testa prepares the Tropic Like It's Hawt, a tequila-based tiki cocktail that also features g n p y and St. George Botanical Gin.*

**IN 2016, GAVIN JACOBS** and his partners, Elliott and Jackie Hall, opened The Brickyard Downtown in the historic district of Chandler, Arizona. Set in a 1920s building that once housed *The Chandler Arizona*, the city's first newspaper, it honors its heritage through the rustic warmth of bare brick walls and a pressed-tin ceiling. "Chandler is my home, and I love its history," says Jacobs. "We'll eventually grow beyond our downtown community, but there is so much opportunity right here."

After parting ways with a previous restaurant partner, Jacobs had visited such food meccas as New York, Chicago, Seattle, and Los Angeles before opening The Brickyard. "No one really had a craft cocktail program paired with global tapas—an adult playground where small plates and fun cocktails would enhance each other," he notes. To help fulfill that vision, he brought on the late Bobby Kramer and tasked him with creating an innovative cocktail program. Kramer later tapped close friend Michael Regan to join the talented bar team, and Regan continues that legacy today as beverage director.



*At The Brickyard Downtown in Chandler, AZ, candied prawns and bone-in short rib are paired with the Pinacol Latte, combining Tennessee whiskey, brandy, coconut cream, pineapple, cold brew, chocolate bitters, and more.*

Their ingenuity and playfulness are captured in the current incarnation of the cocktail list. The outer space-themed 20-page book is Kramer's final collaborative project. Organized into sections named for imagined planets like Classy World (a nod to multiple team members' winning entries in Diageo's World Class competitions), it includes libations such as Kramer's Tanq Me Home Tonight, combining Tanqueray gin, Campari, grapefruit shrub, and a frothy cloud of yuzu-Champagne foam, and Tropic Like It's Hawt from planet Ohnabiech-Prime—a vibrant tequila-based tiki cocktail fortified with génepy and St. George Botanivore Gin. To pair with them, chef Nick Gibbs' eclectic menu, which changes approximately every four months, offers the likes of candied prawns with pineapple-habanero salsa on a bed of black rice and fork-tender pork belly skewers burnished with a honey-soy glaze.

Building on The Brickyard's success, Jacobs and his team opened The Hidden House around the corner in 2019, transforming a cottage built in 1939 into a multifaceted restaurant with a picturesque front patio, a central terrace, and a lofty dining area in back that they call the "hangar." Here, you'll find more refined cuisine, a larger wine list, and a menu of 44 classic cocktails spanning from the pre-Prohibition era to the present day, with superb renditions of such favorites as the Mint Julep, the Pisco Sour, Irish Coffee, and the Penicillin. "Bobby and Michael did amazing work on that program together," says Jacobs. "Our focus was to do classics right on a large scale and I think we nailed it." Rotating house signatures on draft, meanwhile, include the bestselling Diddy Do It, a spicy Margarita accented with Aperol, passion fruit, and yuzu. Sharing the marquee is chef Brent Tratten's menu, featuring delicious entrees such as tender duck breast accompanied by duck-confit bread pudding, dollops of cranberry jam, and candied walnuts as well as a juicy espresso-crustéd filet with black garlic puree, bacon lardons, and blue cheese.

Under construction is a third project: a 1920s cottage (naturally) that will become a cozy neighborhood bar with an all-day coffee program. For Jacobs' team, shaping downtown Chandler into a dining destination is an ongoing passion. "Creating an unparalleled experience where you're transported out of your everyday life is something I push for every day, at every restaurant," he says. *sj*



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRICKYARD DOWNTOWN

## Remembering Bobby Kramer

By the time the sun rose on February 10, 2021, the tragic news had rippled like shockwaves throughout Arizona's hospitality community: Driving home from the job he loved, 31-year-old Robert "Bobby" Kramer had lost his life after he was hit by an inebriated wrong-way driver, leaving behind his beloved wife, Lindsey, and son, Arthur, as well as a cavernous hole in the hearts of everyone who met him. A Navy veteran and award-winning mixologist, Kramer was a shining star, and his loss was incomprehensible: "Magnetic," "inspiring," and "charismatic" were just some of the words used in the remembrances shared by the friends and family of this extraordinary talent and rare force of nature.

Hit especially hard were the team of The Brickyard Downtown and The Hidden House, on which Kramer's ebullient spirit has stamped its indelible imprint.

Beverage director Michael Regan cherishes his close friendship with Kramer, which began in high school and led to special moments in a shared profession. "We worked so seamlessly together; it was the most fun I've had in my career," he reminisces. "I love the show of bartending, and nobody perfected that art better than Bobby. He created an environment that was so lighthearted and fun. It was one of the things that made Bobby so special—he put his whole heart into his work and what he gave to the community."

Owner Gavin Jacobs recalls meeting Kramer as a bartender in a downtown Phoenix restaurant. "I thought, man, this kid is not where he should be," he recalls. "Everything was a glowing light—his personality, his attention to detail, his passion, and the smile on his face. I interviewed others, but there was something about Bobby that touched me deeply. He was just an incredible, talented, knowledgeable person full of life and charisma, and I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for him."



**Gavin Jacobs and Michael Regan at The Brickyard's sister restaurant, The Hidden House.**

**The Hidden House's duck breast, tempura rock shrimp, and espresso-crustéd filet with a Penicillin.**

# occidental OENOLOGY

THE SOMM JOURNAL  
DUG INTO “A CROSS-  
SECTION OF WESTERN  
EUROPE” FOR OUR  
LATEST WEBINAR

BY JESSIE BIRSCHBACH

**a cross-sectional study** examines data from a population at one specific point in time—a beneficial observational method, as it allows researchers to collect a great deal of information quickly. While it can't be used to determine causal relationships, it can at least provide clues as to where to dive deeper.

In the case of our recent “A Cross-Section of Western Europe” webinar as part of our Winery Close-Up series, we gathered an incredible amount of information on some of the namesake region's growing sites. Our hope was that the webinar would help to inspire the audience to further examine these areas and their featured producers—and if Ernst Loosen presenting on the Middle Mosel won't do that, we don't know what will.

As Lars Leicht, *The SOMM Journal's* VP of education and the moderator for this continuing series, said, “If not the cradle of modern wine culture, Western Europe can be considered its finishing school: not only as a standard-bearer for terroir expression and varietal typicity but as inspiration to the New World.”

Per usual, helping to present was Greg Van Wager and his SommGeo map platform—“where Google Earth meets the wine world,” as Leicht likes to say. A yearlong subscription to SommGeo was offered to audience members in a random drawing courtesy of SommFoundation, which also offered cash prizes to winners of its essay contest.

**A roller coaster-like basket system helps growers handle the steep slopes of Conegliano Valdobbiadene.**

PHOTO: ARCANSELO PIAI

*Dr. Loosen's Wehlener Sonnenuhr Vineyard.*

## WINERY: DR. LOOSEN

Region: Middle Mosel

Presenter: Ernst Loosen, proprietor/winemaker

Ernst Loosen speaks of growing Riesling in the Middle Mosel region of Germany very matter-of-factly. It seemed second nature to him—perhaps because he was born into the business: His family established Dr. Loosen over 200 years ago, and he has been running it since 1988.

After a brief primer on the Mosel's three-tier vineyard classification system—one that Loosen noted is older than Burgundy's similar model, established as it was in 1868—the winemaker pointed to the darkest spots on the map he presented of the twisty-turny Middle Mosel and its Grand Cru sites. Broadly speaking, they're south-facing, steep, and close to the winding Mosel River: "The south-facing slopes are better because they receive sun from morning to evening. The steeper the slopes are, the warmer the vineyard: [That's] best for ripeness. And the closer the vineyard to the river the better,



PHOTO: BORNA FIDE PRODUCTIONS

because it gets that moderating influence," said Loosen.

Loosen's Wehlener Sonnenuhr Vineyard is one such Grand Cru. "The name means 'sundial,'" he said, "and this gives you an indication of its south-facing [orientation]. It receives six to eight hours of sunshine a day." An image of the vineyard's soil, resembling a sea of old chalkboard

shards, revealed the high concentration of slate, "which gives us very good drainage," Loosen explained. "It's also one of the reasons we are one of the few regions in Germany [that] was never hit by phylloxera. We still have ungrafted vines [that] are more than 130 years old."

Loosen then shared an image of a grape bunch from the winery's 10 hectares of Riesling on original rootstock—all over 100 years old—that showed the nonuniform fruit set known as millerandage (aka hens and chicks). It was followed by another

showing buckets of grapes infected with botrytis to varying degrees: a black bucket filled with clean, light-green bunches also exhibiting millerandage; a red bucket labeled "Auslese," in which some grapes had turned to pink-gray raisins; and a small "Beerenauslese" bucket in which every precious berry was shriveled and infected.

While presenting the current-release Dr. Loosen 2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Grosses Gewächs Reserve, Loosen clarified that the winery doesn't allow "any botrytis in our dry wines. The hens-and-chicks [bunches] make very complex wine. . . . This one is called 'reserve' because it's made in the same style [that] my great-great-grandfather made dry wines." The process, which Loosen described as "pretty simple," consists of fermentation in traditional German oak *fuders*; once the wine is dry, it's sulfured, topped off, and left in the barrel for two years on the lees without *bâttonage* before it's bottled and aged for another four years. Thanks to such long-established winemaking and farming practices, Loosen makes the Middle Mosel crus all the more grand.

*Blue slate soil in the Middle Mosel.*

## WINERY: SEI SOLO

Region: Ribera del Duero DO

Presenter: Javier Zaccagnini, proprietor/winemaker

As the former (and the first) director of the Consejo Regulador de la Ribera del Duero, Javier Zaccagnini, owner of Sei Solo, knows one of Spain's most prestigious winemaking regions very well. The winemaker also co-founded the ultra-successful Ribera del Duero-based winery Aalto Bodegas y Viñedos and served as its general manager, among other positions.

Most of his presentation was spent on a broad overview of the region that included its geological history: It started 30 million years ago as a vast lake covering Ribera del Duero and the surrounding area before it drained due to a change in climate 5 million years ago, leaving a variety of different soil profiles and rivers in its wake. Images of soil resembling dark brown sugar changed to one of chalky, rocky soil. "We have a tremendous mixture of soils even within one plot—every 200 meters we're changing soils. It's quite similar to Burgundy[, which has] the same tremendous variation," said Zaccagnini.



The area's climate, which he described as "very cold nights and not too warm days during the ripening period," provides daily temperature swings of 25–30 degrees Celsius. Along with the soils and the tendency of the area's Tempranillo to develop "smaller berries and thicker skin than elsewhere in Spain," said Zaccagnini, these diurnal swings contribute to what he called the "beauty" of the wines of Ribera del Duero: a higher concentration of color, polyphenols, and tannins.

The Spaniard's deep love for the area and experience within it led him to establish Sei Solo in 2007, sourcing fruit not

only from his own 3 hectares of vineyards but also from sites in La Horra. The name is a tribute to Zaccagnini's favorite composer, Johann Sebastian Bach, who used it as a title for a series of violin sonatas.

The winery's current release, Sei Solo 2018, is the result of a mild, dry winter and wet spring with a frost in April that did not damage the early-ripening grapes. The vintage comes from the Barroso and Acos vineyards in La Horra, both featuring vines 60–90 years of age. The grapes are separated by vineyard plot and fermented in small steel tanks before the wine is carefully pumped over and racked into two-year-old French barrels to go through malolactic fermentation over several months at low temperatures (around 14 degrees Celsius). The wine is then racked into 600-liter neutral French oak barrels and aged for 20 months, followed by several months of aging in bottle. Zaccagnini produces only 22,000 bottles annually.



### Sei Solo 2018, Ribera del Duero, Spain

**(\$108)** Vines as old as 60–90 years are used for this vibrant 100% Tempranillo named for a series of six solos that Johann Sebastian Bach composed for the violin. Dynamic, rich, and muscular, with firm, graphite-laden tannins, it presents a chorus of black plum and blackberry with an authentic soil component that plays on our heartstrings. Highlighting the mineral qualities of the region, its music is illuminating, but its sense of place is down to earth. **96**

—Meridith May

An old vine in the El Nogal Vineyard in La Horra.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEI SOLO



## BRAND: GUINIGI WINES

**Regions:** Barolo DOCG and the Langhe DOC, Piedmont, and Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany

**Presenter:** August Sebastiani, proprietor, 3 Badge Beverage Corporation

We've regularly featured 3 Badge Beverage Corporation's diverse portfolio of wines and spirits in our pages, from brands like the Sonoma-based Gehricke Wine and Pacific Northwest producer Cedar + Salmon to Uncle Val's Gin and Bozal Mezcal. But hearing proprietor August Sebastiani speak of 3 Badge's Guinigi Wines felt particularly personal. "I'm a world away from the source of these wines," he told the webinar audience, "but they're a very important part of 3 Badge."

Representing the fourth generation of his family's wine business, Sebastiani began his presentation with a mention of his great-grandfather Samuele Sebastiani, who emigrated from Italy to Sonoma in the late 1800s. He and his descendants would help to define and shape Sonoma's grape-growing and wine-production industry. "And here I stand proud to carry that legacy in a unique way," said Sebastiani—unique in that his own contribution began with the purchase of an old Sonoma fire station that his grandfather helped build and where his father volunteered; there, he officially established 3 Badge as a divi-



sion of Don Sebastiani & Sons in 2005. (Today it's a separate entity.)

3 Badge's connections as a négociant have naturally stretched to Italy, creating a bridge between Sebastiani and his family's roots. "Growing up, we were entrenched in the local wine [industry], but we never had California wines on the table," he recalled. "We were usually drinking Barolo.

### Guinigi 2018 Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG, Tuscany, Italy

**(\$28)** Ten percent Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Merlot were combined with Sangiovese to make this fragrant and juicy riserva. Balsamic-covered black cherry and black olive leave a lasting impression. White pepper and mulberry spice up the finish with a hint of black-tea astringency. **93**—M.M.

### Guinigi 2017 Toscana IGT, Italy

**(\$48)** The blend of 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 10% Sangiovese, 5% Petit Verdot, and 5% Syrah is mouth-filling and juicy. Notes of mulberry and ripe cherry are heightened by stunning acidity. Chalky yet soft tannins highlight a sense of vibrancy with brushy blue-floral tones. **92**—M.M.

3 BADGE ENOLOGY

It's a dear favorite of my old man's. He and others feel that New World wines, while lovely in their own right, don't quite have the same food-pairing offerings that Old World wines do. [The latter] come with a little more tannic structure and sometimes higher acidity that doesn't overpower the food and complements [it] well."

For Sebastiani, there is no greater symbol of his family's connection to Italy than the Torre Guinigi, a tower in the ancient town of Lucca in Tuscany. "Lucca is a hub for all parts of Northern Italy," he explained. "We've got Ligurian cousins and Tuscan cousins, so we spent a lot of time with this Guinigi tower that dates all the way back to the 1300s. It's iconic to [our] connection [with the] Old World."

Among the wines Guinigi offers are a Prosecco, Prosecco Rosé, and Pinot Grigio, but Sebastiani was particularly excited to present two of the line's latest releases: the Guinigi 2016 Barolo DOCG and 2015 Brunello di Montalcino DOCG. Both are sustainably sourced and made; in fact, Guinigi's direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are 88% lower than the industry average. Its winery operates on certified renewable electricity and uses non-potable groundwater; all non-hazardous waste is converted into compost.



The vineyards of Les Costières de Pomérols.



Les Costières de Pomérols in the Picpoul de Pinet appellation of Languedoc-Roussillon.

## WINERY: LES COSTIÈRES DE POMÉROLS

Region: Picpoul de Pinet AOP, Languedoc-Roussillon  
Presenter: Matthias Michelin, export manager

At first glance, the Zoom background of Matthias Michelin, export manager for Les Costières de Pomérols, appeared to be some sort of futuristic painting, but it was actually quite relevant to his presentation on Picpoul de Pinet: The image depicted a vast expanse of oyster beds nestled within the foggy Bassin de Thau lagoon with rows of bright-green Picpoul vines in the foreground. As many of us know, Picpoul de Pinet is considered a classic pairing partner for oysters; as a result, Van Wagner pointed out, it's often called "the Muscadet of the South."

Michelin, however, was there to represent not only the region but also the Les Costières de Pomérols cooperative, which was established in 1932 and currently has a membership of about 350 vine growers, producing an average 8 million bottles from its facility in the commune of Pomérols. "Together we farm over 2,000 hectares and produce a large number of bottles, which is unusual for a co-op, as most co-ops sell in bulk," he said, adding that half of the vineyards are certified sustainable and that some of the growers are converting to organic. It's worth noting here for our



scholarly purposes that the six communes that are entitled to use Picpoul de Pinet on the label are the aforementioned Pomérols, Florensac, Pinet, Castelnaud-de-Guers, Montagnac, and Méze.

Although the co-op produces rosé and red, white wine is arguably its specialty: Of its roughly 2,100 hectares of vines, 450 are planted to Picpoul. In fact, 82% of the broader appellation's production is white and rosé, which is unusual compared to the neighboring red-dominated regions. That's mostly thanks to the Mediterranean Sea and the Bassin de Thau, whose cooling, breezy, foggy influence on the otherwise

dry climate, with its warm summers and mild winters, "really keep[s] the grapes fresh, with higher acidity," said Michelin. The export manager, who is also the son of a winemaker, noted that the cooperative's inland vineyards, where white and red grapes grow mostly on hillsides, "is where we'll find more concentration in the [fruit]."

Michelin presented the Les Costières de Pomérols Picpoul de Pinet HB, the wine that the cooperative imports into the U.S. "It's a crisp, refreshing wine with citrus fruits, flower blossoms, and apricots. It's an unusual grape variety," said Michelin, adding that the expression is, of course, "oyster friendly."

*Les Costières de Pomérols is managed by longtime technical director Joel Julien. The exclusive U.S. importation rights are handled by Fran Kysela, MS, owner of Kysela Pere et Fils, Ltd.*



Oyster beds near the vineyards of Picpoul de Pinet.

## WINERY: MEDICI ERMETE

Region: Lambrusco Reggiano DOC, Emilia-Romagna

Presenter: Alessandro Medici, brand ambassador

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEDICI ERMETE



*Father-and-son proprietors Alberto and Alessandro Medici of Medici Ermete.*

"I represent the fifth generation of the Medici family," said Medici Ermete brand ambassador Alessandro Medici, who added that their winemaking history dates back to 1890, when Remigio Medici established three taverns along the busy Via Emilia trade route. Eventually Remigio also founded a winery between Via Emilia and the foothills of the Enza Valley, but it was Remigio's son Ermete who expanded the estate and built its reputation. Furthermore, it was a decision made by Alessandro's father, Alberto, that played the most significant role in shaping the business into what it is today: producing the first single-vineyard Lambrusco in 1993. Though

it came at a cost of 30–40% less production than other wineries in the area, "my family wanted to change the [sweet, mass-produced] reputation of Lambrusco by making a dry Lambrusco, starting from the vineyard on clay soil," said Alessandro.

Today his family and their team organically farm 80 vineyard hectares of this clay soil in Emilia-Romagna's warm climate. Alessandro shared an image of the winery, located in a flat valley vineyard with the Apennine Mountains in the distance, noting that "95% of our farming happens on flatland. The Apennine Mountains divide perfectly the Emilia-Romagna region from Tuscany. They also help to create a perfect climate for the agriculture and viticulture of the region. Thanks to these mountains, we don't receive the strong winds from the sea and the southwest of Italy."

In essence, this is ideal terroir for the Lambrusco grape and around 60 of its subvarieties. According to Alessandro, most of the growers and producers in the area stick to six of these offshoots: Lambrusco Grasparossa, Lambrusco Salamino, Lambrusco Maestri, Lambrusco di Sorbara, Lambrusco Marani, and Lambrusco Mantovano. "They have different organoleptic characteristics [and] different sugar and tannin levels, but they all have acidity, especially the Lambrusco Sorbara," said Alessandro, noting that it ranks among the grapes with the highest acidity levels in Italy, "with a pH between 2.5 and 2.7, close to the pH that producers see in the Champagne area."

Medici Ermete's Concerto Reggiano Lambrusco DOC is made with 100% Lambrusco Salamino, the subvariety of Lambrusco that the producer believes is the most balanced. The dry expression has helped to make Medici Ermete a pioneer of serious, well-made Lambrusco. "It's very hard to say Lambrusco is the most important variety you can find in the world, but it's very easy to say that Lambrusco is one of the most gastronomic, versatile, drinkable, and refreshing wines," said Alessandro.



**Medici Ermete 2020 Concerto Reggiano Lambrusco DOC, Reggio Emilia, Italy (\$26)** Italy's first single-vineyard Lambrusco exudes fruity aromas that lead to a dry mouthfeel of plum and wet stone. Vibrant notes of strawberry and jasmine are joined by balanced acidity and tannins. Hints of chocolate and raspberry shine on the finish. **93** —M.M.

KOBRAND

*The Medici Ermete winery in Emilia-Romagna.*



## SUBZONE: CARTIZZE

Region: Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG

Presenter: Federica Gaiotti, researcher, CREA-VE

Research Centre for Viticulture and Enology

The 8,000-hectare Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG is a hilly area between its namesake communes. These rolling vineyards make up a number of crus, of which the most highly regarded is Cartizze, covering around 108 hectares. Wines from this subzone can be labeled as Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze.

Researcher Federica Gaiotti of the CREA-VE Research Centre for Viticulture and Enology referred to Cartizze as a “Grand Cru,” and while that may not be an official term, it’s clear she believes that the area is worthy of it. And she’s not the only one, as she was joined by fellow researcher and Consorzio di Tutela del Conegliano

Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG director Diego Tomasi in revealing the reasons for the area’s prestige in a paper titled “The Terroirs of Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Wines: A Study of the Origins of Quality in the Hills of the UNESCO Heritage Site.” Among the main takeaways of the study are that Cartizze’s soils consist mainly of sedimentary bedrock of ancient marine origin, with a clay-loam texture and high limestone content that’s “associated with aromatic complexity,” said Gaiotti. “The Cartizze soil is unique compared to all the other soils in this denomination. It’s quite common to find shells in this area.”

The southern exposure of the steep hills



PHOTO COURTESY OF CREA-VE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR VITICULTURE AND ENOLOGY

*The incredibly steep vineyards of Cartizze in the Prosecco Hills of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene, which are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.*



PHOTO: ARCANGELO PIAI

is also “important for optimal ripening of grapes,” she continued; coupled with a continuous breeze, it allows for ventilation that mitigates the threat of disease. “There are also several examples of vines 80–100 years old,” said Gaiotti, which not only makes for a deeper root system with a favorable relationship to the microorganisms in the soil but also consistently produces lower yields: Roughly 100 growers produce only about 1 million bottles of the Glera-based sparkling wine each year.

Thanks to these growing conditions, what’s in these precious bottles is a

full-bodied wine that’s richer than the average Prosecco (or even Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore) while still maintaining an acidity level that sits around 8–10 grams per liter. “You can perceive the perfect balance between sugar and acid. On the palate the wine is very soft. There’s a high content of aroma compounds that makes the sensory profile very full and rich, with a lot of fruity notes like peach [and] apricot but also hints [of] flowers,” said Gaiotti, who added proudly that “these characteristics make the Cartizze wine really unique and easy to recognize.” SJ

## more CROSS-SECTION SAMPLES



**Leindl 2020  
Langenlois  
Grüner Veltliner,  
Kamptal, Austria  
(\$26)** The hilly region of Langenlois is one of the historical and cultural centers of the Kamptal region. Aromas of lemon tart carry over to the palate, intersecting with bright, crackling acidity; a stony mouthfeel; and a hint of meringue, green apple, and Bartlett pear. **92**  
—M.M.

KYSELA PERE ET FILS, LTD.



**Aveleda 2019  
Loureiro &  
Alvarinho, Vinho  
Verde, Portugal  
(\$14)** A stony and focused blend of 70% Loureiro and 30% Alvarinho with notes of pine nut, honeyed Bosc pear, lemon sorbet, and oregano. Minerality chimes in to bring out the energy in this edgy white; brisk from the start, it finishes with a keen slate saltiness. **92**  
—M.M.

# Making It POP

**ZONIN PUTS NEW SPARKLE INTO ITS PROSECCO PACKAGING** by Lars Leicht

## PROSECCO IS A CONSUMMATE

symbol of hospitality. Restaurants in Italy frequently welcome arriving guests with a complimentary glass of the bubbly, its subtle fizz virtually scrubbing away the stress of the day. It is also often served up to toast special occasions, when a wisely selected Prosecco increases the likelihood of those glasses being quickly drained—and promptly refilled.

Hailing from either of the two regions that share the denomination, Veneto and Friuli, DOC Prosecco is arguably one of the world's most versatile wines, offering unrivaled freshness with elegance—qualities that are appreciated today more than ever by the U.S. market.

"I always open a bottle of Prosecco when I get together with friends," says Francesco Zonin, seventh-generation family proprietor and president of 1821 Fine Wine & Spirits. "It is fresh and easy

to enjoy, whether you begin the night with it as an apéritif or enjoy it throughout the meal."

Zonin, whose ancestors founded the eponymous winery in 1821, describes its Prosecco as not just a sparkling wine but a wine that sparkles. Pleasantly dry and fruity, both the classic and rosé expressions bear fresh, aromatic notes that continue through the finish along with hints of almonds and citrus; they're perfectly suited for any type of social gathering among modern American wine consumers.

Embracing today's "pop" culture (pun intended) of fun and inclusivity, the storied house enters its third century with new packaging that differentiates it from its Prosecco peers through its playful retro style. Looking back to labels from the 19th and early 20th centuries—including an early bottling of an Americano cocktail, ahead of its time in so many

ways—Zonin has redressed its bottle in bright colors with a polka dot-trimmed capsule to evoke the bubbly fun inside. It even revived an original logo with a bolder font and an Italian trumpeter in stride that at once heralds the historic brand and leads the march to festivity.

Located in the Veneto, Zonin is Italy's largest privately held wine company and the leading grower of Glera, the grape variety that makes up Prosecco. This gives the company ultimate control from the vine to the bottle so that it can ferment and bottle its Prosecco on demand, guaranteeing fresh product delivered regularly to market.

The 100% Glera grapes for Zonin's classic Prosecco are gently pressed and the must separated into two batches. Half undergoes an initial fermentation at 64 degrees Fahrenheit while the rest is kept in suspended animation just above the

*The boundaries of the DOC Prosecco zone span from the Veneto to Friuli.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ZONIN

freezing point, unfermented. They're then combined in pressurized stainless-steel tanks to undergo secondary fermentation according to the Charmat method, which is preferred because it yields more fresh fruit character.

Prosecco Rosé was officially recognized by the Italian government as a denomination in 2020 and introduced to the world market last year. Zonin's version is made from the required minimum of 85% Glera with 15% Pinot Nero (Pinot Noir) from the same harvest, which is vinified as a red before being added to the blend. Fermentation of the rosé lasts 60 days, twice as long as for the classic Prosecco. It shows flavors of wild strawberry and raspberry with hints of golden apple and wisteria in the bouquet.



*With images like these, Zonin is promoting its Proseccos as the go-to sparkling wine for brunch and other occasions.*



*Zonin's new labels were inspired by those from the company's past.*

With the tagline "Make It Pop!", Zonin is promoting its Prosecco as the go-to modern sparkling wine that is perfect for brunch and other food pairings as well as an ideal ingredient in sparkling-wine cocktails because it is lower in residual sugar than many other Proseccos on the U.S. market. "Prosecco isn't just for celebrations," reiterated Francesco Zonin. "It elevates every occasion and makes any moment a memorable one." <sup>1</sup>



# Sparkle Motion

"Sometimes I doubt your commitment to Sparkle Motion," moans one frenzied pageant mom to another in a scene from cult classic *Donnie Darko*. Well, don't doubt ours. In this column, we at *The SOMM Journal* rate the most notable sparkling wines that cross our desks and lips each issue. Given the wide range of production methods, styles, and price points the category covers, we've devised the following system to score each on its own merits.

## 1 BUBBLE 🍷

Simple but satisfying.

## 2 BUBBLES 🍷🍷

Satisfying and a little more complex.

## 3 BUBBLES 🍷🍷🍷

A strong example of its kind.

## 4 BUBBLES 🍷🍷🍷🍷

A superb example of its kind.

## 5 BUBBLES 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Stellar by any standard.

**For details on submitting wines for review, contact managing editor Ruth Tobias at [rtobias@sommjournal.com](mailto:rtobias@sommjournal.com).**



### **Argyle 2011 Extended Tirage Brut, Willamette Valley, Oregon (\$85)**

From one of the Willamette Valley's coolest vintages in decades comes this blend of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay, which kicks off with notes of orchard fruit, honey, and croissant; lemon-wedge acidity interacts beautifully with the creamy yet buoyant mouthfeel while wild strawberry and lime curd come into play. **92.5**



### **Two Birds 2018 Sparkling Wine, Rogue Valley, Oregon (\$40)**

Balanced as surely as the birds on a wire depicted on the label, these bubbles sing of brioche, Bosc pear, and honey-drizzled apple on the nose; sweet tangerine leads the way on the rounded palate before an ultra-crisp bite of more apple ushers in a tangy, lemon-zesty finish. Composed of 88% Chardonnay and 6% each Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, which spend 29 months on the lees. **92**



### **Bouvet Tresor Rosé Brut, Saumur, Loire Valley, France (\$23)**

There's a decidedly savory side to this 100% Cab Franc. Pale rose-gold in the glass, it displays herbal, mineral, and woody tones even as it smacks of bouncy red fruit—strawberry, cherry, raspberry—underscored by upfront acidity yet softened by a hint of breadiness. **90**

KOBRAND



### **Domaine Carneros 2014 Le Rêve Blanc de Blancs, Carneros (\$125)**

Though it's built to age, this 100% estate-grown Chardonnay is already a multifaceted stunner. As the tiniest, most shimmering of bubbles swarm the glass, apricot, brioche, orange-vanilla, and white florals swirl together on the nose; similar flavors bloom on the round, petal-velvety palate, with frothy sensations of crème fraîche-drizzled melon and warming spice coming in midway. **96**



### **Della Vite Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG, Italy (\$30)**

Scents of pear and chamomile blossom plus a hint of breadiness precede a palate of apricot, lemon-lime, and slightly savory minerality, hanging in a delicate balance that's presaged by the sleek packaging. **92**



Continued on page 94



# HOSPICE du RHÔNE

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DR. NICK DOKOOZLIAN  
WITH INTRODUCTION BY  
JOHN ALBAN



**Valdo Cuvée 1926 Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G., Italy (\$24)** Fresh as a daisy, this blend of 90% Glera and 10% Chardonnay indeed offers up a floral bouquet along with notes of honeydew, white peach, and pear. Though extra-dry with no lack of ripe fruit, it also has the crispness of green apple and lemon plus a touch of salinity. **92**



TAUB FAMILY SELECTIONS



**Cuvaison 2018 Brut Cuvée Méthode Champenoise, Los Carneros, Napa Valley (\$50)** There's so much going on in this estate-grown blend of 62% Pinot Noir and 38% Chardonnay, which spends 30 months en tirage, to hold you in thrall: We detected everything from honeyed lemon and pineapple to brioche and nuts as well as hints of mint and ginger. On the palate, raring acidity meets creaminess in elegant fashion, accented by grapefruit curd. **94**



**Schramsberg 2018 Blanc de Noirs, North Coast (\$43)** Back in 1967, Schramsberg became the first American winery to produce a blanc de noirs, and that legacy shows in the effortless elegance of the current vintage, composed of 86% Pinot Noir and 14% Chardonnay primarily from Sonoma. For all its expressiveness, the yeasty nose of apples in cream, nectarine, almond, and honeysuckle also has a mineral cleanliness; likewise on the complex palate, it's somehow both richly textured and balletic, skipping from apricot, white peach, and more apple to lemon zest and strawberry to young mango with a touch of white pepper and vanilla before the lovely, lasting finish. **94**



**Moët & Chandon Impérial Brut, Champagne, France (\$48)** When it comes to finesse, this classic—roughly equal parts Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier with a slightly smaller amount of Chardonnay—doesn't miss: It's *comme il faut* from the unending bead onward. Joined by biscuit and almond aromas, ripe golden apple on the nose turns to green on the palate, where citrus—lime, grapefruit, mandarin orange—cycles through high-flying acidity even as luscious pear adds weight and chalk conveys elegance through the finish. **93**



MOËT HENNESSY USA



**Moët & Chandon 2013 Grand Vintage Rosé, Champagne, France (\$70)** As vibrant as its upbeat salmon hue, this blend of 44% Pinot Noir, 35% Chardonnay, and 21% Pinot Meunier delivers scents of strawberry, pomegranate, and cherry dappled with baking spice; in the mouth, the taut, glossy texture of peach skin is matched by flavors of stone fruit, orange peel, and hints of green tea. **94** \$J

MOËT HENNESSY USA



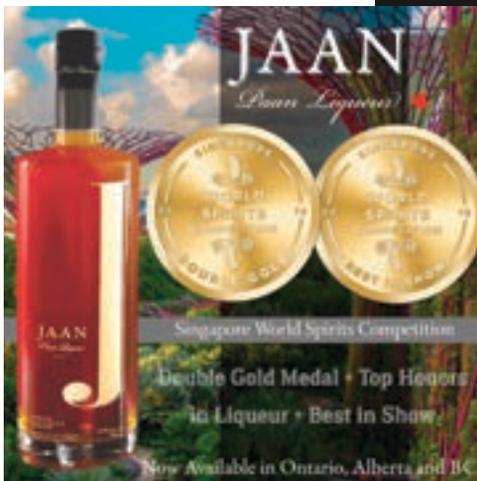
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# ***THE 2021 SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL***

# ***WINE COMPETITION RESULTS***



# BEST OF CLASS AWARDS

## BEST BLANC DE BLANCS & BEST IN SHOW SPARKLING

Wolf Mountain Vineyards 2020 Méthode Champenoise **Blanc de Blanc Brut**, Dahlenoga Plateau, Georgia (\$36)

## BEST CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Brecon Estate 2018 Estate Reserve **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Adelaida AVA, Paso Robles (\$82)

## BEST CABERNET/SYRAH BLEND

Francis Ford Coppola 2017 Eleanor **Cabernet/Syrah**, Napa County and Sonoma County (\$80)

## BEST CHARDONNAY

Trentadue Winery 2020 La Storia **Chardonnay**, Russian River Valley (\$28)

## BEST CHARDONNAY BLEND

Paddy Borthwick 2020 Paper Road **White Blend**, Gladstone, Wairarapa, New Zealand (\$23) LEVECKE CORP.

## BEST CHENIN BLANC

Maryhill Winery 2020 Proprietor's Reserve **Chenin Blanc**, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$28)

## BEST FRUIT WINE

WineHaven Winery and Vineyard NV **Raspberry Wine**, Minnesota (\$18)

## BEST HYBRID WHITE BLEND

Dancing Dragonfly Winery 2020 Calypso **White Blend**, USA (\$21)

## BEST ICE WINE

Inniskillin 2019 **Riesling Ice Wine**, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$80) PARK STREET IMPORTS

## BEST ITALIAN WHITE VARIETAL

MandraRossa 2020 Costadune **Grillo**, Sicilia DOC, Italy (\$12)

## BEST MALBEC

Cellardoor Winery 2018 **Malbec**, USA (\$25)

## BEST MERLOT

Perrucci Family Vineyard 2019 Regan Vineyard **Merlot**, Santa Cruz Mountains (\$38)

## BEST OTHER ITALIAN RED & BEST IN SHOW RED WINE

Jeff Runquist Wines 2019 French Camp Vineyard **Lagrein**, Paso Robles (\$30)

## BEST PETITE SIRAH

Miro Cellars 2019 **Petite Sirah**, Dry Creek Valley (\$28)

## BEST PINOT GRIGIO

Sand Point Family Vineyards 2020 **Pinot Grigio**, California (\$12)

## BEST PINOT NOIR

El Pino Club 2019 Sea Floored **Pinot Noir**, Sta. Rita Hills (\$60)

## BEST PREMIUM BORDEAUX BLEND OVER \$25

Thumbprint Cellars 2017 **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Alexander Valley (\$52) SCOTT LINDSTROM-DAKE

## BEST PREMIUM NON-BORDEAUX BLEND OVER \$25

Wolf Mountain Vineyards 2016 Estate Grown **Claret Red Blend**, Dahlenoga Plateau, Georgia (\$48)

## BEST PRIMITIVO

Garré Vineyard & Winery 2018 **Primitivo**, Livermore Valley (\$34)

## BEST PROSECCO

La Marca NV Luminore **Prosecco**, DOC Veneto, Italy (\$33)

## BEST RED RHÔNE BLEND

Brecon Estate 2019 Haggis Basher **Red Blend**, Adelaida District AVA, Paso Robles (\$82)

## BEST RIESLING

Cellardoor Winery 2019 **Riesling**, USA (\$17)

## BEST ROSÉ BLEND

Once & Well 2021 Frankie's Garden **Rosé**, Margaret River, Australia (\$20) PARK STREET IMPORTS

## BEST RUBY PORT-STYLE

Grape Creek Vineyard **Port**, Texas (\$38)

## BEST SAKÉ

Brooklyn Kura 2021 Greenwood Kimoto Nama Chozo **Saké**, New York (\$45)

## BEST SANGIOVESE

Garré Vineyard & Winery 2018 **Sangiovese**, Livermore Valley (\$32)

## BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC

Whitehaven 2020 **Sauvignon Blanc**, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)

## BEST SHIRAZ

Zonte's Footstep 2018 Age of Enlightenment **Shiraz**, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$56) PARK STREET IMPORTS

## BEST SPANISH, ARGENTINE, PORTUGUESE WHITE & BEST IN SHOW WHITE WINE

Pardevalles 2020 **Alberin**, DO León, Spain (\$13)

## BEST SPANISH, PORTUGUESE, ARGENTINE RED

Helwig Winery 2016 **Graciano**, Shenandoah Valley (\$30)

## BEST SPARKLING ROSÉ

Scotto Family Wines NV **Brut Rosé**, California (\$15)

## BEST TAWNY PORT-STYLE, BEST FORTIFIED WINE & BEST IN SHOW

### DESSERT WINE

Mazuran's Vineyards Oak Aged Royal **30 Year Old Tawny Port**, Auckland, New Zealand (\$235) PARK STREET IMPORTS

## BEST TEMPRANILLO

Bodegas Arcano 2018 **Tempranillo**, Ribera del Duero, Spain (\$20) KRAYNICK & ASSOCIATES, INC

## BEST VARIETAL BLUSH WINE

Risata NV **Pink Moscato**, Provincia di Pavia, Italy (\$15)

## BEST VARIETAL ROSÉ, BEST ROSÉ

Inniskillin 2020 Reserve **Cabernet Franc Rosé**, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$21) PARK STREET IMPORTS

## BEST VIOGNIER

L.A. Cetto 2020 **Viognier**, Valle de Guadalupe, Mexico (\$23)

## BEST WHITE RHÔNE VARIETAL

Bethel Rd. Winery 2019 **Grenache Blanc**, Templeton Gap, Paso Robles (\$30)

## BEST ZINFANDEL

V. Sattui Winery 2019 Pilgrim Vineyard Old Vine **Zinfandel**, Lodi (\$40)



## DOUBLE GOLD WINNERS

Accomplice 2020 **Chardonnay**, California (\$15)

Acquiesce Winery 2020 Estate LODI RULES **Picpoul Blanc**, Mokelumne River, Lodi (\$28)

Acquiesce Winery 2020 Estate LODI RULES **Viognier**, Mokelumne River, Lodi (\$30)

Almquist Family Vintners 2018 Winemaker's Infatuation **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Yakima Valley, Washington (\$36)

Amisfield 2019 **Dry Riesling**, Central Otago, New Zealand (\$20) MISTARR IMPORTS

Aramis Vineyards 2005 Governor **Syrah**, McLaren Vale, Australia

BV v1narstvl a s. 2017 výběr z bobulí **Tramín červený**, Slovácká, Czech Republic (\$12)

Banshee 2019 **Pinot Noir**, Sonoma County (\$25)

Bargetto Winery 2019 Regan Vineyards Reserve **Pinot Noir**, Santa Cruz Mountains (\$45)

Bear Flag 2017 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, California (\$30)

Bodega Y Vinedos Maires S.L 2020 Ademan Carabizal **Tinta de Toro**, Carabizal, DO Toro, Spain (\$10) KRAYNICK & ASSOCIATES

Bodegas de Alberto NV **Dorado Verdejo**, DO Rueda, Spain

Bodegas Frutos Villar 2016 Calderona Reserva **Tempranillo**, DO Cigales, Spain (\$22) KRAYNICK & ASSOCIATES, INC

Bonpas 2020 Réserve de Bonpas **Red Blend**, Côtes-du-Rhône, France (\$13)

Browne Family Vineyards 2018 **Syrah**, Walla Walla, Washington (\$60)

Calabria Family Wines 2019 3 Bridges **Petite Sirah**, Riverina, Australia (\$25)

Cardwell Hill Cellars 2016 Estate Grown Monet Blocks **Pinot Noir**, Willamette Valley, Oregon (\$40)

Cat Amongst The Pigeons Fat Cat **Tawny**, Barossa, Australia (\$29) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Cellardoor Winery 2017 Iron Gate **Red Wine**, USA (\$33)

Cellardoor Winery 2020 Treasure **Blueberry Wine**, Maine (\$18)

Coastline 2019 Reserve **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$15)

Cycles Gladiator 2019 **Chardonnay**, California (\$12)

Durant Vineyards 2018 Dove **Pinot Noir**, Dundee Hills, Oregon (\$50)

Eco Terreno 2019 **Bordeaux Blend**, Alexander Valley (\$22)

English Newsom Cellars 2019 Steve & Cindy Newsom Vineyards **Picardan**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$22)

English Newsom Cellars 2019 Steve & Cindy Newsom Vineyards **Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$35)

Eyeris 2018 Oculus Vineyard **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa Valley (\$100)

Ferrari-Carano Vineyards & Winery 2019 **Chardonnay**, Sonoma County (\$25)

Florio Targa Marsala 2007 Riserva Semisecco **Marsala Superiore** DOC, Italy (\$20) DISARONNO INTERNATIONAL

Funasaka Brewery 2021 Yuzu Bay **Saké**, Japan (\$30) MARIN SAKE IMPORTS

Furthermore 2018 La Encantada Vineyard **Pinot Noir**, Sta. Rita Hills (\$55)

Ghost Pines 2018 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, California (\$23)

Hábanskê Sklepy 2020 pozdní sběr **Sauvignon**, Morava, Czech Republic (\$9)

Highlands 41 2019 Creston Highlands **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$15)

Hook Or Crook 2019 Reserve **Merlot**, Lodi (\$12)

Inniskillin 2019 Reserve **Riesling**, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$21) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Inniskillin 2019 Montague Vineyard **Chardonnay**, 4 Mile Creek, Canada (\$26) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Iwate Me Oshu-no-Ryu 2021 Junmai Daiginjo **Saké**, Iwate Prefecture, Japan (\$65) SUZUKI MARKETING, INC.

Izumibashi Yamada Juro **Junmai Daiginjo Umeshu Saké**, Kanagawa, Japan

J. Lohr 2018 Signature **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$100)

J. Lohr 2019 Los Osos **Merlot**, Paso Robles (\$15)

J. Lohr 2019 Fog's Reach **Pinot Noir**, Arroyo Seco (\$35)

Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate 2017 Grand Reserve **Meritage**, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$26) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Jacob's Creek Wines 2020 Classic **Merlot**, Australia (\$8) PERNOD RICARD USA LLC

Jefferson Vineyards 2019 Jefferson's Own Estate Reserve **White Wine**, Monticello, Virginia (\$40)

Laurel Glen Vineyard 2018 Counterpoint **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Sonoma Mountain (\$55)

Louis M. Martini Winery 2018 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa (\$42)

Maddalena Vineyard 2019 Estate Reserve **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$22)

Marqués de Cáceres 2020 **Verdejo**, Rueda, Spain (\$13)

Mazuran's Vineyards Oak Aged Royal **20 Year Old Tawny Port**, Auckland, New Zealand PARK STREET IMPORTS



# BRECON

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[ Double Gold Continued ]

McWilliams Limited Release Aged 25 Years **Muscat**, Australia (\$80)

Ménage à Trois 2020 **White Blend**, California (\$12)

Messina Hof Winery 2018 Paulo Limited Edition **Sagrantino**, Texas (\$60)

Miles From Nowhere 2021 **Rosé**, Margaret River, Australia (\$18) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Miles From Nowhere 2020 Best **Chardonnay**, Margaret River, Australia (\$32) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Navarro Vineyards 2020 **Chardonnay**, Anderson Valley (\$24)

Nichelini Winery NV Reserve El Tranvia Anton **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Napa Valley (\$52)

Penny's Hill 2019 Malpas Road Vineyard Cracking Black **Shiraz**, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$20) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Picchetti Winery 2018 Vino di Vicino **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, California (\$47)

Portfolio 2017 Limited Edition **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Napa Valley (\$165)

Prothro Family Wines 2018 Beckstoffer Melrose Signature Release **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa Valley (\$75)

Qupé Wine Cellars 2019 **Syrah**, Central Coast (\$20)

RAMONA Ruby Grapefruit **Wine Spritzer**, Italy (\$17) USA WINE WEST, LLC

RAMONA Meyer Lemon **Wine Spritzer**, Italy (\$17) USA WINE WEST, LLC

Robert Hall Winery 2020 Cavern Select **Grenache Gris**, Templeton Gap District, Paso Robles (\$28)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2018 Estate Alexander Valley **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Alexander Valley (\$28)

San Simeon 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$25)

San Simeon 2018 **Chardonnay**, Monterey (\$19)

Shadybrook Estate 2018 Cutters Reserve **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Napa Valley (\$80)

SŌTŌ NV Junmai **Saké**, Niigata, Japan (\$20) PARK STREET

Stanton Vineyards 2018 Oakville Estate **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa Valley (\$85)

Talbott Vineyards 2018 Sleepy Hollow Vineyard **Pinot Noir**, Santa Lucia Highlands (\$50)

Taylor Made 2019 **Shiraz**, Clare Valley, Australia (\$22) SEAVIEW IMPORTS

Taylor's 2019 Aldi Special Release **Shiraz**, Clare Valley, Australia (\$14) SEAVIEW IMPORTS

Thomas Goss 2020 **Shiraz**, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$15) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Tomevinos Selection 2016 Altos de San Clemente **Mencia**, DO Bierzo, Spain (\$15) KREYNICK & ASSOCIATES, INC

Tropical NV Lux **Mango Moscato**, Piedmont, Italy (\$22)

Ursa Vineyards 2015 Vinum Dulces Bourbon Barrel Aged **Souzão**, Sierra Foothills (\$50)

Wakefield 2019 St Andrews **Shiraz**, Clare Valley, Australia (\$50) SEAVIEW IMPORTS

Wakefield 2019 St Andrews **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Clare Valley, Australia (\$50) SEAVIEW IMPORTS

WineHaven Winery and Vineyard 2019 Lakeside **Chardonnay**, USA (\$25)

WineHaven Winery and Vineyard NV **Strawberry-Rhubarb Wine**, Minnesota (\$18)

Yellow Tail 2020 **Shiraz**, South Eastern Australia (\$7)

Znovin Znojmo 2017 výběr z cibéb **Tramín červený**, Znojemská, Czech Republic (\$13)

## GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

10,000 Hours 2019 **Syrah**, Red Mountain, Washington (\$35)

50th Parallel Estate 2019 Profile **Pinot Noir**, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$34) SCHENKER OF CANADA LTD.

7 Vines Vineyard 2019 **Marquette**, Minnesota (\$44)

Acquiesce Winery 2020 Estate LODI RULES **Bourboulenc**, Mokelumne River, Lodi (\$30)

Adega de Pegôes 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Portugal (\$15) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Almquist Family Vintners 2016 Weinbau Vineyard **Carménère**, Wahluke Slope, Washington (\$34)

Amador Cellars 2017 Estate **Tempranillo**, Amador County (\$32)

Amador Cellars 2019 Fields Family Vineyards **Barbera**, Amador County (\$32)

Antonio Mascaró 2018 Mas Miquel Rubor Aurorae **Sparkling Rosé**, Cava, Spain (\$20) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Antonio Mascaró 2014 Mas Miquel Cuvée Antonio Mascaró **Brut Naturee**, Cava, Spain (\$45) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Apothic 2019 **Red Blend**, California (\$14)

Aramis Vineyards 2006 Governor **Syrah**, McLaren Vale, Australia

Aramis Vineyards 2008 Governor **Syrah**, McLaren Vale, Australia

Aramis Vineyards 2007 Governor **Syrah**, McLaren Vale, Australia

Aravail 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Central Coast (\$12)

Arrington Vineyards 2020 Kinzley Reserve **Sauvignon Blanc**, USA (\$20)

Arrington Vineyards 2020 **Riesling**, USA (\$20)

Arrington Vineyards 2018 Encore **Ruby Port**, Tennessee (\$30)

Athenaeum 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa Valley (\$40)

BV v1narstvl a s. 2015 výběr z hroznů **Pinot Noir**, Slováká, Czech Republic (\$34)

BV v1narstvl a s. 2015 výběr z hroznů Reserva **Svatovavřinecké**, Slováká, Czech Republic (\$20)

BV v1narstvl a s. 2015 výběr z hroznů  
Reserva **Andre**, Slovácká, Czech  
Republic (\$20)

BV v1narstvl a s. 2018 výběr z hroznů  
Reserva **Gewürztraminer**, Slovácká,  
Czech Republic (\$16)

BV v1narstvl a s. 2019 pozdní sběr  
**Ryzlink rýnský**, Slovácká, Czech  
Republic (\$11)

BV v1narstvl a s. 2019 pozdní sběr  
**Ryzlink rýnský**, Slovácká, Czech  
Republic (\$11)

Baldassari 2018 **Pinot Noir**, Russian  
River Valley (\$52)

Balistreri Vineyards 2020 **Alicante  
Bouschet**, USA (\$34)

Ballard Lane 2019 **Sauvignon Blanc**,  
Central Coast (\$13)

Balletto Vineyards 2018 Estate **Pinot  
Noir**, Russian River Valley (\$29)

Bar Dog 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**,  
California (\$15)

Bar Dog 2019 **Pinot Noir**, California  
(\$15)

Bar Dog 2019 **Red Wine**, California  
(\$15)

Barefoot Cellars NV **Pink Moscato**,  
California (\$7)

Barefoot Cellars NV **Sauvignon Blanc**,  
California (\$7)

Barefoot Fruitscato NV **Mango**,  
California (\$7)

Barefoot Hard Seltzer **Pineapple**,  
California (\$2)

Barefoot Spritzer **Moscato**, California  
(\$7)

Barossa Valley Estate 2019 **Shiraz**,  
Barossa Valley, Australia (\$15) DELEGAT  
USA INC

Becker Vineyards 2019 Tallent Vineyard  
Reserve **Malbec**, Texas Hill Country,  
Texas (\$30)

Bending Branch Winery 2018 Lost  
Pirogue Vineyard **Tannat**, Texas Hill  
Country, Texas (\$65)

Bent Oak Winery 2019 Barrel Aged  
**Sauvignon Blanc**, Texas High Plains/  
Terry County, Texas (\$28)

Bent Oak Winery 2018 Reserve  
**Zinfandel**, Russian River Valley (\$50)

Bent Oak Winery 2018 Barrel Aged  
**Zinfandel**, Sonoma County (\$42)

Bianchi Winery 2019 Reserve Duality  
**Premium Red Blend**, Paso Robles  
(\$70)

Black Box Wines 2020 **Malbec**, USA  
(\$20)

Block & Barrel 2019 **Chardonnay**,  
Monterey County (\$17)

Block & Barrel 2019 **Red Blend**,  
Monterey County (\$17)

Bodegas Pinna Fidelis 2018 **Crianza**,  
DO Ribera del Duero, Spain (\$16)  
KRAYNICK & ASSOCIATES, INC

Bohemia Sekt 2017 jakostní šumivé  
víno Louis Girardot **Brut**, Morava,  
Czech Republic (\$20)

Bookcliff Vineyards 2019 **Cabernet  
Sauvignon**, Colorado (\$21)

Brassfield Estate Winery 2020 High  
Serenity Ranch **Chardonnay**, High  
Valley, Lake County (\$30)

Brecon Estate 2019 Estate Reserve  
**Petite Sirah**, Central Coast (\$78)

Brockenchack 2016 Jack Harrison  
Single Vineyard **Shiraz**, Barossa - Eden  
Valley, Australia (\$60) DODDS WINE  
IMPORTS

Brooklyn Kura 2021 Number Fourteen  
Junmai Ginjo Nama Nama **Saké**, New  
York (\$30)

Buena Vista Winery 2019 Stone Caves  
Angelz **Zinfandel**, Sonoma

Calabria Family Wines 2019 3 Bridges  
**Cabernet Sauvignon**, Barossa Valley,  
Australia (\$25)

Calabria Family Wines 2019 3 Bridges  
**Grenache**, Barossa Valley, Australia  
(\$25)

Calabria Family Wines 2019 3 Bridges  
**Shiraz**, Barossa Valley, Australia (\$25)

Calabria Family Wines NV Pierre  
d'Amour **Rosé**, Australia (\$18)

Calabria Family Wines NV Kings of  
Prohibition **Shiraz**, Australia (\$20)

Calabria Family Wines 2018 Pierre  
d'Amour **Syrah**, Australia (\$18)

Calcannia 2019 **Grenache Shiraz  
Mourvèdre**, Clare Valley, Australia  
(\$20) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Calchas 2017 **Cabernet Sauvignon**,  
Columbia Valley, Washington (\$22)

California ROOTS 2019 **Red Blend**,  
California (\$5)

Cameron Hughes 2018 Lot 797  
**Cabernet Sauvignon**, Mount Veeder,  
Napa Valley (\$39)



BEST OF SHOW  
2020 CHENIN BLANC  
Proprietor's Reserve



2019 Zinfandel  
Proprietor's Reserve  
2018 Petit Verdot  
McKinley Springs Vineyard

*Maryhill*  
WINERY

Showcasing the rich and diverse  
flavors of Washington state wine with  
passion, patience and balance.

3X WINERY OF THE YEAR  
3X WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR



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[ Gold Continued ]

Cameron Hughes 2018 Lot 846 **Cabernet Franc**, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$16)

Cannonball 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, California (\$15)

Canvas NV **Blanc de Blanc Brut**, Italy (\$30) FOLIO WINE CO.

Carol Shelton Wines 2018 Wild Thing **Zinfandel**, Mendocino County (\$20)

Castello di Izola 2019 **Sangiovese**, Rubicone IGT, Italy (\$28)

Castle Rock Winery 2020 **Pinot Noir**, Mendocino County (\$13)

Castoro Cellars 2019 Whale Rock Vineyard Reserve **Charbono**, Paso Robles (\$30)

Castoro Cellars 2020 Estate **Zinfandel**, Paso Robles (\$20)

Cellardoor Winery 2017 Aurora **Red Wine**, USA (\$32)

Cellardoor Winery 2019 Buoy White **White Wine**, USA (\$18)

Cellardoor Winery 2017 Sewell **Red Wine**, USA (\$25)

Chalk Hill Estate Winery 2020 **Sauvignon Blanc**, Chalk Hill (\$33)

Cinquain Cellars 2018 Nagengast Estate Vineyard **Syrah**, Paso Robles (\$60)

Cinquain Cellars 2018 Estate Petite Petite **Premium Red Blend**, Paso Robles (\$65)

Clarksburg Wine Company 2020 **Chenin Blanc**, Clarksburg (\$21)

Clayhouse Winery 2019 Adobe **Red Blend**, Paso Robles (\$18)

Clearwater Canyon 2019 Phinny Hill Vineyard **Carmenère**, Washington (\$32)

Coastline 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Central Coast (\$13)

Concoxon 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Monterey (\$30)

Convento Oreja 2019 **Crianza**, DO Ribera del Duero, Spain (\$35) KREYNICK & ASSOCIATES, INC

Coqueverie 2018 **Petite Sirah**, California (\$20)

Corner 103 2018 **Petit Verdot**, Alexander Valley (\$60)

Corner 103 2018 Inspiration **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Sonoma County (\$75)

Covert Wineworks 2020 Madison **Petit Manseng**, Virginia (\$29)

DANCIN Vineyards 2019 BRISE **Pinot Noir**, Oregon (\$42)

Dancing Dragonfly Winery 2020 Ballroom **Red Blend**, USA (\$20)

Davis Family Vineyards 2019 Alder Springs Cuvee Luke **White Blend**, Russian River Valley (\$32)

Davis Family Vineyards 2018 Rockpile Ridge **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Sonoma (\$65)

Davis Family Vineyards 2019 Santa Rosa Plains **Pinot Noir**, Russian River Valley (\$55)

Delirio 2019 **Red Blend**, Valle de Guadalupe, Baja California, Mexico (\$20) PARK STREET IMPORTS

D'Elissagaray 2017 Basque **Premium Red Blend**, California (\$35)

Doe Mill Vineyards 2018 Doe Mill Ridge **Zinfandel**, Sierra Foothills (\$18)

Domenico Winery 2016 **Zinfandel**, Amador County (\$39)

Dry Creek Vineyard 2020 **Sauvignon Blanc**, Dry Creek Valley (\$20)

Dry Creek Vineyard 2018 The Mariner **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Dry Creek Valley (\$50)

Duchman Family Winery 2020 Oswald Vineyard **Roussanne**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$26)

Duchman Family Winery 2019 Bingham Family Vineyards **Trebbiano**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$24)

Durant Vineyards 2018 **Extra Brut**, Dundee Hills, Oregon (\$60)

Dutcher Crossing Winery 2017 Proprietor's Reserve **Syrah**, Dry Creek Valley (\$35)

Dutcher Crossing Winery 2017 Kupferschmid **Red Blend**, Dry Creek Valley (\$42)

Eberle Winery 2020 Estate **Chardonnay**, Paso Robles (\$28)

Eberle Winery 2018 Vineyard Selection **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$26)

Eberle Winery 2019 Steinbeck Vineyard **Syrah**, Paso Robles (\$34)

Eco Terreno 2018 Lyon Vineyard River Bed **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Alexander Valley (\$60)

Edge of the Lake Vineyard 2020 Reddy Vineyards Tempetite **Tempranillo**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$40)

Edna Valley Vineyard 2020 **Pinot Grigio**, Central Coast (\$16)

Edna Valley Vineyard 2020 **Sauvignon Blanc**, Central Coast (\$16)

Effingham Manor Winery 2019 **Viognier**, Virginia (\$34)

Elephant in the Room 2021 Jumbo **Chardonnay**, Limestone Coast, Australia (\$11) PARK STREET

Farma Pálava s.r.o./Vican rodinné vinařství 2019 výběr z hroznů EDICE Karel Roden **Ryzlink rýnský**, Mikulovská, Czech Republic (\$16)

Farma Pálava s.r.o./Vican rodinné vinařství 2018 výběr z cibéb **Ryzlink vlašský**, Mikulovská, Czech Republic (\$16)

Ferrari-Carano Vineyards & Winery 2018 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Sonoma County (\$45)

Firehouse Wine Cellars 2020 Gravier Blanc **White Blend**, USA (\$45)

Flambeaux 2018 Flambeaux Vineyard **Zinfandel**, Dry Creek Valley (\$50)

Flavabom 2020 Vine Dried **Shiraz**, South Australia (\$18) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Four Vines Winery 2020 The Kinker **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$18)

Francis Ford Coppola 2018 Battle Family Vineyard Reserve **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Alexander Valley (\$62)

Francis Ford Coppola 2018 Archimedes **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Alexander Valley (\$120)

Francis Ford Coppola 2018 Director's Cut **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Sonoma County (\$25)

Funasaka Brewery 2021 Premium **Saké**, Miyamagiku Tokubetsu Junmai, Japan (\$35) MARIN SAKE IMPORTS

Funasaka Brewery 2021 Jingoro Limited Edition **Saké**, Japan (\$15) MARIN SAKE IMPORTS

Furthermore 2018 Gioia Vineyard **Pinot Noir**, Sonoma Coast (\$60)

Furthermore 2019 **Pinot Noir**, Russian River Valley (\$50)

Garemani Wines 2020 Single Vineyard **Merlot**, Paso Robles (\$60)

Garemani Wines NV **Rosé**, California (\$50)

Garemani Wines 2019 Single Vineyard Goodchild High 9 Vineyard **Pinot Noir**, Santa Maria Valley (\$60)

Garré Vineyard & Winery 2018 Profound Secret **Bordeaux Blend**, Livermore Valley (\$36)

Garré Vineyard & Winery 2018 **Cabernet Franc**, Livermore Valley (\$38)

Gary Farrell Winery 2018 Hallberg Vineyard **Pinot Noir**, Russian River Valley (\$55)

Gervasi 2020 Reserve **Aromella**, Ohio (\$26)

GFF 2020 **Zinfandel**, Lodi (\$17)

Ghost Pines 2018 Winemaker's Blend **Merlot**, California (\$20)

Gianelli Vineyards 2018 **Sangiovese Grosso**, Tuolumne County (\$26)

Grape Creek Vineyard 2019 Serendipity **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Texas (\$47)

Hall Ranch 2019 **Zinfandel**, Paso Robles (\$16)

Hamilton Cellars 2018 Bel Trammanto Estate **Cabernet Franc**, Red Mountain, Washington (\$40)

Heath Sparkling Wines 2019 Adoration **Rosé**, Texas (\$43)

Heath Vineyards 2018 Absolution **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Willow Creek District, Paso Robles (\$94)

HEAVENSAKE 2021 Regis Camus x Urakasumi **Junmai Ginjo Saké**, Japan (\$39) PARK STREET IMPORTS

HEAVENSAKE 2021 Regis Camus x Dassai **Junmai Daiginjo Saké**, Japan (\$85) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Helwig Winery 2019 Gold Country **Zinfandel**, Amador County (\$18)

Helwig Winery 2018 Gold Country **Barbera**, Sierra Foothills (\$18)

Hero of Zero 2021 Preservative Free **Shiraz**, South Australia (\$14) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Hester Creek Estate Winery 2019 Old Vine **Cabernet Franc**, Golden Mile Bench/Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$26) WINE GROWERS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Hindsight Vineyards 2019 **Chardonnay**, Napa Valley (\$32)

Hook Or Crook 2018 Reserve **Old Vine Zinfandel**, Lodi (\$12)

Idyll Wine Co. 2019 Arcadian **Shiraz**, Victoria, Australia (\$10) BEVERAGE SERVICES USA

Inniskillin 2019 **Sparkling Cabernet Franc Ice Wine**, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$120) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Inniskillin 2018 **Vidal Blanc Ice Wine**, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$80) PARK STREET IMPORTS

ITO Wines LLC 2020 Flores de Beco **50% Touriga Nacional 30% Syrah 20% Alicante Bouschet**, Alentejo, Portugal (\$19)

Iwamura 2021 Premium Nigori **Saké**, Onna Joshu Tokubetsu Honjozo Nigori, Japan (\$35) MARIN SAKE IMPORTS

Izumibashi Junmai Kimono Black Dragon Fly 2 Year Aged **Saké**, Kanagawa, Japan

J Vineyards & Winery NV **Cuvée**, California, USA (\$25)

J. Lohr 2017 Carol's Vineyard **Cabernet Sauvignon**, St. Helena, Napa Valley (\$60)

J. Lohr 2019 Seven Oaks **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$17)

J. Lohr 2017 STE **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Paso Robles (\$50)

Jacob's Creek Wines 2021 Dots **Moscato White**, Australia (\$8) PERNOD RICARD USA LLC

Jacob's Creek Wines 2019 Reserve Limestone Coast **Shiraz**, Limestone Coast, Australia (\$13) PERNOD RICARD USA LLC

Jacob's Creek Wines 2020 Classic **Shiraz**, Australia (\$8) PERNOD RICARD USA LLC

Jeff Runquist Wines 2020 Three Way Vineyard **Grenache**, Paso Robles (\$29)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2019 Silvaspoons Vineyard **Tannat**, Alta Mesa, Lodi (\$27)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2019 Shake Ridge Ranch **Tempranillo**, Amador County (\$36)



Portfolio 2017 Limited Edition  
Premium Bordeaux Blend,  
Napa Valley

Contact:

**GENEVIÈVE JANSSENS**

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[ Gold Continued ]

Jeff Runquist Wines 2020 Liberty Oaks Vineyard **Tempranillo**, Jahant District, Lodi (\$28)

Jefferson Vineyards 2019 **Cabernet Franc**, Virginia (\$35)

Josh Cellars 2019 Reserve **Cabernet Sauvignon**, North Coast (\$21)

Jøyus Non-Alcoholic **Sparkling Rosé**, Central Valley (\$25)

Kaleidos 2018 Praying Mantis **49% Grenache, 44% Syrah, 7% Mourvedre**, Paso Robles (\$75)

Kinneybrook 2018 Reserve **Chardonnay**, Sonoma County (\$25)

Knotty Vines 2018 **Red Blend**, California (\$15)

Krondorf 2020 Founders View **Grenache**, Barossa, Australia (\$24) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Krondorf 2020 **Shiraz**, Barossa, Australia (\$19) PARK STREET IMPORTS

La Chertosa 2020 Eye of the Swan **Rosé**, Sonoma Valley (\$19) PARK STREET IMPORTS

La Marca 2020 **Prosecco Rosé**, DOC Veneto, Italy (\$19)

Laetitia 2019 Reserve du Domaine **Pinot Noir**, Arroyo Grande Valley (\$44)

Laetitia NV Récoltant Manipulant **Brut Rosé**, Arroyo Grande Valley (\$25)

Lake Chelan Winery 2018 M11 **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$65)

Lake Chelan Winery 2018 LCW **Malbec**, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$45)

LATERAL 2018 Organic Grape **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Napa Valley (\$50)

Lava Cap Winery 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Sierra Foothills (\$32)

Le Chemin du Roi NV Champagne Castelnan **Brut Champagne**, France (\$169) SHAW ROSS

Les Hauts de Lagarde 2020 Vegan Certified **White Wine**, AOC Bordeaux Blanc, France (\$15) WINC INC

Lillet 2021 **Blanc**, Bordeaux, France (\$20) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Lillet 2021 **Rosé**, Bordeaux, France (\$20) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Line 39 2020 **Chardonnay**, California (\$15)

Line 39 2019 **Pinot Noir**, California (\$11)

Line 39 2019 **Petite Sirah**, California (\$11)

Little Giant 2021 **Grenache**, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$16) PARK STREET

Llano Estacado Winery 2018 **Tempranillo**, Texas (\$14)

Lost Creek Winery 2019 Allure **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Loudoun County, Virginia (\$55)

Louis Bernard 2017 **Red Blend**, Côtes-du-Rhône, France (\$13)

Louis M. Martini Winery 2018 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Alexander Valley (\$38)

Maggie Malick Wine Caves 2020 **Albariño**, Loudoun County, Virginia (\$29)

Maggie Malick Wine Caves 2020 Reserva **Albariño**, Loudoun County, Virginia (\$32)

Maggie Malick Wine Caves 2020 **Sauvignon Blanc**, Loudoun County, Virginia (\$26)

Maggie Malick Wine Caves 2019 Tango **Petit Verdot Port**, Loudoun County, Virginia (\$42)

Malm Cellars 2016 Reserve **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa Valley (\$50)

Malm Cellars 2019 **Pinot Noir**, Russian River Valley (\$20)

MAN Family Wines 2021 Free Run Steen **Chenin Blanc**, Agter-Paarl, South Africa (\$12)

MAN Family Wines 2019 Bosstok **Pinotage**, WO Coastal Region, South Africa (\$12)

MandraRossa 2020 Secco Costadune **Zibibbo**, Sicilia IGT, Italy (\$18)

MandraRossa 2020 Costadune **Frappato**, Sicilia IGT, Italy (\$18)

Marchesi Vineyards 2019 Eridano **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$45)

Marchesi Vineyards 2019 **Sangiovese**, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$36)

Marisco Vineyards 2019 Leefield Station **Pinot Noir**, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20) VINOVA WINE GROUP

Martin Berdugo 2018 **Crianza**, DO Ribera del Duero, Spain (\$18) KRAYNICK & ASSOCIATES, INC

Martin Códax 2019 Ergo **Red Blend**, Spain (\$14)

Maryhill Winery 2018 McKinley Springs Vineyard **Petit Verdot**, Horse Heaven Hills, Washington (\$44)

Maryhill Winery 2018 Proprietor's Reserve **Zinfandel**, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$48)

Mazuran's Vineyards 2018 The Governor's Cellar **Merlot**, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand (\$29) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Mazuran's Vineyards 1981 **Vintage Port**, Auckland, New Zealand (\$443) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Mazuran's Vineyards 1977 **Vintage Port**, Auckland, New Zealand (\$455) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Mazuran's Vineyards 2011 **Vintage Port**, Auckland, New Zealand (\$310) PARK STREET IMPORTS

McManis Family Vineyards 2020 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Lodi (\$12)

McWilliams 2021 Alternis **Nero D'Avola**, Riverina, Australia (\$22)

McWilliams Aged 25 Years **Tawny**, Australia (\$80)

McWilliams Aged 10 Years **Tawny**, Australia (\$22)

Melrose Vineyards 2018 Estate Grown **Chardonnay**, Umpqua Valley, Oregon (\$25)

Ménage à Trois 2020 **Moscato**, California (\$12)

Ménage à Trois 2019 Decadence **Chardonnay**, California (\$14)

Ménage à Trois 2019 Midnight **Red Blend**, California (\$14)

Ménage à Trois 2019 California **Red Blend**, California (\$14)

Mettler Family Vineyards 2019 Estate Epicenter **Zinfandel**, Lodi (\$25)

Middle Sister NV Sweet & Savvy **Moscato**, California (\$12)

Mikami Vineyards 2019 **Zinfandel**, Lodi (\$39)

Milbrandt Vineyards 2018 Estate **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Wahluke Slope, Washington (\$27)

Milbrandt Vineyards 2017 Northridge Vineyard **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Wahluke Slope, Washington (\$45)

Milbrandt Vineyards 2018 Sentinel **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Wahluke Slope, Washington (\$50)

Mirassou Winery 2020 **Pinot Grigio**, California (\$12)

Mission Hill Family Estate 2019 Reserve **Merlot**, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$28) MARK ANTHONY BRANDS

Mission Hill Family Estate 2020 Reserve **Pinot Gris**, Okanagan Valley BC VQA, Canada (\$22) MARK ANTHONY BRANDS

Molon Lave Vineyards 2014 **Ruby Port**, Fauquier County, Virginia (\$48)

Molon Lave Vineyards 2018 **Chambourcin**, Fauquier County, Virginia (\$39)

Mr. Riggs 2020 The Gaffer **Shiraz**, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$25) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Mt. Defiance Cidery & Distillery NV **Sweet Vermouth**, USA (\$32)

Nami 2021 Junmai Gingo **Yamada Nishiki**, Culiacan Sinaloa, Mexico (\$40) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Navarro Vineyards 2020 Estate Bottled **Gewürztraminer**, Anderson Valley (\$24)

New Clairvaux Vineyard 2020 St. James Block **Viognier**, Tehama (\$18)

Noble Ridge Vineyard & Winery 2018 Reserve **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Okanagan Falls, Canada (\$50)

Oak Crest Vineyard & Winery 2020 Estate Grown **Malbec**, Lodi (\$35)

Okapi NV Proprietor's Blend Alkimmy **Red Blend**, Napa Valley (\$48)

OKO 2020 Organic **Pinot Noir**, Languedoc-Roussillon, France (\$14)

Opaque 2017 **Red Blend**, Paso Robles (\$30)

Paso Point 2019 Lot 72 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Paso Robles (\$30)

Pedernales Cellars 2019 Reserve **Viognier**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$40) GILLESPIE COUNTY

Pedernales Cellars 2018 **Newseaux**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$50)

Pedroncelli Winery 2018 Faloni Vineyard Courage **Zinfandel**, Dry Creek Valley (\$36)

Picchetti Winery 2019 Cedar Lane **Merlot**, Arroyo Seco (\$43)

Platinum Crush 2018 Stagecoach Reserve **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa Valley (\$100)

Ponting Wines 2018 366 **Shiraz**, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$125) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Pontotoc Vineyard 2020 Enchanted Rock **Albariño**, Gillespie County, Texas (\$30)

Poplar Grove Winery 2018 **Cabernet Franc**, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$35) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Prophecy 2020 High Priestess **Sauvignon Blanc**, New Zealand (\$14)

PureCru 2017 Purety White Meritage **Sauvignon Blanc/Sémillon**, Napa Valley (\$30)

Qutori Wines 2019 **Syrah**, Colorado (\$30)

Rack & Riddle Winery NV Unruly **Brut**, California (\$18)

Raffaldini Vineyards & Winery 2019 Swan Creek **Montepulciano Riserva**, Swan Creek, North Carolina (\$37)

Red Phoenix 2018 **Red Blend**, California (\$25)

Red Phoenix 2017 Rubeus **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Napa Valley (\$60)

Replica 2018 Misbehaved **Pinot Noir**, California (\$16)

Rios Wine Company 2017 Single Vineyard **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa Valley (\$65)

Risata 2020 **Moscato Bianco di Canelli**, Asti, Piedmont DOCG, Italy (\$15)

Risata NV **Red Moscato**, Pavia, Italy (\$15)

Risata NV **Sparkling Rosé**, Veneto, Italy (\$15)

Robert Hall Winery 2019 Cavern Select **Cabernet Franc**, Estrella District, Paso Robles (\$55)

Robert Hall Winery 2018 Cavern Select **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Adelaida District, Paso Robles (\$50)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2018 Estate, Old Vines **Zinfandel**, Sonoma County (\$25)

Ron Yates 2018 Lost Draw Vineyards **Tempranillo**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$34)

Rowen Wine Co. 2017 **Red Wine**, Sonoma County (\$60)

Russian Ridge Winery 2018 Concerto **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Santa Cruz Mountains (\$36)

Samuel Lindsay 2019 The Gandy Dancer **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Lodi (\$25)

San Juanito 2020 Amanecer **Malbec**, Valle de Bernal, Mexico (\$9) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Scotto Family Wines NV **Brut**, California (\$15)

Sean Minor 2020 4B **Chardonnay**, Central Coast (\$16)

Sebastiani 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, North Coast (\$18)

Sebastiani 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Alexander Valley (\$45)

Secret Cellars 2019 **Pinot Noir**, Central Coast (\$19)

Seifried 2021 Nelson **Sauvignon Blanc**, New Zealand (\$14) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Shiloh Road 2020 **Chardonnay**, Sonoma County (\$24)

Shottesbrooke 2018 Reserve Series The Proprietor **Red Blend**, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$60) SHOTTESBROOKE USA

Shroud Mountain 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, California (\$18)

Sidewood Estate 2018 Stable Mate **Shiraz**, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$22) EPICUREAN WINES

Silver Ghost Cellars 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Napa Valley (\$35)

Silver Springs Winery LLC NV Don Giovanni Wines Tri-dition Zion **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, New York (\$37)

Silver Springs Winery LLC NV Don Giovanni Wines **Riesling**, New York (\$32)

Silver Swallows 2020 **White Zinfandel**, California (\$25)

Single Oak Vineyard 2020 **Chardonnay**, California (\$25)

Spicewood Vineyards 2019 Dutton Vineyards Black Label **Tempranillo**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$34)

Spicewood Vineyards 2017 El Guey **Red Blend**, Texas High Plains, Texas (\$34)

[ Gold Continued ]

Starborough 2020 **Sauvignon Blanc**, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$15)

Stoneleigh 2021 Organic **Sauvignon Blanc**, Marlborough, New Zealand

Sutter Home Winery NV **Pink Moscato**, California (\$8)

Tehachapi Winery 2019 Zabata Vineyard **Sauvignon Blanc**, Arroyo Seco (\$28)

Tehachapi Winery 2019 **Malbec**, Paso Robles (\$33)

Terra d'Oro 2020 **White Blend**, Clarksburg (\$16)

Terra d'Oro 2020 **Pinot Grigio**, Clarksburg (\$16)

The King's 2019 A Sticky End **Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc**, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$24) VINOVA WINE GROUP

The Mission Central Coast 2019 **Pinot Noir**, Santa Margarita Ranch, Paso Robles (\$30)

The Storm Cellar 2020 Estate Vineyard Field Blend **White Wine**, West Elks, Colorado (\$25)

Theopolis Vineyards 2019 Estate Grown **Petite Sirah**, Yorkville Highlands (\$40)

Theopolis Vineyards 2020 **Pinot Noir**, Yorkville Highlands (\$45)

Thick Skin 2020 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Lodi (\$17)

Three Thieves 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, California (\$11)

Thurston Wolfe 2018 Upland Vineyard Conglomerate **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Snipes Mountain, Washington (\$30)

Tomich Wines 2021 **Pinot Grigio**, Woodside Vineyard, Australia (\$25)

Tropical NV **Blueberry Moscato**, Piedmont, Italy (\$18)

Trump Winery 2019 New World Reserve **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Monticello, Virginia (\$54)

Trump Winery 2015 Reserve **Brut**, Monticello, Virginia (\$80)

Trump Winery 2018 Meritage **Premium Bordeaux Blend**, Monticello, Virginia (\$28)

Tsillan Cellars 2020 Estate Reserve **Chardonnay**, Lake Chelan, Washington (\$36)

Twin Rocks Estate Vineyard and Winery 2019 **Grenache Blanc**, Sierra Foothills (\$38)

Two Bad Labs Vineyard 2020 Lindsay Creek Unfiltered **Sémillon**, Lewis-Clark Valley, Washington (\$20)

Urso Vineyards 2018 **Souzão**, Sierra Foothills (\$32)

V. Sattui Winery 2018 Morisoli Vineyard **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Rutherford, Napa Valley (\$98)

V. Sattui Winery 2019 Entanglement **GSM**, Napa Valley (\$44)

V. Sattui Winery 2019 Ramazzotti Vineyard **Zinfandel**, Dry Creek Valley (\$46)

V. Sattui Winery 2019 **Grenache**, Napa Valley (\$38)

V. Sattui Winery 2019 **Chardonnay**, Napa Valley (\$38)

V. Sattui Winery 2019 Boonville Ranch **Riesling**, Anderson Valley (\$29)

Valdecuevas 2020 Finca La Pardina Valdecuevas Cuvée **Verdejo**, DO Rueda, Spain (\$23) TOROS & VINOS, LLC

Vinařství Gotberg 2019 pozdní sběr **Tramín červený**, Mikulovská, Czech Republic (\$10)

Vinařství Gotberg 2019 pozdní sběr **Sylvánské zelené**, Mikulovská, Czech Republic (\$10)

VINARSTVÍ LACINA 2020 Ovocné víno **Marhulové Pohlazení**, Velkopavlovická, Czech Republic (\$13)

Vinařství Štěpán Maňák NV výběr z hroznů **Rulandské modré**, Mikulovská, Czech Republic (\$17)

Vinné Sklepy Lechovice 2019 pozdní sběr **Ryzlink rýnský**, Znojemská, Czech Republic (\$9)

Vinos for Chinos 2020 **Grenache**, South Australia (\$19) PARK STREET IMPORTS

VJB Cellars 2018 **Barbera**, Sonoma Valley (\$44)

VJB Cellars 2017 Estate **Aglianico**, Sonoma Valley (\$52)

Wakefield 2020 Jaraman **Chardonnay**, Clare Valley/Margaret River, Australia (\$22) SEAVIEW IMPORTS

Weisinger Family Winery 2018 Peter William Vineyard **Malbec**, Rogue Valley, Oregon (\$38)

Wellington Cellars 2018 Estate 1882 **Zinfandel**, Sonoma Valley (\$34)

Whale Light 2020 **Pinot Gris**, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$21)

Wild Goose Vineyards 2020 **Riesling**, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$18) SCHENKER OF CANADA LTD.

William Hill Estate 2019 **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Central Coast (\$17)

William Hill Estate 2019 **Merlot**, Central Coast (\$17)

Wine Cube NV **Sauvignon Blanc**, California (\$17)

WineHaven Winery and Vineyard 2018 **Nokomis**, Minnesota (\$40)

WineHaven Winery and Vineyard NV Stinger **Mead**, Minnesota (\$18)

Wish Big 2020 **Rosé Procecco**, Veneto DOC, Italy (\$14)

Wollersheim Winery 2020 Dry **Riesling**, USA (\$11)

Yellow Tail NV Big Bold **Red Bordeaux Blend**, South Eastern Australia (\$7)

ZD Wines 2020 **Chardonnay**, California (\$42)

Znovin Znojmo 2020 VOC ZNOJMO **Veltlínské zelené**, Znojemská, Czech Republic (\$8)

Znovin Znojmo 2020 pozdní sběr **Ryzlink rýnský**, Znojemská, Czech Republic (\$8)

Zonte's Footstep 2019 Blackberry Patch **Cabernet Sauvignon**, Fleurieu, Australia (\$22) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Zonte's Footstep 2019 Canto **Sangiovese**, Fleurieu, Australia (\$22) PARK STREET IMPORTS

Zonte's Footstep 2019 Lake Doctor **Shiraz**, Langhorne Creek, Australia (\$22) PARK STREET IMPORTS





*The Man Behind the Brand*



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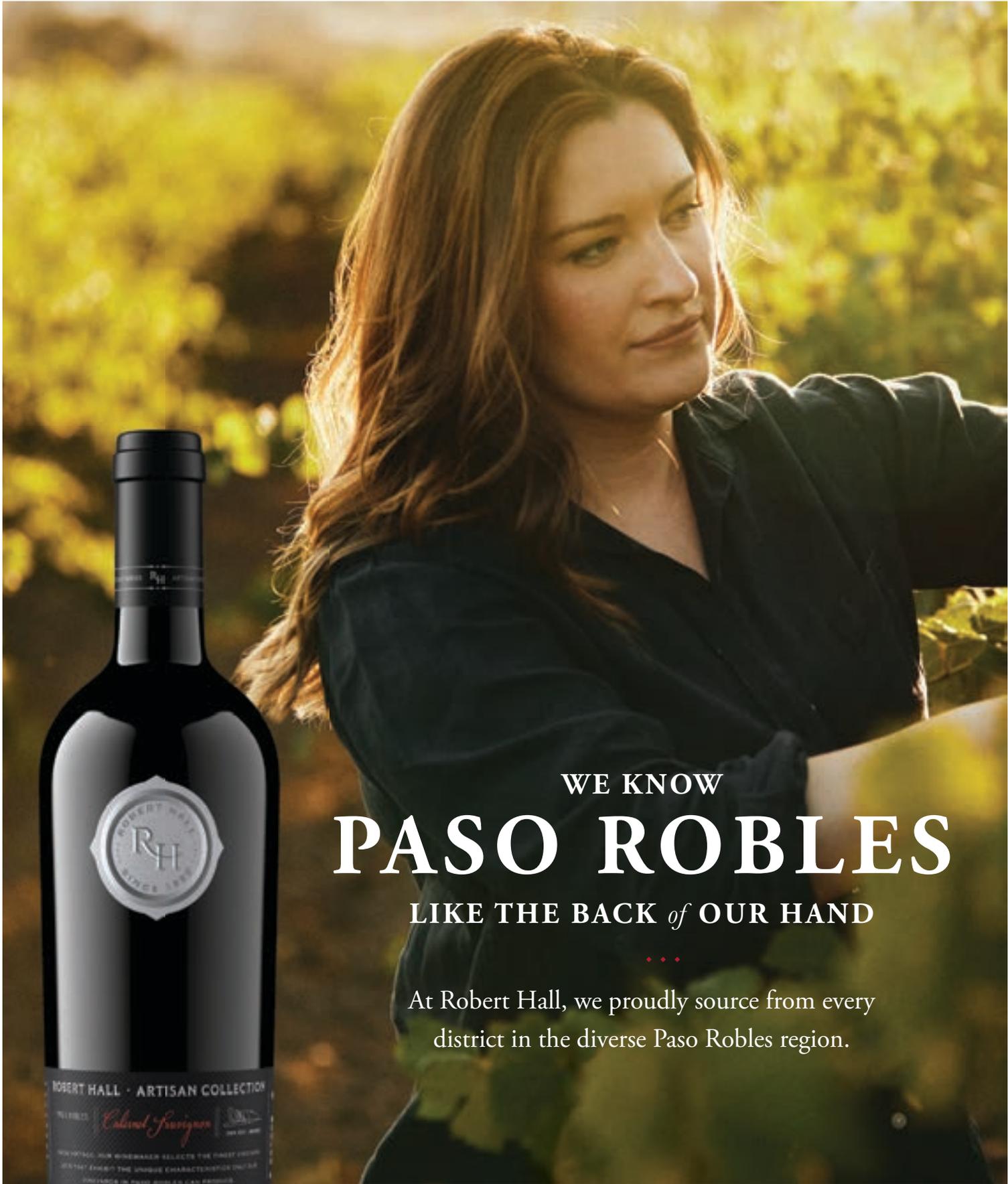
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WE KNOW

# PASO ROBLES

LIKE THE BACK *of* OUR HAND



At Robert Hall, we proudly source from every district in the diverse Paso Robles region.

**ROBERT HALL WINERY**  
*Featuring Winemaker Amanda Gorter*

The AVAs of Paso Robles ADELAIDA DISTRICT | CRESTON DISTRICT | EL POMAR DISTRICT | PASO ROBLES ESTRELLA DISTRICT | PASO ROBLES GENESEO DISTRICT | PASO ROBLES HIGHLANDS DISTRICT | PASO ROBLES WILLOW CREEK DISTRICT | SAN JUAN CREEK | SAN MIGUEL DISTRICT | SANTA MARGARITA RANCH | TEMPLETON GAP DISTRICT

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