

■ THE SOMMELIER JOURNAL

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# THE **SOMM** JOURNAL

## SLEEPY HOLLOW 2.0

ON HALLOWED GROUND,  
**TALBOTT VINEYARDS**  
SOWS THE SEEDS FOR  
THE FUTURE

PHOTO COURTESY OF TALBOTT VINEYARDS

# DON'T WASTE THIS WHISKEY

As seen in  
Gary Allan's music video  
"Waste of a Whiskey Drink"



**Weed**  
—OAK CELLARS—

*Straight Bourbon Whiskey*  
91 proof



A stylized signature of Gary Allan in white ink.

# THE SOMM JOURNAL

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THE *Good*  
EARTH

**WENTE VINEYARDS'**  
FOCUS ON  
SUSTAINABILITY  
STARTS FROM THE  
GROUND UP

*by Kelly Magyarics*

*Bud break on a Cabernet vine  
in Wente's Sachau Vineyard in  
the Livermore Valley.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF WENTE VINEYARDS

## as the only California

Certified Sustainable winery in the Livermore Valley, Wente Vineyards roots its winegrowing philosophy in respect for the soil—which, according to senior viticultural and vineyard manager Niki Wente, demands a holistic approach. “For me, the term means ‘do no harm,’ having everything be in better shape after I leave it,” she says. “I want my soil as well as my neighbors, animals, native vegetation, employees, and colleagues to be happy.”

Wente Vineyards was founded in 1883, making it the oldest continuously operated family-owned winery in the U.S. The company began working with the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance to help develop its guidelines and program back in 2001, and in 2010 both the vineyards and winery were certified sustainable. Since then its team has constantly moved the needle forward, tirelessly working each year to not only maintain the certification but improve upon it.

In aiming not just to do more but to do better, Wente is following in the footsteps of her father, Phil, who oversaw the vineyards before her. Now she manages two teams of tractor operators—the winery has begun purchasing electric vehicles to replace those fueled by gasoline or diesel—as well as a team of viticulturists for the winery’s 2,200 acres under vine, which are planted to 28 varieties. No day is ever the same: Some days she’s glued to her laptop or in meetings, while others she heads out to the vineyards to inspect the pruning and other operations. But her overarching goal is to help create, communicate, and execute the block-by-block farming plan for a successful harvest—which you just can’t have without healthy soil.



PHOTO: STEPHANIE RUSSO

Wente Vineyards senior viticultural and vineyard manager Niki Wente.

“I WANT MY SOIL AS WELL AS MY NEIGHBORS, ANIMALS,  
NATIVE VEGETATION, EMPLOYEES, AND COLLEAGUES

to be happy.”

—NIKI WENTE

Luckily, she points out, the Livermore Valley is blessed in that regard. Comprised mainly of coarse gravel and loam, soils here aren't prone to pests like nematodes, nor are they nutrient poor, so the liberal use of chemical fertilizers to supplement compost and gypsum isn't required. "We're very fortunate," Wente adds. "We don't have too many issues compared to other regions, like leaf roll or mealybugs in Monterey or Pierce's disease in Napa and Sonoma."

Wente is a firm believer in several practices that preserve and protect the soil, including multitasking operations like mowing or pre-pruning concurrently with spraying sulfur dust as fungicide. "The more passes you can combine, the less [frequently] you're driving a tractor through the vineyard and compacting the soil," she says. "It's also better for the environment as less CO<sub>2</sub> is released into the atmosphere."

She also touts the winery's no-till system, which keeps carbon in the soil and encourages the growth of native vegetation that's home to beneficial insects that eat

pests and suppress noxious weeds. "When you till the soil, you allow all these different seeds to germinate into some pretty gnarly weeds that can be really hard to kill," Wente explains. "The more you allow native grasses to thrive, the fewer inputs you'll need to do." The team also recently welcomed sheep into 300 of its vineyard acres for a three-week trial run, as grazing can lessen or even eliminate the need for mowing and herbicides—though the animals must be monitored closely as they can also cause damage to drip systems.

Inextricably tied to vineyard health, water is indeed one of California's most valuable resources; since rainfall here is minimal (20 inches in a good year, 7 inches in a bad one), most of the water in the Livermore Valley is sourced from the South Bay Aqueduct, constructed in 1960. Once it arrives at Wente Vineyards, it's delivered to the soil via irrigation systems that aim to maximize results while minimizing use. In 2010, sensors were placed on some vines to measure the sap flow from root to leaf as well as deter-

mine when plants stopped releasing liquid, a process known as evapotranspiration. The timing and volume of irrigation were then modified, increasing duration but decreasing frequency, and set to occur at nighttime to ensure less evaporation. The final combination of variables resulted in fruit that met quality standards with only a 5% decrease in yields from the typical five-year average. In short, according to Wente, the new schedule has helped to reduce the amount of total irrigation time in keeping with the plant's exact needs.

In addition to optimizing irrigation, Wente Vineyards' viticulturists are constantly looking at methods to improve the quality and quantity of organic matter in the soil, including via natural-based fertilizers. They take 300 soil samples every December and January and then compost according to their findings, balancing the micro- and macronutrients needed to make soils happy and healthy. They also take samples of petioles—the stalk that attaches the leaf to the stem—to make sure nutrient-hungry vines are not depleting soils.



*Julio Covarrubias is lead vineyard manager at Wente Vineyards, where he's worked for over 20 years.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF WENTE VINEYARDS

Within the last few years, Wente Vineyards began working with Novihum Technologies, which creates a range of stable humus concentrates designed to restore soil health and increase yields; one application is purported to last for ten years. When Novihum Argil was first launched in 2012, it was only available in a pre-planting format that required it to be buried in the hole in which the vine was being planted, but the California-based company recently released a version that can be spread like compost. Last year the Wente Vineyards team applied it to half of one of their top-performing Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards, which was suffering from topsoil washout and leaching due to its hillside location; gypsum was applied to the other half. While it's too early for conclusive results, the initial findings have been promising. "The problems were corrected and then some. If one application of a natural product actually lasts ten years, that would be pretty exciting," Wente says, noting that continuous monitoring will help determine the cost-benefit ratio of Novihum versus gypsum or compost.

The winery has also experimented with products from Urth Agriculture, including an organic fertilizer called The Nano-Ag Answer as well as The Pro-Tech Answer, a proprietary blend of natural electrolytes and sea kelp that assists with disease and pest resistance, balances pH levels, and enhances nutrient uptake in both the root and foliage. On a 35-year-old block of Cabernet Sauvignon vines that has struggled ever since it was converted from overhead sprinklers to drip irrigation ten years ago, the yields increased substantially; Wente says she's never seen the plants look healthier than since they began delivering Urth's fertilizer via the irrigation system.

Each grape variety responds differently to sustainability measures and soil variables. Wente calls Cabernet Sauvignon "a poster child for sustainable practices," happy to be left to its own devices and still produce berries with good color and structure as well as intense character. Chardonnay is susceptible to mildew but needs ample water to ensure berries reach their ideal size and the canopy is full enough. Petit Verdot, meanwhile, is a glutton that sucks nutrients from the soil, including magnesium and potassium; the answer to this problem lies in selecting



**Grazing sheep can lessen or even eliminate the need for mowing and herbicides.**

rootstock that will best adapt to the soil type, according to Wente, whether high salinity, clay, or sand. "We are constantly looking for different things that are beneficial to the soil and trying to figure out the best way to capture carbon and contain that in our soils," she says.

Wente believes that the future of viticultural sustainability is tied to regenerative farming, which focuses on conservation and rehabilitation through practices that include preserving biodiversity, improving the water cycle, recycling waste, and, of course, strengthening soil health and vitality. (Currently, 79% of Wente Vineyards' winery waste is recycled.) The winery has also

partnered with the Kiss the Ground Impact Fund, which aims to support farmers, ranchers, and land stewards around the globe in their efforts to transition to regenerative practices as well as to aid grassroots projects at the intersection of environmentalism and social justice; to that end, it donated 25 cents from each bottle of Wente Vineyards sold up to \$30,000 for 2021.

For her part, Wente anticipates that within a decade there will be a much greater—and more widespread—understanding of the concept of sustainability and its benefits, both within and outside of the industry. "As that word gets out, people will respect it more," she says. ❧

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# A Most Influential Man: Remembering Steven Spurrier

*“Every great man is an idol, an oracle of inquiry. Don’t aspire to know the former, but aspire to know the deity in his soul.”*

*—Michael Bassey Johnson, poet and philosopher*

PHOTO: RYAN STONE



Steven Spurrier was one of the organizers of the legendary 1976 Judgment of Paris competition pitting California wines against French wines. Our April 2016 cover celebrated the event’s 40th anniversary. Pictured second from left is Spurrier with journalist George Taber, winemaker Bo Barrett, and Ted Baseler, CEO of Ste. Michelle Wine Estates.

First and paramount on our minds is the passing of Steven Spurrier on March 9. He changed the perception of wine throughout the world and directly impacted the success of the California wine industry in particular with the Judgment of Paris competition in 1976, which he organized. As the onetime Paris wine merchant told us in our April 2016 cover story commemorating the legendary event’s 40th anniversary, “We intended to show the wines to get their quality recognized and have something to talk about. We were so blown away by the quality of California wines that something had to be done.”

Since 2014, Spurrier had served as our London correspondent, thanks to his longtime friendship with senior editor Anthony Dias Blue (see also page 20). In “Letter From London,” he reported on his tastings of some of the world’s most coveted wines—wines that very few of us ever have the fortune to try but were able to experience through him; he also regaled us with tales of his incredible career in “The Wine Observer.” He will further be remembered for founding the first independent wine school in France, L’Académie du Vin, and, more recently, the Académie du Vin Library publishing group as well as Bride Valley Vineyard in Dorset, England, with his wife, Bella.

We’re reeling from this news, but we remain inspired by his wisdom, his influence on our industry, and his quiet dignity, which touched our hearts. *sj*

Meridith May  
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

{ steven spurrier’s letter from london }

## The Judgment of Paris Revisited



Steven Spurrier, right, leads the original Judgment of Paris tasting in 1976.

PHOTO: BELLA SPURRIER/COURTESY OF GEORGE TABER



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# Back to Business

## MANAGING WINE PROGRAMS IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

**I TOTALLY GET SOMMELIERS WHO** feel the need to integrate their personal wine journeys into their employers' wine programs: The more you experience as a buyer, the more you learn. But I think everyone understands that, at least during what is hopefully the beginning of the end of pandemic restrictions, many restaurants will seek to manage their wine programs with some degree of fiscal responsibility.

Sure, there may be some pent-up consumer compulsion to spend—and spend big—but it will still take most of the restaurants that managed to survive the past year considerable time to mitigate their losses. If you can't manage a program under those circumstances, there's a good chance you'll be out of a job.

So how does a sommelier adjust to the economic climate of the next several years while overseeing competitive, compelling wine programs? Here are a few tried-and-true ways:

**Maintain low inventories of cutting-edge stuff:** The most expeditious approach involves adopting a smaller

program that consists of fewer than 200 selections at a time, amounting to a standing inventory as low as \$25,000–\$50,000. “Small,” of course, doesn't have to mean “severely limited.” The advantage of small wine lists has always been that you can easily rotate inventory, and changing pages every day—in the same way that a chef writes menus daily in order to offer new, imaginative dishes consisting of the freshest seasonal ingredients—is a snap.

If, say, you rotate in at least five wines each week on a list usually comprising about 150 selections, you are actually offering over 400 new wines each year. That's more than enough to keep your guests, your staff, and yourself up on the best and latest, especially if you make each selection count by strictly picking wines that enhance the concept of your restaurant and complement specific dishes. Which brings us to . . .

**Hone in on your menu:** For the most critically acclaimed and profitable restaurants, the only reputation that has ever really mattered is culinary: Guests go to restaurants to eat, and they happen to

drink wines while they're there. The most successful post-pandemic wine lists, then, probably won't be all-encompassing, consisting of wines that hail from every region of the world but have no real culinary purpose. Does a successful chef offer dishes to satisfy every craving, from hamburgers to miso-marinated black cod? Of course not. Sommeliers likewise need to keep a razor-sharp focus on what their restaurant does best—that is, signature dishes appealing to the guests' palates and imaginations.

**Promote yourself:** If commercial industries have learned anything from the pandemic, it's that revenue doesn't drive itself. The days of sommeliers who only stock cellars and open bottles are long gone. Building wine programs now involves conceiving lists and pairing menus, executing events and promotions, writing email newsletters and website posts, and telegraphing content with every image-driven application possible. Do not wait to be told what to do or how to do it. It's time to harness your strengths, individuality, and hard-earned knowledge and get to work. **sj**

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# Taking the Time to Taste

PHOTO: WANDA MANN



Col d'Orcia owner Count Francesco Marone Cinzano.

“People . . . seem to interpret wines in a different way, and maybe it’s also because they’re more relaxed. They tend to sense wine a lot better, and I think that’s important.”

—Count Francesco Marone Cinzano

**DON'T JUDGE ME** by the gallery of bottle shots on my Instagram feed and the line of 750s snaking through my Manhattan apartment: I've actually been drinking less wine during the pandemic. And I've never enjoyed it more.


Before COVID-19, my calendar, like that of most wine professionals, runneth over with tasting events; it wasn't uncommon for me to crisscross the Big Apple to attend several in one day. Sipping quickly before moving on from one portfolio tasting to the next, I would often return home feeling a bit disenchanted. Was this really the best way to taste wine?

Don't get me wrong; I miss the social aspect of our industry and the palpable energy that fills the room at such events. I've been introduced to many exceptional producers and met some fantastic people. But during this hiatus, I've had something that I desperately lacked before the pandemic: time. Time to open a bottle and experience its evolution in the glass. Time to return to a wine hours later and even the next day. By slowing down and drinking less, I began to notice that my tasting skills were improving as I detected aromas and flavors that had previously eluded me. I fell in love with wine all over again.

Of course, sharing wine is an essential part of the tasting experience, and I miss leisurely face-to-face encounters with fellow wine lovers; there's nothing like the real thing. But technology has made it possible for us to stay connected and share a glass through cyberspace. Zoom webinars and Instagram Live tastings have been a welcome escape when I didn't want to drink alone. I've particularly enjoyed the one-on-one virtual tastings I've had with producers, as they most closely capture the feeling of truly being together.

A few months ago, I interviewed Count Francesco Marone Cinzano, the owner of Col d'Orcia in Montalcino, on Instagram Live. Cinzano shared that he too misses travel and wine events, but he also noted that tasting at home has its benefits. "People . . . seem to interpret wines in a different way," said Cinzano, theorizing that they're less likely to be distracted by unfamiliar sensory inputs in their living rooms. "And maybe it's also because they're more relaxed. They tend to sense wine a lot better, and I think that's important."

I agree. I recently took my first sip of the newly released Col d'Orcia 2016 Brunello di Montalcino DOCG (\$59) during a Zoom tasting with Cinzano; in our leisurely conversation, we focused on the nuances of the wine and the circumstances that led to us toasting one another through our screens. After we signed off, I spent the rest of the day—and the next—tasting the wine and came to know it in a way I would never have had I quickly taken a few sips at an event. A classic and elegant expression of Brunello, it has a purity and grace that reflects Cinzano's wish to, in his words, "preserve what comes from the vineyard."

Trust me, I look forward to the day when visiting vineyards and socializing at events is more than just a Brunello-fueled daydream. But until then, I'm appreciative of the time I've had to focus on and treasure what's in my glass. 

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



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# B(l)oom Time

## FORGET ME NOT BREATHES NIGHTLIFE INTO A STAID DENVER NEIGHBORHOOD

**IF WHAT'S HAPPENING** here in Denver is any indication (see my December 2020 column on Honey Elixir Bar and Wildflower), botanicals seem to be a blooming bar trend. Perhaps it's a reflection of the extent to which we're all desperately yearning to breathe easy once again while making up for a year's worth of sensory deprivation: After all, says Nicole Lebedvitch, "Flowers are more than just flowers"—they're a colorful, fragrant symbol of rebirth, an eternal metaphor for natural vitality. And as operations partner and beverage director of Forget Me Not, she's strewing them and their fruits throughout her cocktail list accordingly.

It's a fitting motif for the Culinary Creative restaurant group's brand-new lounge, occupying as it does a former florist's shop in Cherry Creek—a neighborhood that, just like some flowers, tends to close up at night. "It's very quiet after 8 p.m.," Lebedvitch explains, "and we wanted to bring a little bit of nightlife to the area," giving not only residents an after-dinner option but "the industry a place to go after work."

The result welcomes them all into what she calls an "incredibly airy, bright" space centered around a long, three-sided bar; ample skylights, a shimmering golden chandelier, potted plants, and pops of color in the form of purple and crimson upholstery warm the white backdrop, while a front patio that nearly doubles total seating capacity beckons beneath a mural bearing the bar's name and image on the wall of the adjacent building. In the hour I spent there recently for a preview, I counted no fewer than 15 people—or about one every four minutes—crossing that patio to peer inside and ask about the grand opening; clearly, the locals were as enthusiastic about the prospects of Forget Me Not as Lebedvitch was.

Now that it's open, the industry-savvy among them might be even more thrilled



*On the patio at Forget Me Not in Denver's Cherry Creek neighborhood.*

upon learning of Lebedvitch's long tenure at what were, until their recent closures, two of Boston's most celebrated watering holes, Eastern Standard and The Hawthorne. That experience shows in the polish which with her cocktails are both conceived and executed. Of those I tried, perhaps my favorite was the Satine, which she described as "a different way to think about a rum cocktail": Flavored with guava, chocolate, and lime and topped with Prosecco, "it's playful, light, and refreshing but still [has] the complexity of spice." But I was also enamored with the vibrant, nonalcoholic Wanna-bee, combining Stappi Red Bitter soda with hibiscus honey, pineapple, and soda water.

Early front-runners among guests, meanwhile, are large-format drinks like



PHOTO: RUTH TOBIAS

*Featuring Santa Teresa 1796 Rum, the Satine also contains guava, chocolate, lime, and a Prosecco float.*



PHOTO: KAYLA JONES

*The Jimador's Blade combines reposado tequila and bison grass vodka with Sherry, coconut matcha, and lime.*

the Noon in Veneto, a tropical fruit-infused twist on the Aperol Spritz; served in vessels with spigots for pandemic-era safety, they're nonetheless a harbinger of hope for the less-distant socializing to come. So is chef-partner Max Mackissock's soiree-inspired selection of small plates: Rounding out salumi and cheese boards, retro relish trays, and caviar service are treats like Jonah crab toast, rich and juicy mini-lobster rolls, and luxe platters of imported tinned seafood accompanied by house-made crackers, herb salad, and swirls of Rodolphe Meunier butter.

Lebedvitch's own go-to is the Hill of Taganana, essentially a rum Old Fashioned designed to "take somebody [to a spot] overlooking a bay; it's escapism in every way." But once they've found sanctuary at Forget Me Not, I suspect most Denverites will be perfectly content to stop and smell the roses right here. **\$||**



# 100



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# Due North

## WRAPPING UP OUR WHIRLWIND TOUR OF THE CENTRAL COAST

### TO RECAP OUR FOUR-COLUMN

overview of the Central Coast of California and its 41 AVAs, we have so far visited Santa Barbara and San Luis counties, Paso Robles, Monterey, and Carmel Valley. Now it's time for a flyover tour of the 12 historic AVAs that stretch from Monterey County to the San Francisco Bay.

The massive **San Francisco Bay AVA**, established in 1996 and expanded in 2008, encompasses almost 1.5 million acres. It's known for high-quality fruit that varies by type according to its proximity to the influences of both the bay and the ocean—from Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the coolest areas to Barbera and Cabernet Sauvignon in the warmest. It contains four sub-AVAs, including the **Livermore Valley**, which is dominated by the multigenerational Wente and Concanon families, who have both been farming amazing Chardonnay for 140 years. A moderate climate, deep water supply from the Livermore Basin, and gravel-based soil all facilitate the production of excellent Petite Sirah, Cabernet, Syrah, and Zinfandel, among other grapes. Home of viticultural pioneer Paul Masson, the **Santa Clara Valley AVA** itself contains the region's other two sub-AVAs: **Pacheco Pass** and the **San Ysidro District**. Vineyards are concentrated around Morgan Hill, Gilroy, the Santa Cruz Mountains, and the Diablo Range. Pinot Noir and Chardonnay thrive in the cooler coastal climes, while warmer areas are planted to Italian varieties like Zinfandel (aka Primitivo) and Sangiovese as well as Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, and Petite Sirah.

San Benito County contains some of California's most dynamic vineyards, all within five closely nestled AVAs from south to north: **Paicines**, **Lime Kiln Valley**, **Mount Harlan**, **Cienega Valley**, and

*The 41 AVAs of the Central Coast represent wildly differing soil types and climate zones that can be cool enough for Pinot Noir yet hot and arid enough for Tempranillo and Zinfandel.*

**San Benito.** The area is defined by a gap to the Pacific through the Gabilan Range and the Santa Lucia Mountains as well as a long history of winegrowing marked by the founding of Almaden Vineyards in 1852 and what is perhaps the state's oldest Pinot Noir planting at Eden Rift Vineyards in 1849. Averaging 2,000 feet in elevation, Mount Harlan was established by Josh Jensen and Calera Wine Company in 1990 to become world famous for its rare limestone soils and ageworthy single-vineyard Pinot Noirs. Lime Kiln is known for its wide diurnal temperature shifts (up to 50 degrees) and the Mourvèdre and Zinfandel it grows on marine-based and gravelly loam soils.

Finally we arrive at two of my favorite appellations: **Santa Cruz Mountains** and **Ben Lomond Mountain**. From 400 feet in elevation on the west end to over 3,000 feet on its highest peak, the former

has produced some of the greatest wines in California history, with David Bruce Winery and Ridge Vineyards breaking the top ten at the infamous Judgment of Paris tasting in 1976. The latter is a sub-AVA that was first planted 160 years ago; in its unique climate and soils, both Burgundian and Bordeaux varieties thrive.

To summarize: The 41 AVAs of the Central Coast represent wildly differing soil types and climate zones that can be cool enough for Pinot Noir yet hot and arid enough for Tempranillo and Zinfandel. The proximity of the Pacific Ocean, with her precious fog and breezes, proves to be a defining feature, as does the orientation of the hills and mountains that lie between the vineyards and the sea. From Monterey County to the San Francisco Bay, this 325-mile swath of wine country delivers affordable pleasures that beg to be explored and celebrated. **SJ**



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# A Tribute to Steven Spurrier

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTHONY DIAS BLUE



*The author, left, with Steven Spurrier.*

*I was just starting off as a wine writer, while Steven was fresh off the international triumph of his famed Judgment of Paris tasting. I was in awe, but he treated me with courtesy and kindness. That was Steven—always generous and attentive to others.*

by Anthony Dias Blue

**I FIRST MET STEVEN SPURRIER** in 1977 at a wine event held at a restaurant in New York's Midtown. I was just starting off as a wine writer, while Steven was fresh off the international triumph of his famed Judgment of Paris tasting. I was in awe, but he treated me with courtesy and kindness. That was Steven—always generous and attentive to others.

Over the years we saw each other often—at other events, at judgings—and then, for 13 years, we were consultants together for Singapore Airlines. During that time we met twice annually for a week in Singapore. Along with the third consultant, Australian Master of Wine Michael Hill Smith, we made a supreme effort to dine at every good restaurant in that food-obsessed city. We failed but had a great time trying. Every night we would meet in the hotel lobby and set off on a new adventure. Some places were extremely elegant; others were tiny four-table joints serving only one dish. But no matter where we were headed, Steven always wore a suit. He was, after all, a very proper English gentleman.

After our nightly forays, I often tried to convince him to join me in a fine single malt back at the hotel. He wasn't at all interested and would order a glass of wine instead, even though we had been drinking wine all evening. Such was his obsession. What's more, like his dress and manners, his tasting technique was meticulous. His assessments were accurate, intelligent, and consistent. We rarely disagreed, but when we did, the discussion was lively and erudite. (He usually won.)

In early 2019, I visited with Steven and his delightful wife, Bella, in Devon. The Spurriers had a farm there, and Steven—who over the years had sold wine, written about wine, tasted wine, judged wine, and consulted on wine—was, with a little help from climate change, finally able to make wine. He proudly presented his Bride Valley Brut, a charming and sophisticated sparkler—just like its maker.

The last time I saw him was November 2019, when he came to serve as chief judge at the San Francisco International Wine Competition. For three days, it was like old times in Singapore. We tasted, we laughed, we ate, and we drank. Then he returned to the U.K., and not long after came the somber note saying something vague about “declining health.”

The wine world has lost an articulate proponent; I have lost a dear and irreplaceable friend. S|

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PICTURED: 4<sup>TH</sup> & 5<sup>TH</sup> GENERATION LEADERS OF THE WENTE FAMILY

# Peter Molinari

OPERATIONS MANAGER, DOMAINE STORAGE, NAPA, CA by Michelle M. Metter

PHOTO: ADAM YOUNG



**BASED IN NAPA, CALIFORNIA,** sommelier Peter Molinari spends his days serving as operations manager of Domaine Storage, working toward his WSET Diploma, and juggling fatherhood. We checked in with him to get his perspective on the rigors of the past year and on the industry's prospects in 2021.

**Q: What drew you to the wine industry?**

I grew up on a vineyard in St. Helena that has been in my family since 1899. I initially had little interest in the wine business but decided to give it a shot after leaving my career as a hotelier in 2010. Once I began my tenure in the wine industry, I was immediately captivated by how limitless the learning potential was and knew that, no matter how much I dedicated myself to the world of wine, I could never learn everything, which was both daunting and incredibly appealing. Knowing that I required a clear direction in which to study, I began taking courses with WSET in 2013. After a few years in a number of roles with Frog's Leap Winery, I craved broader exposure to the world of wine and joined Domaine in 2016. Every day is a little bit different with no shortage of opportunity, and the connection to such a passionate client base keeps it fresh.


**Q: What are you doing to keep your skills sharp?**

The world of wine is rooted in history but thrives on innovation, so keeping up with current trends [and] up-and-coming producers [while] constantly tasting through new and old wines has been critical. The best thing about wine is how much you can learn from every glass.

**Q: How has the past year affected your business? What do you see in terms of the potential of the year ahead?**

In 2020, Domaine experienced a burst of new and existing client activity. With more of our clients staying home or relocating, they leaned on us to continue to expand our network and fine-tune our suite of services. Between navigating the secondary market, storing and managing collections at our network of nationwide facilities, and assisting in home cellar organization and relocation, we were able to customize and deliver solutions for our clients' wine collections so that they could spend more time enjoying them. Continued growth is the theme for 2021, and we will be driving that initiative by opening a Domaine facility in south Florida that will include a refrigerated pickup and delivery network to cover the bulk of the state. How we continue to connect with our wine community will be another area of potential for us as we look forward to (hopefully) getting our clients and industry partners together again in our facility lounges.

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

Jacques Selosse Substance Blanc de Blancs Champagne with [bassist] Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The brilliance of that wine would be the only thing to keep me grounded for what I'm sure would otherwise be a completely chaotic and entertaining conversation. 

*San Diego-based wine journalist Michelle 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.*

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- SEPT. 2019

94  
POINTS

THE TASTING  
PANEL  
- NOV. 2020

95  
POINTS

THE TASTING  
PANEL  
- JAN./FEB. 2021

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# So You Want to Build a Wine List . . .

**I FIND IT CURIOUS** that sommeliers who have never built a wine program are often tasked with doing so for restaurant openings. Imagine a construction worker who knows all about framing, drywall, and plumbing trying to design a house from the ground up. No matter how much they might know about construction, if they've never learned how to properly draft plans and manage logistics and contractors, it's unlikely they'll ever achieve success. Similarly, all the wine knowledge and service experience in the world doesn't prepare a sommelier for the ins and outs of creating a wine program.

categories, are you going to organize the list by region, variety, color, and/or style? What are you going to call your categories? Will there be subcategories? Within each section, are you going to list the wines alphabetically or according to body, from lightest to heaviest? Are you going to specify grapes when the labels don't—even for well-known regions—and/or indicate all the grapes in blends?

Once you have an outline, you'll be in a better position to start plugging in your

for such data points as major category (e.g., red/white/sparkling), minor category (e.g., country), region or subregion (if applicable to your organization convention and list size), producer, marque, varietal(s), vintage, format, distributor, frontline price, actual cost, list price, cost of goods percentage, stock verification, opening order quantity, opening order cost, verification of opening order, variances between what was ordered and what was received, POS programming name, verification in POS,



*An opening template . . . is critical to understanding not only what you are going to implement but how. It should cover everything from the structure and format of the list to labeling conventions and nomenclature.*


This might come as a shock, but the least important aspect of the process is choosing the wines themselves. What's of utmost importance is knowing both how to organize the data represented by the selections and how to turn it into useful supporting collateral such as an opening order matrix, inventory spreadsheet, or order guide.

Every program needs an opening template: It's critical to understanding not only what you are going to implement but how. It should cover everything from the structure and format of the list to labeling conventions and nomenclature. For instance, if you're creating a list for a Spanish restaurant, will you put the Spanish wines first in every category? Speaking of

inputs. This step will help you fill any holes within each category. For example, if you are organizing by region, you might find that you have huge price gaps in the Rioja section. If you have organized by body type, your Riojas might appear in multiple sections—which, depending on factors like list size, could confuse both your staff and your customers. These observations can help guide your final selection process.

But an outline is only the beginning. You'll need to create useful data sets, including an all-encompassing wine matrix, to inform your decisions. A spreadsheet is key. It should include dozens of columns

and so on. You can then use this to sort and balance your list, create your opening order, determine what it will cost, verify vintages, and, finally, write the actual list. Your spreadsheet can even be adjusted to serve as both your inventory template and an order guide for ongoing operations.

Granted, this system requires a lot of data entry and time on the front end. Ultimately, though, it will streamline your opening process, eliminate errors and unexpected surprises, and help ensure your program is in order—saving you heaps of time in the long run. Remember, wine is fine, but this is a business! 



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# The Living Legend of Rutherford Dust

**BEAULIEU VINEYARD IS KEY TO THE ENDURING—AND EVOLVING—LEGACY OF NAPA VALLEY** by Deborah Parker Wong

In many ways, the history of Beaulieu Vineyard—whose first winemaker, the iconic André Tchelistcheff, coined the term “Rutherford dust”—mirrors the history of Napa Valley itself, as attendees of “It’s All About the Dust,” the fifth installment of our six-part webinar series in partnership with SommFoundation and Treasury Wine Estates, discovered. (They were also eligible to compete for three \$500 scholarships, one year of access to SommFoundation’s online educational tool SommGeo, and a spot at Crush Camp 2021.)

Led by Treasury Wine Estates education manager Gillian Balance, MS, the session was moderated by Lars Leicht, vice president of education at *The SOMM Journal*, who kicked things off with a timeline of both the region and of Beaulieu Vineyard—the rich histories of which converged in 1885, when California State Senator Seneca Ewer built a winery across from the Rutherford train depot that, in 1900, would become Beaulieu. That’s when



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TREASURY WINE ESTATES

*Beaulieu Vineyard winemaker Trevor Durling.*

*Harvesttime in Napa Valley.*

*Beaulieu Vineyard is the ultimate source of that almost ineffable but compelling wine characteristic known as “Rutherford dust.”*



San Francisco businessman Georges de Latour, who was often in the valley to source tartaric acid for the production of cream of tartar, purchased the property, which his wife described as *beau lieu*, “a beautiful spot,” providing the inspiration for the winery’s name.

Leicht’s introduction provided the perfect segue into a look at the factors that make the Rutherford AVA so unique. He pointed out the three alluvial fans or benches that are its defining feature, composed of colluvial and fluvial soils created by ancient stream beds, gravel, loam, and sand. The terroir created by the benchlands is considered the source of the AVA’s best-known characteristic: the aforementioned “Rutherford dust,” which was described by Ballance as a high-toned aroma of clean dirt akin to graphite and pencil shavings. She also noted that the AVA has a relatively large diurnal temperature swing due to the shadow cast by the Mayacamas mountain range over the vineyards to the west of Highway 29; the result is a pattern of cool afternoons that ensures the long, slow ripening of Beaulieu’s coveted Bordeaux varieties.

Although the title of “oldest winery” is technically held by Inglenook, Beaulieu stands as Napa County’s oldest continually bonded winery. De Latour got the better of Prohibition by making sacramental

wine for church services—and tripling his vineyard acreage in the process. But he truly changed the course of Napa Valley’s history in 1938 with the recruitment of Tchelistcheff from the Pasteur Institute in Paris. During his tenure, the Moscow-born winemaker oversaw more than 40 vintages of Beaulieu and was instrumental in expanding the winery’s estate holdings, planting Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the Carneros AVA.

The winemaking techniques and technologies introduced by Tchelistcheff at Beaulieu—including temperature-controlled fermentation, improved malolactic conversion, new frost-control measures, and better hygiene practices in the cellar—were swiftly and widely adopted throughout the valley. After his passing, the Rutherford Dust Society was formed to honor his legacy, and its members, known as “Dusters,” remain among the winery’s most loyal fans.

Today, Beaulieu farms over 1,100 acres of estate vines in Napa Valley, from Rutherford Ranch 12 in the Calistoga AVA to Ranch 5 in the Carneros AVA. All are Napa Green certified as well as certified sustainable. For a discussion of the wines they yield, Ballance and Leicht were joined by Beaulieu’s Trevor Durling, who led the group through a tasting of the 2017 Georges de Latour. Durling is only

the fifth winemaker in the winery’s storied history to craft Georges de Latour Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon.

“Georges de Latour is very consistent,” observed Ballance, who asked Durling to elaborate. “Our reserve winery is a state-of-the-art microwinery inside Beaulieu dedicated to the production of Georges de Latour,” he explained. “We’re using optical sorters that we calibrate to sort by color and concrete fermenters.” The 2017 vintage—which Durling called the most technically advanced in the producer’s history—is a blend of 97% Cabernet Sauvignon and 3% Petit Verdot. “Typically there will be a few vintages where I add Merlot or Malbec,” he noted, “but usually it’s Petit Verdot that I select from one specific block at Vineyard 1. The majority of the Cabernet Sauvignon does come from Rutherford, so the wines are Rutherford-centric.” He described the wine as broadening on the palate, with nonfermentable sugars coating and “pushing up” the grape and wood tannins before a long, fresh finish.

Once Ballance announced that the quiz for prizes had been posted, the tasting concluded and the competition was on. Congratulations to the winners: Britt Parrish of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in first place; Peter DeRosa of Panama City Beach, Florida, in second; and Monica Gural of Red Bank, New Jersey, in third. S|



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMCOR

# Crisis Averted

**EASYPEEL** ENSURES NOT ONLY THE INTEGRITY OF YOUR WINE BUT THE SAFETY OF YOUR FINGERS

by Eric Marsh



**THOSE WHO HAVE OPENED** countless bottles of wine in a single night have likely experienced distress due to cheap labels and packaging: the glue on a label that's lost its adhesivity while sitting in an ice bucket, a cork that seems cemented in the neck of a Champagne bottle, or a subpar capsule on a bottle of Napa Cabernet that seems more fit for a lumberjack competition than elegantly choreographed wine service. Whether the misadventure results in bruised egos or actual scars, it likely could have been prevented by an investment in better packaging.

To a point, the myopia that some producers suffer is understandable: They want to meet the basic standards of packaging with as little effort—and cost—as possible and focus all their attention on the liquid inside. They care chiefly about aesthetics and may not consider at all the functionality of the capsule. But if it's evident that they are cutting corners when it comes to packaging, some consumers might assume the same is true of their approach to the wine itself.

For instance, capsules are often made of cheap material like PVC, which not only is bulky and slippery but seems impenetrable. Many somms can likely relate to the image

of standing tableside and sawing away like Paul Bunyan, their confident smile fading to a nervous grimace and their brow glistening as if it's their first night on the job—all because a producer wanted to pinch a few pennies and use plastic rather than aluminum or tin. Of course, those materials also have their drawbacks—they can tear, and as the hand firmly rotates along the jagged metal, it can slice the skin. That all said, some somms are likely to avoid voicing valid concerns related to packaging in fear that they'll be viewed as incompetent.

Fortunately, the master inventors at Amcor have taken these complaints to heart and created a solution: EASYPEEL. No cutting is necessary with this customizable aluminum capsule, which features a

discreet notch for the insertion of a wine key knife. Once the edge of the knife is positioned inside, simply pull up and back to remove the top like a magic trick, leaving a clean line and eliminating the risk of either injury or damage to the capsule.

As Amcor marketing executive Sophie-Gabrielle Martin explains it, cutting through a standard capsule with precision “depends on various factors [such as] the person’s dexterity, the time given to open the bottle, [and] the knife used.” The result, she says, “is often random and imprecise,” but EASYPEEL’s seamless system guarantees that one can execute the steps of traditional wine service with consistency.

Not only does EASYPEEL protect the people who use it, it assures that the over-

all aesthetic of the bottle isn't compromised while preserving the integrity of the wine and, in turn, its producer. The capsules fit on the bottle as snugly as premium tin sleeves and are of equal quality, but they're made from 100% aluminum, which makes them not only a less expensive option but a recyclable one. Martin says that EASYPEEL provides “a simple and effective way to magnify the art of tasting while enhancing the user experience”—not least by safeguarding the fingers of those who open innumerable bottles of wine a night. For more information, contact [info.capsules@amcor.com](mailto:info.capsules@amcor.com). 



*EASYPEEL provides “a simple and effective way to magnify the art of tasting while enhancing the user experience”—not least by safeguarding the fingers of those who open innumerable bottles of wine a night.*

# 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@tastingpanelmag.com](mailto:rtobias@tastingpanelmag.com).**



### Laurent-Perrier Ultra Brut, Champagne, France (\$70)

A textbook example of its style, this is everything any lover of zero-dosage bubbly could ask for. Linen-crisp and snappy aromas of lemon-lime, green pear, and white nectarine, softened by a drizzle of honey, make promises the palate keeps: Linear with mouthwatering notes of lemon, green apple, and stone, it's as pure and cleansing as the air after a spring rain, with a finish as abidingly fresh as the start. **94.5**

LAURENT-PERRIER US, INC.



### Lawer Estates NV Brut Rosé, California (\$25)

From Lawer winemaking team Cary Gott and Kelly Delanni comes a striking blend of 26% each Sauvignon Blanc and French Colombard with 19% Chardonnay, 14% Viognier, 13% Muscat Canelli, and 2% reserve red. Sourced primarily from the North Coast and vinified in the traditional method, the rose-gold result, pinpricked with nonstop beads, ushers in scents of mandarin orange, cling peach, and Rainier cherry that continue on the palate, where ripe acidity informs the fairly generous mouthfeel that finishes with a dash of almost whisky-like spice. **92**



### Colliano 2019 Peneca Rebula Brut, Goriška Brda, Primorska, Slovenia (\$18)

What fun. A pretty straw hue in the glass, with a fine if not endless perlage, this Charmat-method sparkler of 100% Rebula (Ribolla Gialla) offers clean aromas of Granny Smith apple as well as apple tart, a hint of white florals, and a squeeze of citrus that blossoms on the palate, exhibiting every shade of lemon in turn—from sorbet to candied—along with juicy tangerine and grapefruit pith. A touch of rose, white pepper, and pine nut adds contrast, while a roundness balances the smack of acidity. **93**

LAUREATE IMPORTS



### Zonin Prosecco Rosé, Italy (\$16)

Thanks to its newly approved designation (see our coverage in the March issue), Prosecco Rosé is already a surging category in the U.S. and sure to be one of summer's hottest trends. The well-established Zonin brand is, naturally, on top of it with this seashell-pink blend of 85% Glera and 15% Pinot Nero, which is as easy-drinking as you'd expect. Ripe strawberry, watermelon, and cantaloupe mingle on the nose with a drop of cream soda, while plenty more strawberry meets zingy peach lozenge in the mouth. **90**

1821 FINE WINES & SPIRITS



### Besserat de Bellefon NV Grande Tradition Brut, Champagne, France (\$50)

From the lasting mousse to the lasting finish, this blend of 45% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir, and 20% Pinot Meunier delivers subtle aromas of pluot, honeysuckle, and cinnamon toast; smooth despite the tingling acid, the palate offers brûléed grapefruit and peach nectar with touches of walnut before a mouth-filling finish. **92.5**

WINESELLERS, LTD



### Bouvet Ladubay 2018 Crémant de Loire Brut Excellence, Loire Valley, France (\$18)

With a texture reminiscent of meringue—simultaneously crisp and soft—this forthright blend of Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay expresses itself clearly in scents of green apple and pear plus a trace of pastry dough, all underscored by crackling upfront acidity amid flavors of yellow apple and lime zest. **91**



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# Dramas Come True

RECAPPING THE  
CONCOURS D'SPIRITS  
WHISKEY WEBINAR

*by Allyson Reedy*

We never get tired of talking about our favorite spirits, and so, in advance of Concours d'Spirits, an April competition organized by SommCon in partnership with *The SOMM Journal*, we've launched a namesake webinar series devoted to them. For the first installment we focused on whiskey, inviting Fernando Sousa and Travis Gyarmaty of San Diego consultancy Hatchet Proof Craft Cocktail Services to lead the way. The Zoom presentation introduced us to the representatives of six distilleries (plus one manufacturer of ice makers) who shared news about products we can't wait to try and taught us more about the innovations going on at some of our favorite existing brands.



# Torabhaig, *Scotland*



For being so new, Torabhaig sure does have some history. Production of its single malt Scotch didn't begin until 2017, but its home base in the Scottish Highlands is much, much older, according to Torabhaig sales director Bruce Perry: Only the second distillery ever on the Isle of Skye and the first to be built in some 190 years, it occupies a farmhouse dating back to 1760. A four-year renovation gave the farm new life, this one filled with copper stills and Douglas fir washbacks. (We think the original owners would approve.)

"It was unimaginable that it's turned into what it's turned into today," Perry said of the building, which features stonework and bricks from the 1400s. But as challenging as the reconstruction project may have been at the start, that was the site at which Mossburn Distillers & Blenders, the company behind Torabhaig, felt this whisky had to be made. As Perry stressed, the character of single malt Scotch is intricately tied to the land, and the farmstead, with its stunning stone building and streams of pure spring water, was the ideal spot to start distilling. "We wanted to recreate what we saw on the Isle of Skye, which was beauty in a very rugged sort of way," he added.

The aforementioned single malt, Torabhaig Legacy Series 2017, has just launched, and other expressions are in the pipeline, including the Torabhaig 10 Year Old, which should be out in 2028. "We're asking people to join us on that journey through whisky," Perry said.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TORABHAIG



*The Torabhaig distillery on the Isle of Skye.*



# Rabbit Hole, *USA*



*Rabbit Hole founder Kaveh Zamanian.*

"Rabbit Hole for me is a metaphor for the American dream," said company founder Kaveh Zamanian. "Regardless of where you were born [or] what class you're born into, I believe you can follow your dream, whatever it is, so long as you're willing to go down your own personal rabbit hole." Zamanian told the audience about his rabbit hole, which, as you might have guessed, involves whiskey.

His passion for the spirit took him from Chicago to Louisville, Kentucky, where he opened a stunning distillery in 2018 that allowed him to go all in on experimenting with different malted grains, proprietary cooking methods, and one-of-a-kind recipes as he sought to redefine the category domestically and raise it to the esteem enjoyed by whiskeys produced elsewhere in the world. "When I started, I saw a sea of monotony," he recalled. "There were a handful of recipes from a handful of distilleries. That [gave me] an opportunity to do something unique" in terms of exploring the possibilities for new flavor profiles in his small-batch whiskeys.

Rabbit Hole has already made its mark with its Cavehill and Heigold Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskeys; Boxergrail Kentucky Straight Rye Whiskey; Dareringer Bourbon Whiskey Finished in PX Sherry Casks; and the limited-edition, cask-strength Founder's Collection that's Zamanian's pride and joy. But he has a lot more in the pipeline. Giving the audience a sneak peek of the three rye whiskeys and five bourbons the brand will release next, he said, "It's all about creating something new and innovative. We don't want to replicate. . . . Our motto is to find what you love and go all in. That's the spirit of Rabbit Hole."



## Redwood Empire Whiskey, *USA*

Whiskey isn't the first beverage that comes to mind when you think of Sonoma County, but the team behind Redwood Empire Whiskey wants to get it in the conversation. "Sonoma is well known for wine, but . . . we hope to put its name on the map for [spirits]," said master distiller Jeff Duckhorn.

The name comes from the distillery's surroundings in western Sonoma, in the heart of the forestland where those colossal old-growth trees live and inspire what they do. "We love our place in the world," Duckhorn said, adding that their awe-inspiring location sparked a desire to protect and preserve the environment: Their bottles are imprinted with quotes from naturalist and environmental philosopher John Muir, and for every one they sell, they plant a tree. To date, they've planted over 225,000.

The brand's three core products are fittingly named after some of the area's most famous redwoods. The sweet-and-spicy, cocktail-friendly Lost Monarch is a blended whiskey; the big, bold Emerald Giant is a rye; and the deep, woody Pipe Dream is a bourbon. Currently, all are blends of house distillates with sourced spirits. "We made that decision because we wanted to grow quickly," Duckhorn said. "We wanted to get to market with a high-quality product and not try to rush our [own] whiskey before it was ready."

Next up for the nature-minded whiskey makers: two bottled-in-bond expressions, a rye and a bourbon. Expect an August rollout.

## Weed Cellars, *USA*

As the saucy name suggests, Weed Cellars does things a little differently, so it was no surprise when master distiller Mark Weaver told us that he and his team at MBW Brands created Weed's straight bourbon in an unconventional sort of way. While most spirits producers make what they want to drink and then look for an audience, Weed started with the consumer, tailoring their whiskey according to demand.

"We take a different approach in that we ask consumers their thoughts," said Weaver. "From the quality of the product to its taste profile, we listen to what they say . . . and then we make it." Through numerous focus groups that spanned multiple demographics (including age), the company—which also makes wine and beer—learned what people consumed, how often they consumed it, and what they most wanted to drink.

"Since we're not a distillery that's been around for hundreds of years, we decided to go after what people are looking for now and make something more in tune with [that]," Weaver explained, adding that the "good, solid, straight bourbon" he produces at his distillery in Waxahachie, Texas, about 30 miles south of Dallas, is a classic, mellow 91-proofer whose appeal "transcends more than one age group."

As if that weren't enough to attract attention, Weed Cellars Straight Bourbon Whiskey got a giant bump in late 2020 with a placement in the video for country-music star Gary Allan's song "Waste of a Whiskey Drink." "Weed whiskey is almost a character in the video," chief marketing officer Natasha Swords said. "We're building a campaign around that involving radio, billboard, print, merchandising . . . increasing awareness and building recognition—and we're so fortunate to be able to work with celebrities like [Allan]." It's just one more way in which the scene-stealing brand is proving ready for its close-up.





## Michter's Distillery, *USA*

John Shutt, strategic partnerships manager at Michter's Distillery, didn't miss a beat when asked which of the brand's many expressions newbies should start with. "You have to go with the US\*1 Rye. It's a Kentucky-style rye—it has a nice, balanced, [multi]dimensional taste profile," he said. "[But] we have something for every personality, every mood. We've got you covered!"

The brand's diverse portfolio reflects its long history: Shutt shared that the Michter's legacy is actually older than the United States, as it was founded in Pennsylvania in 1753 and endured for a couple of centuries before going bankrupt in 1989. All was not wasted, though; it got new life in the 1990s when Joe Magliocco acquired the name and resurrected the brand in Louisville, Kentucky. It has been there since while remaining a family-owned operation.

Michter's opened a second Louisville facility in February 2019, this one open to the public for tours and tastings. Shutt said that among the things that set the company apart is its barrel program. The oak is seasoned for a minimum of 18 months before it's toasted, charred, and finally filled with liquid at a lower entry proof than is typical—103—to ensure a richer, smoother sip. "That's what makes [our] distillery different," Shutt said. "Michter's whiskeys might be powerful, but they'll never be aggressive. It's that Kentucky hug you're looking for."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICTHER'S DISTILLERY

*A branded column still at the Michter's Shively Distillery in Louisville, KY.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BUSKER



## The Busker Irish Whiskey, *Ireland*

It's hard not to get excited when listening to The Busker brand ambassador Woody Kane talk about Irish whiskey. "The best way to taste any whiskey is with a good friend," he said. The name pays homage to street performers, who "want to share the wonderful gift that they have, and that's what we wanted . . . to take a look at the great tradition Irish whiskey holds and offer that. We wanted to capture the imagination."

Kane certainly did just that while describing the Royal Oak Distillery—an idyllic, 42-acre 18th-century estate about an hour southeast of Dublin where The Busker is made from locally grown barley by a passionate team. "If you put a pin in our distillery and put a circle of, say, 50 miles, you'll find everything we use. It's as local as we can get, down to the people," he asserted. "We wanted to be true to who we were [and] to what Irish whiskey is all about."

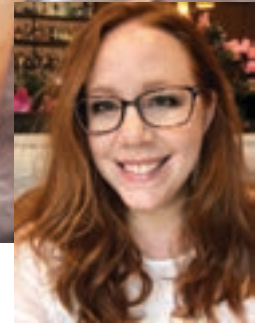
Royal Oak recently released its much-anticipated The Busker Single Grain, Single Malt, and Single Pot Still expressions along with Triple Cask, which combines all three. The quartet is specifically made for the American market, using modern techniques without forgoing the estate's strong Irish tradition. It is, after all, located just 20 miles away from the birthplace of whiskey, at least according to *The Red Book of Ossory*, which made the world's first reference to the spirit way back in 1324. "There's plenty of history . . . to be told," Kane said—a discussion best had, almost certainly, over a glass of The Busker.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOSHIZAKI



A cocktail featuring Hoshizaki's large square cubes.


Sally Ray is marketing director for Hoshizaki's U.S. division.



## Hoshizaki, *USA*

"The last thing you want is a piece of ice in there," said Sally Ray, marketing director for Japan-based company Hoshizaki's U.S. division, in reference to a glass of fine whiskey. This may be a counterintuitive thing for someone selling ice makers to say, but Ray was making the point that the team at Hoshizaki understands and respects whiskey as well as the fact that there's a time and a place for their product.

It's not, of course, for aficionados who only sip the spirit neat. But for those drinking it on the rocks or mixing it into cocktails, quality ice goes far beyond its chilling ability. Simple as it sounds, properly frozen water can really elevate a cocktail program. Those little cubes we take for granted are the ultimate marriage of form and function, keeping drinks at the proper strength as well as temperature while potentially doubling as a stylish garnish. "Ice is an important ingredient for any bar program. It's all about the presentation, and ice plays a big part of that," Ray said.

Hoshizaki machines are known for their easiness to clean and service as well as their capacity per batch, meaning that the initial investment in any of its nearly 60 different models can pay off pretty quickly. Even more important, the eight types of ice they yield is clearer and cleaner than that produced by the DIY silicone-mold method, with the super-versatile 1-inch cubes, large spheres for stylish cocktails, and dramatic 2-by-2-inch cubes earning top spots in bars and restaurants around the country—you know, for the times when the first thing you want is a piece of ice in there. 

{ cover story }

# Sleepy Hollow 2.0

ON HALLOWED GROUND,  
TALBOTT VINEYARDS SOWS  
THE SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

story by Michelle Ball  
photos by Jeremy Ball

## *Shaping the future*

of what's considered to be one of California's "Grand Cru" estates is a daunting task. Yet few are as well suited to it as Talbott Vineyards winemaker David Coventry, who's leading the charge at Sleepy Hollow Vineyard—an expansive 565-acre site on the northern edge of the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation. First planted in 1972 to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, it quickly became a benchmark for cool-climate viticulture, demonstrating the region's enormous potential while other growers struggled to ripen Bordeaux varieties.

Robb Talbott—who founded Talbott Vineyards in Salinas to focus on premium Chardonnay in 1982—purchased the illustrious Sleepy Hollow in 1994, thereby adding Pinot Noir to his portfolio of luxury wines.



*Talbott Vineyards winemaker David Coventry samples Chardonnay from a 700-liter Damy barrel that air-dried for three years before use.*





**First planted in 1972, Sleepy Hollow Vineyard is the second-northernmost vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA.**

By then, cultivation of the grape had begun throughout the Santa Lucia Highlands, and winemakers outside the area were further helping propel the success of the new AVA (it received its status in 1991) by designating Sleepy Hollow on their labels, along with a handful of other prominent local vineyards such as Pisoni, Garys', and Rosella's. "I think that's when it really started to take off," says Gwen McGill, executive director of the Santa Lucia Highlands Wine Artisans trade association. "That's when people started acknowledging that it was a region that could really compete with the top areas of Pinot Noir."

McGill was first introduced to the appellation's wines in the early 2000s and was

struck by their unique flavor profile. "They have this beautiful freshness, vibrancy of fruit, and voluptuous texture," she says. What makes this place so special is its proximity to the Monterey Bay: Mornings are often blanketed by fog, which burns off in the late morning, followed by cool marine breezes that pick up in the early afternoon. These are generated by the deep, icy waters off the peninsula and, induced by the inland heat, funneled through the Salinas Valley. The result is a very long growing season that contributes to the development of thicker, darker skins, maximizing Pinot Noir's flavor potential. Meanwhile, low rainfall and well-drained soils support healthy roots and allow growers greater

control over irrigation, ensuring a tension between freshness and concentration in the wines in the form of high acidity, ripe tannins, and intense fruit.

Today, the Santa Lucia Highlands has very little, if any, suitable acreage left for new plantings: The narrow appellation hugs the foothills of the coastal mountains, where it's hemmed in by the fertile cropland of the Salinas Valley. With limited opportunities for expansion, then, vintners' best bet for continuing to elevate the quality and reputation of the AVA as a whole is to refine their existing sites. In the nearly five decades since Sleepy Hollow was first planted, research has led to the discovery of a wider range of clones and rootstocks that not only suit modern wine styles with a diverse set of flavors but also are less susceptible to disease. Replanting is costly, however, and although Robb Talbott had started the process, it wasn't until E. & J. Gallo purchased the brand in 2015 that a full overhaul commenced.

Coventry, who was hired as Talbott Vineyards' winemaker in 2016, believes the estate's best wines are ahead of it. "Having the support to replant the vineyards, with all the research that is available to me, is just monumental—I'm given every tool I need to practice my craft at the highest possible level," he says, adding that he looks at Sleepy Hollow as a jigsaw puzzle he needs to solve to reveal its flavor profiles. To leverage its fullest potential, he worked closely with vineyard manager Kevin Ryan in choosing the right Pinot Noir clones and rootstocks for each block. For instance, the Old Martini clone, which is prone to disease, was swapped with Dijon clones 113, 115, 667, and 777 as well as Pommard and a handful of other selections. The Wente Chardonnay clone, meanwhile, was replaced with its modern offshoots, Robert Young and Mount Eden, along with classics like clones 76 and 95. Roughly a dozen different rootstocks were selected in accordance with elevation and soil structure.

Together, these new plantings create a comprehensive spectrum of flavors for Coventry to blend or showcase through block-designated bottlings. "We have more highly polished lenses that more accurately, and with much more focus, get the flavor from the ground into the plant and [then] into my hands," he explains.



## Coventry's Calling

Says Coventry of his path to winemaking, "You don't find it—it calls you." The Monterey native has had a diverse career, and yet he knew early on he might end up at Talbott Vineyards one day. He first met Robb Talbott as a kid, when he and his friends stumbled onto the vintner's property while hiking. He recalls Talbott scolding them for trespassing, only to add, "You kids look hot—go jump in the pool!"

Graduating from college with a degree in biology, Coventry worked as a chemist for five years before making a full pivot to manage a rock band. At one concert in Boulder, Colorado, he ran into Ed Kurtzman, then the winemaker for Chalone, who had flown out for the show; when Kurtzman began bemoaning the lab work awaiting his return, Coventry found himself volunteering to help. Wine intrigued the scientist in him, after all. "I like a good puzzle, and there's nothing so complicated as making wine—it's such a dynamic sys-

tem," he says, noting that it encompasses everything from biology and chemistry to physics and geology, as well as business and hospitality. Upon arriving at Chalone, he was hooked, accepting a position as the winery's enologist in 1997.

He soon cemented his reputation in the industry by earning accolades as head winemaker at Morgan Winery and De Tierra Vineyards. Stints as a consulting winemaker followed, allowing him to work with many vineyards throughout the appellation, gleaned knowledge from each one and formulating his own ideas about which clones grow best and where. When Talbott Vineyards' former winemaker, Dan Karlsen, was ready to move on, he encouraged the Gallo family to contact Coventry, whom he had known at Chalone.

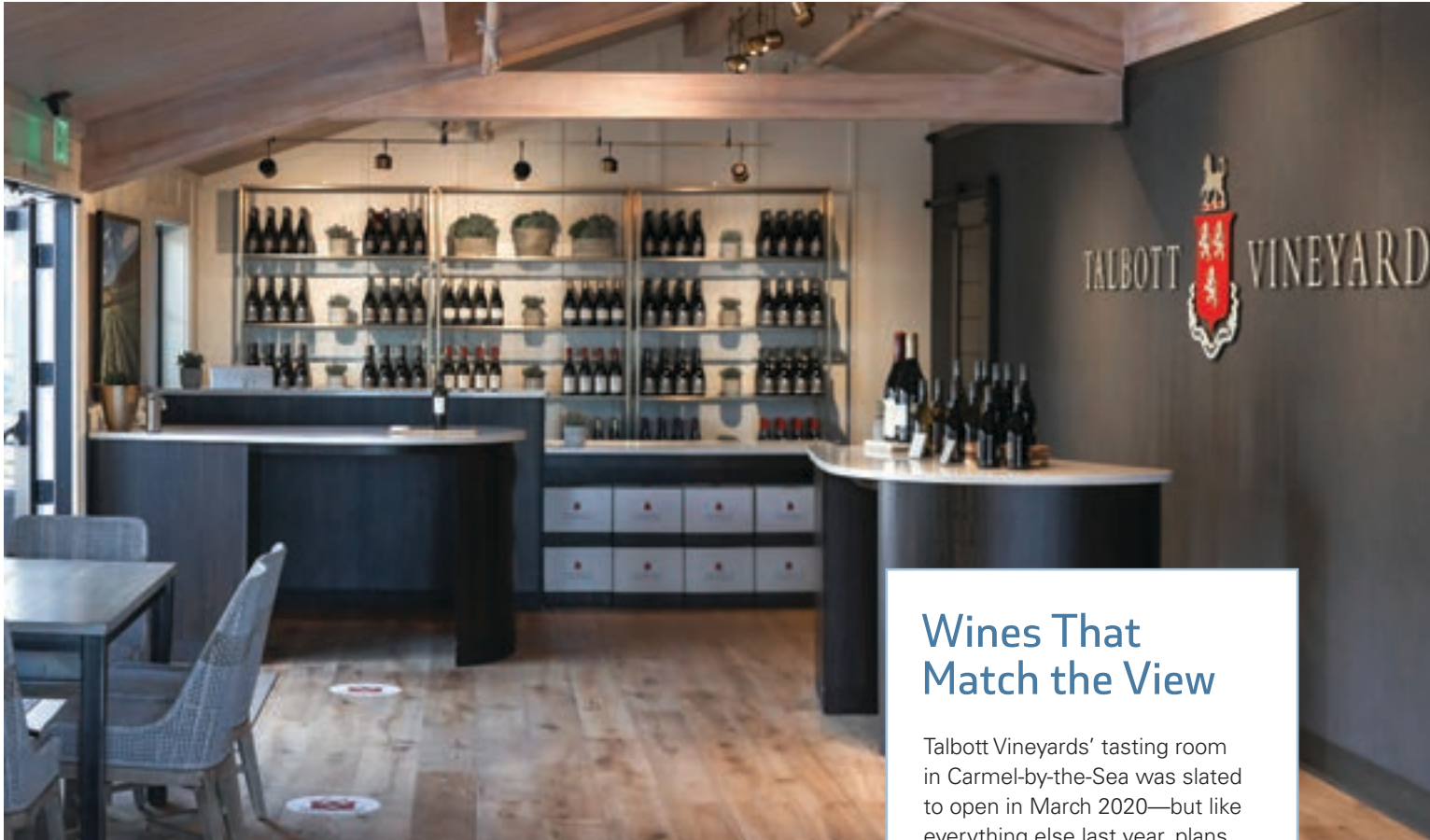
Coventry's bold winemaking style reflects his confidence in the chemistry behind pushing the envelope. "Riper wines can support more acidity, more alcohol, more oak, more tannin. The secret to mak-

ing truly great wine is to make it balanced," he explains, adding the observation that "wines aren't overoaked—they're 'underwined.' You can only do to the wine [what] the fruit is there to support." He therefore urges buyers to be guided by their palates rather than by numbers on a tech sheet. "In the most primordial part of the human brain, there is a button that is clearly marked 'Yum.' And truly great wine presses that button," he insists.

Yet his success in this regard might not be possible without conditions like those found at Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, where the terroir facilitates grape growing on the edge of ripeness. To extract the most flavor and color from the skins, Coventry ferments hot—even the Chardonnay—and follows fermentation with a week of post-maceration. "You get everything out of the grape [with this approach]," he says. "When you have a vineyard like Sleepy Hollow, and you get the ripeness that we get, you leave nothing on the table."



Winemaker David Coventry looks out over the vines of Sleepy Hollow against the backdrop of the Salinas Valley.



*Talbott Vineyards' tasting room in Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA.*

## Wines That Match the View

Talbott Vineyards' tasting room in Carmel-by-the-Sea was slated to open in March 2020—but like everything else last year, plans changed. When it finally opened in January, the days of walking in for a quick pour at the bar were over, at least for the time being. Yet despite the setbacks, the venue—with its gorgeous balcony view of the ocean—is attracting a new generation of visitors for seated tastings, says tasting room supervisor Alex Gessner: “We’re seeing people who are purposefully coming here—they’re planning ahead.”

It will be interesting to see how the hospitality business evolves from here, but there’s optimism that customers will continue to seek out curated experiences that generally support a better bottom line. Not only do seated tastings like Talbott’s yield higher average sales per person, but they are highly correlated with brand loyalty. In short, the trend offers a glimmer of hope after what has been a difficult year for the service industry.

### **Spotlighting Blocks**

They say no great wine is ever made sitting at a desk, so Coventry spends many hours walking the vineyard; many of the plots that stand out to him were planted less than ten years ago, confirming his belief that Talbott Vineyards is on the right path. “At some point, when the whole ranch is replanted, that exceptional quality is going to be the standard level of quality—and it’s just going to get even better from there,” he says.

As a result, he and his team embraced the aforementioned concept of block-designated bottlings (which may change depending on the vintage) in 2017. These higher-tier wines are matured in 500-, 600-, and 700-liter French oak barrels made especially for the winery; compared to the traditional 228-liter barrel, the larger vessels deliver less of a new-oak punch while offering greater lees contact due to their wider sur-

face area. “The wines age more slowly [in them], so the fruit remains more intact, pure, and concentrated,” explains Coventry. “[With the] lees contact, you’re building richness, but you’re also preserving the fruit.” Granted, the barrels’ size makes them somewhat inconvenient—they don’t stack properly, and they require special tools—but he feels the result is worth it.

In fact, Coventry sees large-format barrel aging as the future for his luxury wines, serving to preserve the character of the fruit from this iconic vineyard—a mission he takes very seriously as part of his role in maintaining not only the reputation of Sleepy Hollow but the heritage of Talbott Vineyards. “The best honor we can [show] to the legacy of the past is to make the future even brighter,” says the winemaker. “This is the place where I live. This is my future, my present—and it will be my past.”

# Tasting NOTES

## 2018 Kali Hart Chardonnay (\$20)

Fresh aromas of yellow stone fruit join hints of buttermilk and lively flavors of ripe pear and Meyer lemon. Balanced and refreshing, with a whisper of French oak.



## 2018 Kali Hart Pinot Noir (\$23)

Fragrances of steeped rose hip and ripe strawberry are mirrored on the palate, which offers firm tannins up front, plush red fruit, and notes of charred orange peel.



## 2017 Sleepy Hollow Chardonnay (\$33)

Classic whiffs of lemon and crème brûlée mingle with juicy yellow peach. The palate is rich yet zingy with flavors of pineapple and cardamom plus ample acidity that leaves your mouth watering.



## 2017 Sleepy Hollow Pinot Noir (\$40)

With notes of dark cherry and black tea, Talbott Vineyards' flagship wine is fuller-bodied and more opulent than the Kali Hart Pinot, showing layers of dark red fruit, mulling spices, and savory threads of mushroom and bone broth.



*Note:* Debuting in 2018, Talbott's Fidelity tier is crafted from the best lots on the estate and matured in large-format barrels. These highly allocated wines represent the utmost potential of Sleepy Hollow Vineyard.

*Of the 360 acres slated for the project at Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, about 75% have been replanted.*



## 2018 Fidelity Char- donnay (\$100)

Sourced from a single parcel of Clone 95 in the North Ranch section of the vineyard and aged in 500-liter François Frères puncheons, this complex Chardonnay serves as an ode to Montrachet. Layers of lemon curd and pastry, hints of white flowers, and sea breezes are its signature. Texturally, it's silky and luxurious, with flavors of candied pineapple, yet spiky strands of acidity and salinity balance its weight for a long, lip-smacking finish. 150 cases made.



## 2018 Fidelity Pinot Noir (\$120)

Co-fermented lots of Clone 113 (for elegance); Clone 114 (for tannin and backbone); and Clone 115 (for juicy, dark fruit) from a 4.2-acre parcel called Block 23 West were selected for this wine. Aromas of amaro, cinnamon, and clove combine with an alluring mélange of rose hip, red cherry, and Provençal herbs. There's tension between the wine's dark-cherry core and the prickly spice texture that tingles the front of the palate amid layers of hibiscus, cocoa nibs, and raspberry tea tannins. 300 cases made. *SJ*





The heirloom carrot and cauliflower steak at The Little Nell in Aspen, CO, features braised beef, salsify puree, and sprouted barley.

PHOTO: SHAWN O'CONNOR



# Uncommon Cuts, Uncommon Wines

ASPEN'S **THE LITTLE NELL** ANTICIPATES THE FUTURE OF FOOD

by Michelle M. Metter

**THE ONLY FIVE-STAR HOTEL** in Aspen, Colorado, The Little Nell is known as much for its approach to hospitality as its breathtaking scenery: It's evident to visitors that its multiple restaurant concepts, helmed by executive chef Matt Zubrod, aim to elevate the guest experience dish by nourishing dish. The signature heirloom carrot and cauliflower steak with braised beef, salsify puree, and sprouted barley is no exception.

Echoing New York-based chef and author Dan Barber, who encourages rethinking the American diet to include less meat, Zubrod says that "in the near future, we will need to balance our red meat intake for dietary and production purposes, so this [dish] is a way to balance our available crops with less common cuts of meat."

It starts with 3 ounces of oxtail that's been braised sous vide for 18 hours with thyme, rosemary, crushed star anise, and veal demi-glace. Rainbow carrots are cut lengthwise; combined with butter, thyme leaves, and carrot stock; and also cooked sous vide—as are the cauliflower steaks, which are spiced with ras el hanout and caramelized to finish. Salsify puree, pickled salsify preserves, and sprouted barley complete the dish, which is offered both as an appetizer and a main course.

[Continued on page 46]



PHOTO: CZ PHOTOGRAPHY




**Matt Zubrod is executive chef at The Little Nell in Aspen, CO.**

*They say the only obligation we have on this Earth is to make our dreams come true. Ramón Bilbao's dream was to create a wine with its own character, capable of transmitting its personality and leapfrogging generations. Driven by this passion, he began a journey of discovery, innovation and even imagination to make this dream come true. Today this dream is still alive in each bottle waiting to be discovered.*

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**The Little Nell's wine director, Christopher Dunaway.**

"When it comes to finding the best [wine] selections to complement this dish, I look at the Mediterranean influences [in the recipe, such as] the ras el hanout and the savory herbs," says wine director Christopher Dunaway. "I believe the wine to best pair with it should have a combination of richness, spice, and freshness to harmonize and highlight its umami flavor. Root vegetables such as carrots imply sweetness and can pair beautifully with ripe-fruited, spicy wines. The ras el hanout and savory herbs incorporated also ask for a wine with bold character [that's] not overly concentrated and tannic, as that would clash."

For example, he says, "A Grenache-based wine from higher altitudes and old vines would be a home run with this dish. I'm thinking something like Clos Maïa from the Languedoc or Comando G's La Bruja de Rozas from the Sierra de Gredos west of Madrid. Old vines would lend the weight and fruit necessary to match the richness of the dish, and the freshness [of] the wines [imparted by] the higher altitude would cut the richness, harmonize with the spice, and highlight the umami of the cauliflower and oxtail. Of course, the top pairing of all—should one be seeking perfect harmony—would be Château Rayas from Châteauneuf-du-Pape, or, for a more full-throttle experience, Alvaro Palacios L'Ermita [from Priorat] would be sublime."

Read on for pairing suggestions from two more sommeliers.

## LARQUINITA T. BOYD

*Founder, Drink Like A Sommelier, Inc., Atlanta, GA*

The Neyen 2017 Espiritu de Apalta Cabernet Sauvignon and Carménère blend is the pairing I selected. The vineyards of the Apalta/Valle Central region are located within the appellation of Colchagua Valley; this area of central Chile produces some of the country's most prominent wines. During the mid-'90s, French ampelographer Jean-Michel Boursiquot identified the grape varietal Carménère, which was [initially] thought to be a late-ripening Merlot. This full-bodied wine offers a tannic and structured yet lush blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Carménère, and on the palate, it boasts lush black fruits, vanilla, tobacco, and medium-plus intensity. [It would be] a flattering complement to the entrée.



PHOTO: MIDTOWN COLLECTIVE/MICHAEL JONES

## BOBBIE BURGESS

*Wine director, Restaurant Tyler/Eat Local Starkville, Starkville, MS*

Less common meat, less common wine: While Nebbiolo is a popular variety, [expressions of] its synonymous Chiavennasca from Valtellina, Italy, [are] often overlooked. Richly aromatic, full-bodied, tannic, notably acidic, and complex, the Nino Negri 2015 Sfursat Carlo Negri has all the qualities to complement the dish. Sous vide oxtail is tender but still fatty with rich flavors, needing an equally intense wine. Sfursat has the tannin and body to cut through it, concentrated flavors that complement its richness, and a distinct acidity to cleanse the palate. Also, the rosemary, thyme, and anise [flavoring the braising liquid] are herbal aromas common to the Chiavennasca variety. When you caramelize vegetables, the water evaporates and the sugars break down and concentrate, leaving a sweet nuttiness in the carrots and cauliflower. Sfursat is made appassimento, [meaning the] grapes are dried for a specific time, partially dehydrating them, concentrating the sugars, and adding those intensified aromas, including a distinct nuttiness and spices [that match] the dish. *§*



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOBBIE BURGESS

*Would you like to be featured in Pairing Up? Connect with the author at [metter@fastforwardevents.com](mailto:metter@fastforwardevents.com).*

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## THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF

# TERROIR

RECAPPING THE  
“REMARKABLE  
SINGLE VINEYARDS”  
WEBINAR IN  
ASSOCIATION  
WITH SOMMCON  
AND NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

by Jessie Birschbach



“AS IMPORTANT AS TERROIR IS, a single vineyard is the ultimate expression of terroir,” said *SOMM Journal* VP of education Lars Leicht to commence the most recent installment of Geographical Digest, “Remarkable Single Vineyards.” As the moderator of our webinar series in partnership with *National Geographic* and SommCon, the industry veteran has been quick to offer wise insights on every matter at hand. But with less than two minutes for an introduction, we would need the full session to identify the myriad touchstones of a successful single-vineyard program.

Careful site selection is perhaps more critical in the New World than the Old, considering that the property in question must eventually provide some return on investment. (Not that an ROI doesn’t have to happen in Europe, but there it’s the appellation that typically dictates a vineyard’s location and design.) Analyses of climate, soil, rainfall, topography, sunshine hours, and available water are key to determining a given site’s viability, as are the various decisions that go into its design. Factors like row orientation, the density of plantings both between and within the rows, vine-training systems, and pruning methods all contribute to its performance. Taking the proverbial bird’s-eye view, you could say that there are two sides to the development of a great vineyard: On one side are the elements that winegrowers can control, and on the other are those they can’t. Isn’t it wonderfully romantic that it’s the wild variables of nature that make a site unique?

Luckily for the webinar audience—and our readers—the majority of these concerns were covered in our discussion of both the physical and theoretical parameters of the remarkable single vineyards presented.

*Fog rolls into the Bien Nacido  
Vineyard in the Santa Maria Valley.*

# FLYING HIGH WITH FRESHNESS

**SITE: BIEN NACIDO VINEYARD, SANTA MARIA VALLEY, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

**WINE: BIEN NACIDO ESTATE 2018 CHARDONNAY (\$45)**

**PRESENTER: WILL COSTELLO, MS, BRAND AMBASSADOR**

Even as a certified pilot, Master Sommelier Will Costello finds wine more exciting than flying—perhaps particularly when it comes from a vineyard as special as the Bien Nacido Estate Chardonnay does.

“Bien Nacido is considered one of the most [utilized vineyard designates] in the world,” said the brand ambassador for Bien Nacido & Solomon Hills Estate Wines. Providing a bit of history, he explained that the Miller family purchased the property as part of a land grant in the 1960s and were among the first to plant vines in Santa Barbara County and the Santa Maria Valley. Since then, “because [of] the quality [of] and high respect [for] the vineyard, we have had over 270 different producers buy fruit from us to make their wines,” he added. “When you extrapolate that over 43 years, we’ve had over 15,000 different bottles labeled as Bien Nacido.”

And yet, Costello noted, Bien Nacido’s own label represents the only true Bien Nacido Estate wine in the world. In order for a wine to be labeled as “estate bottled,” it must be not only made exclusively with grapes grown by the producer but also fermented, aged, and bottled on the producer’s property. As Costello put it, “While so many other wineries have had success in buying and producing Bien Nacido Vineyard, there really is only one *Bien Nacido Estate*.”

The image of Bien Nacido Vineyard serving as Costello’s Zoom backdrop may have appeared sunny and warm, but the area is actually notoriously cool—Winkler Scale Region 1B cool, which offers the same growing degree days as Champagne or Central Otago in New Zealand. In fact, earlier that February day, “You would have seen frost everywhere,” according to Costello, who then showed an image of a row of Bien Nacido vines covered in tiny icicles. The site’s climate is attributed to its location toward the inland end of a rare transverse (east-to-west) mountain range, which funnels a steady current of cool marine air.

The Estate Chardonnay is sourced primarily from a few blocks planted on their own rootstock in 1973. These almost 50-year-old vines are arranged a bit differently than the rest of the plots within the vineyard’s 655 planted acres: The rows, originally spaced relatively far apart to accommodate a wider tractor, were interplanted with younger vines in the mid-1990s, thereby providing plenty of opportunity for the roots to struggle as they delve deep into the soils—mainly sandy loam with chalk, gravelly loam, and marine loam. This approach, together with the ungrafted rootstock, organic farming, winemaking practices, and, of course, cooler weather, make for a wine with incredible freshness not unlike that of white Burgundy. “The beauty of Bien Nacido is that of the cold weather combined with the California sunshine, [which] gives us acidity with fruit,” said Costello.

MILLER FAMILY WINES



PHOTO COURTESY OF BIEN NACIDO AND SOLOMON HILLS ESTATES



**BECAUSE OF THE QUALITY OF AND HIGH RESPECT FOR THE VINEYARD, WE HAVE HAD OVER 270 DIFFERENT PRODUCERS BUY FRUIT FROM US TO MAKE THEIR WINES.”**

—WILL COSTELLO

PHOTO: WILL COSTELLO

# STEWARDED AN EMERGING VINEYARD

**SITE: SAN BERNABE VINEYARD, SAN BERNABE, MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

**WINE: DIORA 2018 LA GRANDE MAJESTÉ PINOT NOIR (\$40)**

**PRESENTER: JAMES EWART, WINEMAKER**

Since 2004, San Bernabe has been an AVA as well as a vineyard, thanks to the dedication of the Indelicato family, owners of Delicato Family Wines. The appellation is around 25,000 acres, of which Delicato farms roughly 1,680 for its Diora Wines label. Over the past few years, the company has shifted into terroir-driven luxury wines, and Diora is part of this endeavor.

San Bernabe Vineyard was among the first sites planted by the missionaries of San Antonio in the early 1800s, but it wasn't until the early 1970s, when the building of many miles of canals made it possible to irrigate the land, that it expanded into what it is today. About 60 miles from the Monterey Bay, the vineyard is framed by the Santa Lucia mountain range, which, according to Diora winemaker James Ewart, "blocks the marine influence and protects the Salinas Valley from rain." (The name

Diora, which comes from the French word *d'or*, "of gold," was in his words "inspired by the golden hills" of the range.)

Born into a winemaking family in Australia's Adelaide Hills, Ewart recalled that his first summer in the Monterey region more than 20 years ago "was almost colder than winter in Australia." He attributes its large diurnal temperature swings to the funneling of onshore winds off of the Monterey Bay through the Salinas Valley: "We can get those ripe notes as a result of the peak [heat] of the day, but [we] still have those cool nights that slow down grapes' respiration and preserve acidity."

Upon purchasing the land in 1988, the Indelicato family undertook a major replanting in favor of varieties best suited to the terroir. Careful selection led them to focus on Chardonnay as well as Pinot Noir clones 667, 115, 828, 459, and Pommard. According to Ewart, the Pommard clone was chosen to cre-

ate a "darker style" of Pinot Noir.

Displaying a colorful map of soil profiles, Ewart summarized that although San Bernabe Vineyard contains a variety of types, Aeolian or wind-derived soil is most common; its abundance "is quite unique to San Bernabe," making it a defining feature of the AVA. He added that the undulating hills of the site are "sand dunes stabilized over many years." The result of the struggle faced by vines planted here is "some really nice, concentrated, small berries, [producing] a wine of bright fruit and ripeness."

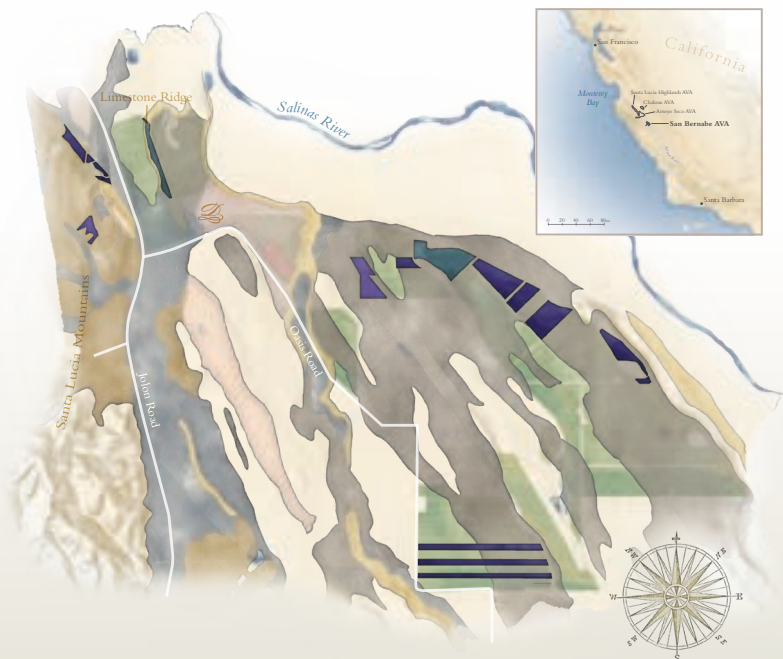
The dark and fruit-forward Diora 2018 La Grande Majesté—San Bernabe's first appellated Pinot Noir—consists mainly of grapes from the vineyard's best Pinot Noir block, set on a hillside. Ewart said his goal as a winemaker is to "guard these grapes from the vineyards to the winery and really express the vineyard."

*The San Bernabe Vineyard in the up-and-coming San Bernabe AVA.*



# Diora®

## SAN BERNABE VINEYARD



### KEY

Winery	Chardonnay	Snelling-Greenfield complex	Xerorthents, loamy	Greenfield fine sandy loam
Vines	Pinot Noir	Lockwood loam	Ayar silty clay	Roads
Waterways	Syrah	Chamise channery loam	Garey sandy loam	



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIORA

### Diora 2018 La Grande Majesté Pinot Noir, San Bernabe Vineyard, Monterey (\$40)

The fruit for this wine is sourced from the highest-elevation plot on the site. Planted on Lockwood shaly loam soils, the small-berried grapes create a plush wine blessed with a core of chocolate, strawberry, and cherry and an earthy soul. Dotted with cinnamon and orange peel throughout, it finishes with herbal notes tinged with cranberry and spice.



### Diora 2018 La Grande Lumière Chardonnay, San Bernabe Vineyard, Monterey (\$40)

The first vintage from Diora to include the San Bernabe Vineyard (which has also given its name to an AVA) on the label, this white was aged sur lie for ten months in 100% new French oak. It's fresh, lithe, and vibrant, with a buttery, nutty mouthfeel. Notes of tangerine, mango, vanilla, and peach work in tandem with high-toned acidity before rosemary-seasoned green apple appears on the finish.

TRANSCENDENT WINES

# BLESSED BY CABERNET

**SITE: SANTA MARGARITA RANCH VINEYARD, SANTA MARGARITA RANCH, PASO ROBLES, SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

**WINE: ANCIENT PEAKS 2018 CABERNET SAUVIGNON (\$22)**

**PRESENTER: MIKE SINOR, FOUNDING WINEMAKER**

In the southernmost reaches of the large Paso Robles AVA lies a little sub-appellation called Santa Margarita Ranch. Untouched by any of the other sub-AVAs, its location makes it quite special. Originally part of a Mexican land grant, the 14,000-acre ranch would eventually fall under the stewardship of three families: the Wittstroms, Rossis, and Filipponis. On the hunt for ideal grape-growing sites, Robert Mondavi discovered the ranch and entered into a 36-year lease agreement, beginning vineyard development in 1999. But after the sale of Robert Mondavi Winery in 2004, the three families bought back the lease in 2005 and founded Ancient Peaks Winery, named after the tail end of the protective Santa Lucia Mountains.

Industry veteran Mike Sinor is founding winemaker of Ancient Peaks. Having himself worked under Mondavi in the 1990s, he maintained that the love and care that one of America's all-time greatest winemakers put into Santa Margarita Ranch continues today. Sharing a map of the 875 SIP-certified acres under vine, he noted the varieties featured throughout. Immediately noticeable were the large swaths of red representing Cabernet Sauvignon, along with splotches of color denoting 13 other varieties. Next he shared an image of the five distinct soil profiles in the area, describing the ancient seabed while holding a large Jurassic-era species of oyster shell buried throughout. Much of Ancient Peaks' Cabernet Sauvignon grows on the veins of these ancient shells, while other varieties take advantage of volcanic, granitic, rocky alluvium, and shale soil profiles.

Santa Margarita Ranch's proximity to the ocean, which is about 14 miles away, provides the cooler weather that convinced Mondavi to plant Bordeaux varieties, "and we've been so blessed by that decision ever since," said Sinor, as it's responsible for the freshness of wines like the Ancient Peaks 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon he presented. "Cab is our focused variety," Sinor asserted, because "it just does really well here." As a nationally distributed brand, he added, Ancient Peaks means "to bring forth an estate wine that's family owned [and] certified sustainable . . . at a great price."



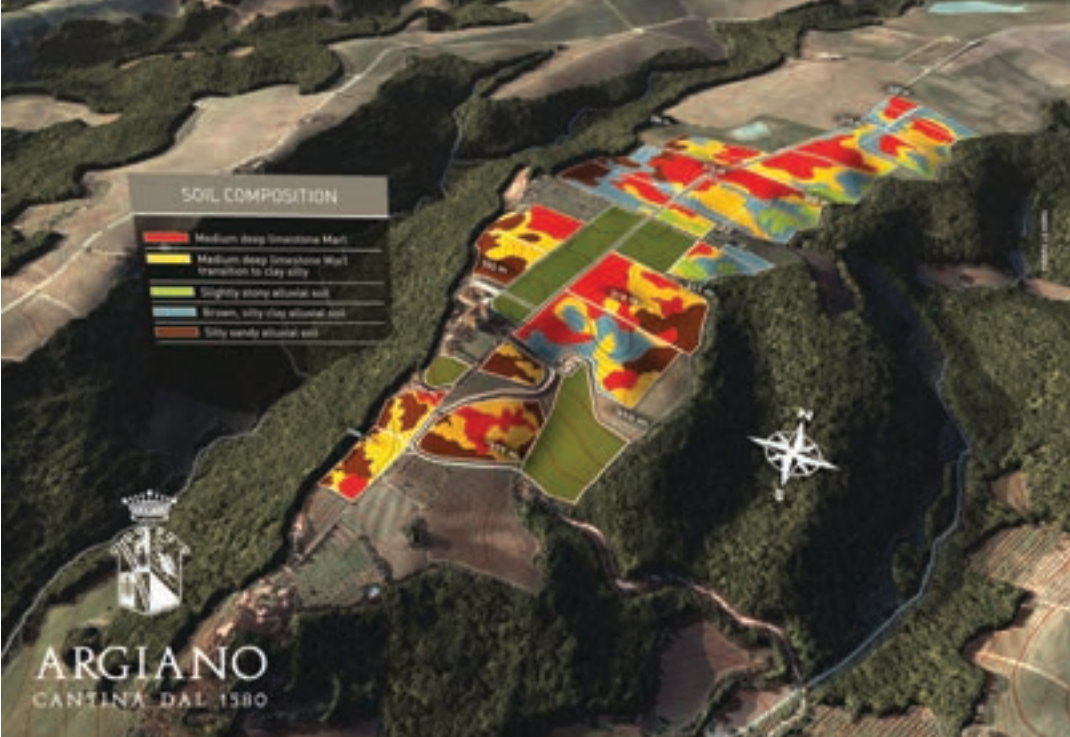
**Ancient Peaks 2017 Pearl Collection Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Margarita Ranch, Paso Robles (\$70)** The inaugural release of this small-production Cab is sourced from specially cultivated blocks in the estate-owned Margarita Vineyard. Aged in 100% new French oak, it incorporates 5% Petit Verdot for added color and dimension. Ancient seabed soils on the property lend a chalkiness to the wine along with a sensation of slate in a velvet-lined coat of fennel and black olive. Concentrated notes of blackberry wash up against a spiced finish of dark chocolate and cedar.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANCIENT PEAKS

**SANTA MARGARITA RANCH'S PROXIMITY TO THE OCEAN, WHICH IS ABOUT 14 MILES AWAY, PROVIDES THE COOLER WEATHER THAT CONVINCED MONDAVI TO PLANT BORDEAUX VARIETIES, "AND WE'VE BEEN SO BLESSED BY THAT DECISION EVER SINCE," SAID SINOR.**

*The Santa Margarita Ranch estate vineyard of Ancient Peaks.*



The vineyards of Argiano in Montalcino, Tuscany.

## BRUNELLO'S BEST EXPRESSION

**SITE: VIGNA DEL SUOLO VINEYARD, BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO, TUSCANY, ITALY**

**WINE: ARGIANO 2015 VIGNA DEL SUOLO BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO (\$200)**

**PRESENTER: RICCARDO BOGI, SALES MANAGER**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARGIANO



**ABOUT 30 MILLION YEARS AGO, MONTALCINO WAS UNDER A SHALLOW SEA TEEMING WITH LIFE THAT EVENTUALLY EVAPORATED, LEAVING BEHIND RICH LIMESTONE, CALCAREOUS, AND MARL SOIL.**

The historic Argiano winery was established in 1580, though its single-vineyard Vigna del Suolo Brunello di Montalcino wasn't released until 2015. Argiano sales manager Riccardo Bogi told the audience that the wine is sourced from a small parcel representing just 4.4 hectares (11 acres) of the estate's 120 hectares (296 acres) of vines, meant to be "our best expression of Brunello." But why just that one? Bogi insisted that to understand this, we had to know that, about 30 million years ago, Montalcino was under a shallow sea teeming with life that eventually evaporated, leaving behind rich limestone, calcareous, and marl soil.

Whittled by the hands of rainfall over time, there now exists a plateau in the southwestern corner of the essentially square-shaped hill that is the region of Montalcino. This is the site of Argiano's 135-hectare estate, planted to 40 hectares (99 acres) of Sangiovese, 7 hectares (17 acres) of Cabernet Sauvignon, 4 hectares (10 acres) of Merlot, and 4 hectares (10 acres) of Petit Verdot as well as 10 hectares (24 acres) of olives. We were shown a brightly colored aerial soil map overlaid onto the stubby finger-like estate vineyard, which is organically farmed and divided into six parcels. The oldest and most important of these parcels, according to Bogi, is Vigna del Suolo, planted in 1965.

The marl, or clay with a high level of limestone, that dominates the site causes the Sangiovese Grosso vines planted here "to struggle and send their roots deep into the soil," Bogi explained; it's also known to help grapes maintain their acidity, something that is necessary for the naturally rich and tannic Sangiovese variant. The plateau also experiences a higher level of sun exposure as well as influence from the Tyrrhenian Sea, whose breezes help to reduce vine disease and ensure milder winters and drier summers as compared to those in northern Montalcino.

The Vigna del Suolo Brunello undergoes spontaneous fermentation in temperature-controlled concrete tanks for about two weeks and then ages for roughly 30 months in large (15-hectoliter) French and Slovenian oak barrels. Only 3,440 bottles of the 2015 vintage were produced.

LUX WINES

# THE FRENCH AND ARGENTINE CONNECTION

**SITE: TEMIS, EL CEPILLO, UCO VALLEY, MENDOZA, ARGENTINA**

**WINE: ALTA VISTA 2015 TEMIS MALBEC (\$48)**

**PRESENTER: PATRICK D'AULAN, FOUNDER**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALTA VISTA



When putting together a panel on the subject of single vineyards, one should certainly invite Patrick d'Aulan, founder of Alta Vista: It was the first winery in Argentina to release a single-vineyard wine.

The Frenchman was born into a family of great winemaking tradition as the owners of Champagne house Piper-Heidsieck for two and a half centuries. When he arrived in Argentina in 1998 with renowned Bordeaux winemaker

Jean-Michel Arcaute, he knew that together they could create an extraordinary wine in the country's distinctive terroir.

They established Alta Vista that year in a winery that was itself built in 1890 in Chacras de Coria, Mendoza. Though improvements to the old facility were necessary, d'Aulan made sure to maintain many of its traditional features, such as the old concrete tanks that had been in operation for 120 years. "We didn't rebuild anything—we just updated," he explained.

Alta Vista maintains 124 hectares (306 acres) spanning five different vineyards in the region—three in Luján de Cuyo and two in the Uco Valley. All of the properties sit above 1,000 meters (3,280 feet) in elevation, where they benefit from wide diurnal temperature swings of up to 20 degrees Celsius and pure snowmelt from the Andes as a water source. The producer also boasts old vines: Some of the Malbec parcels planted in the sandy, silty soils of the 19-hectare (47-acre) Temis Vineyard are over 100 years of age. Located in the Uco Valley, Temis experiences warm days tempered by a constant breeze and followed by cool nights. In fact, it boasts the coolest climate of all of Alta Vista's single vineyards.

Such conditions help d'Aulan's winemaking team—consisting of both French and Argentine natives—to create complex wines like the Temis Malbec. Fermented in the century-old concrete tanks, the fruit from those equally old vines produces a wine of great freshness but notably round character; due in part to low yields, only 5,000 bottles are made. "I love this combination of Argentinian Malbec and high altitude made with French heritage," said d'Aulan.



**Alta Vista 2015 Single Vineyard Temis Malbec, El Cepillo, Uco Valley, Mendoza, Argentina (\$48)**

In 2001, Alta Vista became the first winery in Argentina to use a single-vineyard designation. The coldest of Alta Vista's estate properties, experiencing a constant breeze, the Temis vineyard was planted in 1938;

its age is a key factor in the wine's notable complexity. Dark fruit, great structure, fine acidity, and a startling minerality are all inherent components of the well-balanced palate. Concentrated notes of boysenberry are meaty and ripe.

**Alta Vista 2014 Single Vineyard Alizarine Malbec, Las Compuertas, Luján de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina (\$48)**

This cool-climate vineyard sits at an elevation of over 3,000 feet, where silty clay-loam soils meet a layer of boulders that go 3–6 feet deep. Chalky tannins lend an edge to the floral aromas and flavors, including dried violets, at the forefront of this elegant red. Iron and beet are captured on a mid-palate that further emphasizes its distinctly high-acid structure. Ripe blueberry and plum notes keep pace on the finish. Aged 12 months in new French oak and an additional six months in bottle.

**Alta Vista 2015 Single Vineyard Serenade Malbec, Agrelo, Luján de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina (\$48)**

At 3,000 feet above sea level, this vineyard undergoes extreme diurnal temperature changes, but the arid climate never experiences frost. Contrasting the grip of the Alizarine Malbec, this well-built expression is creamy and plush yet elegant. Blackberry preserves are sumptuous with underlying chaparral and roasted coffee. Gamey notes distinguish the bold finish.

KOBRAND

*A row in Alta Vista's Mendoza estate vineyard.*



*A view of the Stags' Leap Estate Vineyard from the Manor House porch.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF STAGS' LEAP



PHOTO: TED THOMAS

## THE SOUL OF THE ESTATE

**SITE: STAGS' LEAP ESTATE VINEYARD, STAGS LEAP DISTRICT, NAPA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA**

**WINES: STAGS' LEAP THE LEAP CABERNET SAUVIGNON (\$115) AND NE CEDE MALIS PETITE SIRAH (\$150)**

**PRESENTER: CHRISTOPHE PAUBERT, WINEMAKER AND GENERAL MANAGER**

"My goal is to show the beauty of the Stags' Leap fruit with my philosophy that I learned in Bordeaux, which is a dedication to the unique expression of each vineyard," said Christophe Paubert, winemaker and general manager for Stags' Leap Winery. Although dedication to microterroir may not be wholly unique to the Bordelais, the opportunity for a French winemaker to finesse such incredible California fruit may be.

Stags' Leap Estate Vineyard is located at the southern end of the Stags Leap District AVA in Napa Valley, where it encompasses a third of the 240-acre estate—one of the first to be planted in the region in the late 1800s. Situated at the foot of

the legendary Palisades, the property takes advantage of its diverse soils, from volcanic rock to deep loam, that in turn provide excellent drainage.

Paubert explained that Stags' Leap experiences the effects of the San Pablo Bay more than its neighbors to the north do. "Because the Palisades are made up of mostly basalt, in the summer they heat up, and this drives the air up, in turn funneling the air in from the south," he said. "We get fog that happens mostly after July, when we're ripening the grapes, and this helps to decrease the number of hours we get from the sun." These orographic, climatic, and pedologic factors all work in conjunction to create the distinctively velvety texture and overall character of Stags' Leap wines, according to Paubert.

"The wine we're talking about today is a blend of these different components, giving us different aromas and textures," he said of the Stags' Leap 2017 The Leap Cabernet Sauvignon; a true representa-

tion of the Stags Leap District, it blends the most expressive barrels from select blocks throughout the estate. Paubert also mentioned the Stags' Leap Ne Cede Malis Petite Sirah, sourced from estate's oldest block, which is named for the winery founder's family motto: "Don't give in to misfortune." The wine is predominantly Petite Sirah, though it includes at least 15 other varieties in small amounts. "We don't make all our wine [exclusively] from the estate," said Paubert, "but the estate is our soul."

**Stags' Leap 2017 The Leap Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District, Napa Valley (\$115)** Cabernet Sauvignon from this century-old 240-acre estate in the Stags Leap District is planted on well-drained volcanic soil. Glossy tannins and a velvety texture accentuate the wine's poise as violets and sweet earth bathe in black-fruit creaminess.

TREASURY WINE ESTATES

# BORN OF THE "MOUNTAIN TORRENT"

**SITE: PUENTE ALTO VINEYARD, PUENTE ALTO, ALTO MAIPO VALLEY, CHILE**

**WINE: GRAVAS DEL MAIPO 2017 CABERNET SAUVIGNON (\$70)**

**PRESENTER: ISABEL MITARAKIS, WINEMAKER**

Chilean wine giant Concha y Toro has been dedicated to making world-class Cabernet Sauvignon from Puente Alto terroir for generations. It's perhaps its Gravas del Maipo label that best exemplifies the region's incredible character. "So we have this massal selection today," said Isabel Mitarakis, winemaker for Gravas del Maipo. "No clones, just . . . 100 years of the French vines planted in Puente Alto."

Not far from the capital city of Santiago, the Puente Alto Vineyard is located on the north bank of the Maipo River at the foot of the Andes Mountains, about 650 meters (2,132 feet) in elevation. The river and the mountains are the two "major characters in this story," Mitarakis said, noting that the latter has a moderating influence on what she called the "semi-arid" Mediterranean climate. The breezes coming off of the Andes create a daily temperature swing of as much as 18 degrees Celsius, she explained, adding, "This helps keep the acidity in the grapes and lengthens the ripening period. It's very slow, so we can reach the desired level of tannin and phenols."

As for the former, Mitarakis quoted Charles Darwin, who visited Chile in 1830, to best express the importance of the Maipo River to the vineyard's terroir: "The Maipo is rather a great mountain torrent than a river; the fall is very great, and the water the color of mud; the roar is very like that of the sea, as it rushes amongst the great rounded fragments." Later, the young and talented Chilean would show the audience a slide of these "great rounded fragments" of volcanic material carried by the river millions of years ago, which now can be seen in the vineyard.

Most of the Puente Alto DO consists of rocky alluvium soils, which, according to Mitarakis, allow for excellent drainage, promoting the growth of smaller clusters and concentrating the tannins and colors to result in full-bodied wines. But the rocks that the river deposited in the appellation's terraces also play a role. "We're in the third terrace, which is the oldest terrace, so we have more complexity in terms of soil. We find more clay in some areas, more sand in others, [and] big gravel, big rounded rocks, [in still others]," said Mitarakis.

She proudly recognized that these soils born from a "great mountain torrent" make for a highly aromatic wine in the form of the Gravas del Maipo 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon. Most of the Puente Alto Vineyard's 127 hectares (314 acres) are planted to the grape, but there is also some Merlot, Petit Verdot, and Cabernet Franc—just as there is in the wine, which specifically contains 10% Cab Franc, 3% Petit Verdot, and 2% Merlot.

CONCHAYTORO

**Gravas del Maipo 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Puente Alto, Maipo Valley, Chile (\$70)** This wine is named for the result of thousands of years of erosion in the Maipo River basin: an abundance of gravel in the subsoils of the Puente Alto Vineyard, which rises over 2,000 feet in elevation at the base of the Andes, near the river's northern bank. The wine delivers generous swirls of blackberry and dried violets in a rush of streamlined luxury. Sturdy tannins are met by a measured graphite character that reflects the grace of the terroir. **\$**

FETZER VINEYARDS

*The Puente Alto Vineyard in the Alto Maipo Valley of Chile.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRAVAS DEL MAIPO



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94  
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92  
points

PRESCRIPTION CLARKSBURG CHARDONNAY - \$20

92  
points

PRESCRIPTION 2018 ALEXANDER VALLEY CAB SAUV - \$30

*\*Reviews by Publisher Meridith May*



LLOYD  
BY: *Rob Lloyd*



# The Five-Year Plan

A SOMMFOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT REFLECTS ON HER PATH TO THE WINE INDUSTRY by Jessica Leigh Jolly

PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSICA LEIGH JOLLY



**THE SUMMER OF 2016** is one I will never forget. The year had been a trying one, with a divorce and a major surgery, and I'd almost forgotten who I was. I'd always been adventurous, happy, and optimistic, but my experiences had made me a new person: someone who needed to get back to living life, do things they'd been afraid to do, and celebrate the beauty that surrounded them. Above all, I felt the need to be closer to home. I was living in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates at the time, but after four years in the Middle East, I knew my time there was up. I wanted a new life.

But before I moved back to the U.S., I wanted to make a memory that would always remind me of my inner magic, strength, and resilience as well as of the great things that God had destined for my future. After making a short list of destinations, I settled on Cyprus. The next thing I knew, I was stepping off the plane. I pulled my braids up into a bun and threw my passport into my backpack, ready to explore.

An avid traveler since childhood, I'd visited many places both domestic and international but had never traveled solo. I had a weeklong itinerary packed with pottery making, beautiful Airbnb stays, agricultural tours, and a stop at the Baths of Aphrodite, but one of the most memorable parts of my trip was my visit to Sterna Winery in Kathikas.

PHOTO: VIACHESLAV VIA ADOBE STOCK



It's a small establishment, but the level of knowledge and care its team provides to their guests is remarkable. I've always loved learning and cultural exploration, whether it's related to cuisine or art, but I never saw myself becoming a sommelier. At the time, I didn't even know what a sommelier was—I just knew that I loved having new experiences. And these were particularly vivid: I got to see the caves beneath the winery, chat with locals, and taste a plethora of different Cypriot wines as I learned about the country's millennia-long history of winemaking.

Fast-forward to 2018: Living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and feeling unfulfilled professionally, I thought back on my trip to Cyprus. My mom, who's a member of a popular wine club, suggested I apply for a job as a tasting room attendant. The experience I had in this role confirmed that becoming a sommelier would be a part of my journey: The trainings were fun and no day felt like work (except for those nights I spent as a closer!). Wine knowledge surrounded me, from my Level 3 co-workers providing book recommendations to the training staff showing us the purpose of aerating and perfecting the pour to the patrons themselves, who had their own pairing insights to offer. My fate in the industry was sealed—and it was then that I heard about the SommFoundation Scholarship for Black American Wine Professionals,

sponsored by Cooper's Hawk.

I never thought I'd be selected; there were so many qualified people, and I had just gotten my feet wet in the wine world. But here I am two years later as a scholarship recipient. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the Court of Master

in the wine industry and to offer individuals like myself a shot in a world that many of us have not been exposed to says a lot about the organization's commitment to diversity. Seeing so many phenomenal Black wine professionals currently killing it in the industry is equally encouraging.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JESSICA LEIGH JOLLY

*The author's photos from a life-changing trip to Cyprus.*

Sommeliers has temporarily suspended its programming. But if classes resume this summer, I am hopeful that I will be enrolled in my Level I Introductory Course—and I cannot wait to see where my story will unfold from there. It's a humbling feeling when your dreams are supported; essentially, this is what SommFoundation is doing for me.

For SommFoundation to acknowledge that there are so few African Americans

I'm so happy that they are being acknowledged and celebrated, and I'm even happier that I am being propelled to maybe follow in their footsteps.

While my five-year plan had a turbulent start, 2021 is proving to be my moment. I will continue to flourish and conquer my fears—and I am very thankful for the role that SommFoundation and Cooper's Hawk are playing in that destiny. SJ





# Steering Consumers to the PORT SIDE

## THE FLADGATE PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES A SAFE HARBOR FOR AFICIONADOS OF FORTIFIED WINES

by Richard Carleton Hacker



Port barrels at the Croft lodge in Vila Nova de Gaia.

**A FEW YEARS AGO**, I was aboard a small luxury yacht that was cruising the scenic waters off of the Orkney Islands of Northern Scotland. In what I considered to be a misplaced trust in my nautical skills, at one point the captain asked me to take the helm as he went below for a cup of coffee. A few minutes later a fierce gale blew in, rocking the boat as the waters turned choppy.

The captain shouted from the galley, “Go to port, go to port!” To be honest, my first thought in that blustery weather was of a glass of 20 Year Old Tawny, although I knew he meant I should change our course to the left, steering into the wind to lessen its effect on our craft. But the reason I instantly knew the difference between starboard and port was because of a phrase I had made up to help me remember: “Is there any Port left?”

Indeed, ever since I came of age, Port has had a special place in my life, whether I was drinking it or writing about it. Some years ago, I was honored with the title of Cavaleiro (Knight) by the Confraria do Vinho do Porto (Port Wine Brotherhood) for having made “a significant contribution to the image and knowledge of Port Wine” over the years. This, of course, has only intensified my resolve to continue spreading the gospel of Portugal’s national drink, or, as the Portuguese call it, Oporto, which has had its own appellation since 1756.

After all, despite its inclusion on many restaurant menus and retail shelves today, most American consumers are only vaguely familiar with the category as a whole, remaining unaware that it encompasses a multitude of styles with a diverse spectrum of flavors—as exemplified by the vast selections offered by The Fladgate Partnership’s exceptional portfolio. To prove the point, allow me to pick up where I left off in the January-February issue of *The SOMM Journal* and provide a further breakdown of some of the company’s current offerings:

The dramatically rolling vineyards of Taylor Fladgate's Quinta Vargellas.



### Croft 10 Year Old Tawny

**(\$29)** Whether served chilled on its own or used as a base for cocktails, this is one of the more vibrant, muscular ten-year-old Tawnies readily available today. The deep-purple liquid offers a soothingly sweet and ultra-fragrant profile that emits rich oak, cedar, stewed apple, and prune.



### Croft Reserve Tawny (\$19)

The distinctive, atypically wide-shouldered bottle sets this label apart from other Tawnies, as does its deep flavor—the result of seven years of aging after blending. Although it is slightly sweeter than the Croft 10 Year Old Tawny, it retains the style's characteristic notes of plum and almond as well as herbaceous, spicy overtones. Simply add a slice of lemon or broaden its potential by featuring it in a Negroni.



### Croft Distinction (\$19)

This vintage-character Ruby Port is a blend of expressions aged three to four years in neutral oak barrels to achieve nuances of flavor that are greater than usually found in younger wines—resulting in an excellent balance of value and complexity. It is on the lighter side of the Ruby Port spectrum, with hints of milk chocolate, raisin, and dark grapes.



### Croft Fine Ruby Port (\$13)

An intense ruby color; this inexpensive wine allows one to taste the characteristics of a Ruby Port without venturing into the slightly headier realms of Late Bottled Vintages (LBVs). Black-fruit aromas and flavors of bright blueberry, blackberry, and black cherry make for a perfect pairing with dark chocolate or fruit-based desserts.



### Fonseca Terra Bella (\$22)

This expression has the distinction of being the first 100% organic Port to be certified by the USDA's National Organic Program. The Fladgate Partnership's head winemaker, David Guimaraens, and his viticultural team grow the fruit for this wine on a plot originally cultivated by Guimaraens' late father, Bruce, at Fonseca's Quinta do Panascal estate, which has been organically farmed since 1992. Decidedly sweet with a deep purple hue and a dry finish, it boasts an abundance of juicy summer fruit with traces of bubble gum.



### Taylor Fladgate Fine Ruby (\$16)

Made with grapes from the best vineyards of the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior; this Port provides a gentle entryway into the world of Rubies. Tannins and cedar go hand in hand with cherry and plump fruit before the enticingly dry finish.



### Taylor Fladgate First Estate Reserve (\$20)

A nonvintage Port that nonetheless boasts heady vintage character; this sweet Ruby Port is a blend of reserve wines that were selected for their intense depth of color and fruit. Aged for four years in neutral wood vats before bottling, it shows fresh, rich aromas of black cherry and cassis; a well-knit structure; and smooth tannins, resulting in a velvety, luxurious mouthfeel.



### Taylor Fladgate 20 Year Old Tawny (\$57)

With an intense amber color; this vibrant wine has voluptuous, spicy, jammy, and nutty aromas laced with orange blossom; an underlying oak influence comes from an average of two decades of cask aging. The palate is rich, with concentrated flavors and a long, mellow finish.




### Taylor Fladgate 30 Year Old Tawny (\$140)

The wines that make up this blend are taken from different vintages and then aged in 600-liter oak casks for decades, over which time they lose their dark purple-black color and gain their distinctive "tawny" hue. In addition, as they age, they develop nutty flavors and become more concentrated, thanks in part to the fact that the barrels lose 3% of their volume every year.



### Taylor Fladgate 40 Year Old Tawny (\$235)

With an intense amber color; this full-bodied wine—one of the oldest and rarest Tawnies available—intermingles aromas of nuts and spicy, tangy marmalade with toasty and raisiny notes derived from its lengthy aging in casks. Rich with concentrated flavor; it has a long, mellow finish. Save it for those special moments and serve at room temperature or slightly chilled. 





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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND SOMMCON, OUR WEBINAR SERIES POSES A FAMILIAR QUESTION: **“TECHNIQUE OR TERROIR?”**

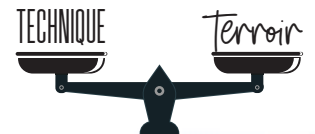
# Fluid EXPLANATION

by *Jessie Birschbach*



Here's the thing: Never have I ever taken my first sip of a wine and thought, "Hmm, is what I'm tasting here technique or terroir?" That said, I have had thoughts like "Whoa, this tastes like gravel and crunchy red fruit" and "Oof, this Pinot smells like someone just lit a match." Observations like the former have made me wonder which cool and perhaps rocky region the wine came from, while the latter helped me to deduce that a reductive style of winemaking had been employed.

So as much of a cliché as this question is, I admit it's an unavoidable and even necessary one to pose in order to truly understand a given wine. In fact, we explored the subject in an earlier webinar with SommCon just last fall precisely because we've come to understand that the answer to this query is and always will be, like wine itself, fluid. So, in revisiting it, we asked a handful of some of the best producers in the world where their wine—or, in the case of one participant, their spirit—falls on the scale. As moderator Lars Leicht, *The SOMM Journal's* VP of education, asked, "If wine is made in the vineyard, then why do we need winemakers? What's the balance?"



# Honoring a Family Who Treasures Their Grapes

**WINES:** TAITTINGER BRUT LA FRANÇAISE (\$65) AND PRESTIGE ROSÉ (\$85)

**PRESENTER:** VITALIE TAITTINGER, PRESIDENT

**SCALE:** BALANCED BETWEEN TERROIR AND TECHNIQUE



PHOTO: MARTIN MORRELL



As insistent as Vitalie Taittinger was that her Champagne house owed its style to terroir perhaps more than any other, she also wanted to honor her family's role in crafting their distinctively elegant Champagne. "Yes, we are blending, but the aim is not to erase the terroir," said Vitalie. "My career began in art, and for me winemaking is exactly the same. . . . We are keeping the shades of color from each terroir to create the family style [and] story."

The abridged version of that story goes something like this: Founded in the 18th century, Champagne Taittinger eventually came under the ownership of a private investment firm until Pierre-Emmanuel Taittinger, Vitalie's father and the grandson of the company's founder, bought it back in 2005. One of the last family-owned and -operated Champagne houses, Taittinger owns 752 acres encompassing 34 vineyards, including Grand Crus in the Montagne de Reims and Côte des Blancs appellations. This allows the producer to feature more estate-grown, terroir-driven fruit in its expressions than the other Grandes Marques Champagne houses. What's more, the relatively high percentage of Chardonnay grapes Taittinger uses results in the richer yet more elegant style for which it's revered, as does aging longer than the appellation requires.

In the role of president since early last year, Vitalie works alongside not only her father, who's honorary chairman, but her brother Clovis, who serves as managing director. However, she was quick to add that "the keyword for us is teamwork," citing the contributions of vineyard director Christelle Rinville and winemaker Alexandre Ponnavoy, to name just a few.

I had the pleasure of meeting Vitalie in Beverly Hills years ago, not long before I visited Taittinger's ancient chalk cellars in Reims; although she mentioned her family's sustainability efforts then, she seemed to place much more emphasis on the topic during our webinar, noting that the family works closely with Rinville's team and the growers it sources from to ensure there's "biodiversity in the soil." In addition, Taittinger has been certified via the Sustainable Viticulture in Champagne (SVC) program and has also maintained a Level 3 High Environmental Value (HVE) rating from the French Ministry of Agriculture since 2017, "which [represents] really the best practices you can have in Champagne," she said.

To showcase the Taittinger style and terroir, Vitalie presented its Brut La Française and Prestige Rosé. The former, a blend of 40% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir, and 25% Pinot Meunier, is aged for almost four years on its lees—twice as long as the appellation requires. The Prestige Rosé, meanwhile, offers incredible value at an SRP of \$85.

KOBRAND



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAITTINGER



*Château de la Marquetterie serves as Taittinger's headquarters just 2 miles from Épernay, near the Marne River.*

# Supercharged Compounds

**WINE:** SAINT CLAIR FAMILY ESTATE 2019 ORIGIN SERIES SAUVIGNON BLANC, MARLBOROUGH (\$28)

**PRESENTER:** HAMISH CLARK, WINEMAKER/VITICULTURIST

**SCALE:** TIPPED TO TERROIR



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAINT CLAIR FAMILY ESTATE



*Marlborough, New Zealand, is world-renowned for its Sauvignon Blanc.*

“Considering technique versus terroir, Saint Clair Sauvignon Blanc is very much about terroir,” said winemaker Hamish Clark—and although the Marlborough native was cautious not to understate the importance of his team’s careful approach in the winery, he presented a strong case for the influence of the small subregion of Dillons Point from which Saint Clair sources its best Sauvignon Blanc.

Proprietors Neal and Judy Ibbotson planted their first grapevines in Marlborough in 1978, becoming one of the area’s pioneering growers. In 1994, just before the region’s Sauvignon Blanc skyrocketed in popularity to achieve worldwide recognition, Saint Clair Family Estate released its first vintage. “The late ‘90s was really when Marlborough started to explode,” said Clark. “In the year 2000, we discovered a special little area in a place called Dillons Point,” which is located in close proximity to Cloudy Bay and the Richmond Range mountains. It benefits from a cooler climate than the other subregions of Marl-

borough as well as uncommonly fertile and free-draining alluvial soils with a high mineral salt content, which Clark credited for “really turbocharg[ing] Sauvignon Blanc’s flavors in particular.”

The discovery of Sauvignon Blanc from Dillons Point helped Saint Clair achieve international acclaim in the late 1990s and early 2000s, according to Clark, who admitted that “it was a bit of a gamble really—we didn’t know what our first vintage would be like. But after assessing the quality following that first vintage, it has become our most coveted area for sourcing Sauvignon Blanc, and these days it makes up the majority of our production” of the variety. Still, they wanted to understand *why* it was so special. After several years of research in collaboration with the University of Bordeaux and University of Auckland, Clark said they found that the area’s fertile soils enhance the concentration and intensity of

certain flavor compounds in the grapes, including black currant, passion fruit, and grapefruit. “We now understand that while Sauvignon Blanc will grow anywhere, it really thrives in high-nutrient soils, [giving] you an expression that is supercharged, essentially,” said Clark.

To preserve these “supercharged” qualities, the team exerts “very little winemaking influence on our Sauvignon Blanc program,” noted Clark. “We’re using vineyard yeast [that’s] selected for its ability to ferment cleanly and strongly, [which] helps to express and not adulterate these flavor compounds.” They also ferment each parcel separately in small 20,000-liter tanks, he added, “so we can understand where these flavors are coming from.” But if there was one major takeaway from Clark’s presentation, it’s that all signs lead to Dillons Point.



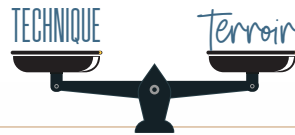
E. & J. GALLO

# Finding Beauty in Diversity

**WINE:** ROBERT HALL WINERY 2018 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, PASO ROBLES (\$20)

**PRESENTER:** DON BRADY, WINEMAKER

**SCALE:** BALANCED BETWEEN TERROIR AND TECHNIQUE



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT HALL WINERY



“Robert Hall was a dreamer,” said winemaker Don Brady at the top of his presentation. “He built it and they came”—including Brady himself, who arrived in Paso Robles from Texas over two decades ago and remembers the late entrepreneur as an avid believer “in working the land, learning the craft, and improving on every vintage.” In fact, when Robert Hall Winery was established in 1999, the pair set out to do just that while also capturing “the essence of Paso” in their wines.

Today the producer sustainably farms 136 acres of estate vineyards in the Estrella and Geneseo districts of Paso Robles in addition to sourcing fruit from sustainable vineyards across the entire region. But while Brady acknowledged that Robert Hall’s wines are surely “made in the vineyard,” he feels that technique plays an equally strong role. After sharing an image of a rocky, sandy vineyard on one of Robert Hall’s estate properties in the Estrella District, Brady—who was part of the group that helped create the 11 Paso Robles AVAs in 2014—explained that his team views the large region as being divided into three distinct growing areas; as a result, they treat the fruit they source from each differently in the winery as a way of “matching technique with terroir.”

While Paso Robles overall experiences the largest diurnal swings in California and a “maritime climate with a Mediterranean rain pattern,” Brady noted, conditions can vary dramatically within it. Dubbed the Inland Valley Districts, the San Miguel District, the Estrella District, the Geneseo District, and San Juan Creek typically offer alluvial sedimentary soils and a warmer climate, producing wines with ripe flavors and good acidity. The Mountain Districts—which consist of the Templeton Gap District, the Willow Creek District, Santa Margarita Ranch, and the Adelaida District—offer the coolest microclimates in Paso as well as calcareous shale and clay seabed soils and, in Brady’s words, “pretty good elevation too—anywhere from 600 to 2,200 feet.” He observed that the wines “can sometimes be angular” but also praised them for their dark fruit and dense color and tannins. The remaining sub-AVAs comprise the Inland Hill Districts, which “are kind of a mix of the [other] two” in terms of the character of their wines, said Brady. “There are patches of seabed soils and there are also some sedimentary soils that have basically been washed down out of the hills.”

After the Paso Robles pioneer finished his summary of the region, he circled back to present the Robert Hall 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, noting that it was blended to play on the strengths of those three areas. “We use that big, rich fruit from the Inland Valley but balance [it] with the angular structure of the [Inland] Hill and Mountain districts to really take advantage of the diversity that Paso offers,” he added. If the Robert Hall Cabernet is evidence of that diversity, it is also perhaps one of the region’s most holistic expressions. For more information, visit [roberthallwinery.com](http://roberthallwinery.com).

*Robert Hall Winery in Paso Robles.*



An aerial view of the Jordan Winery Chateau Block Vineyard and the surrounding estate in the Alexander Valley.

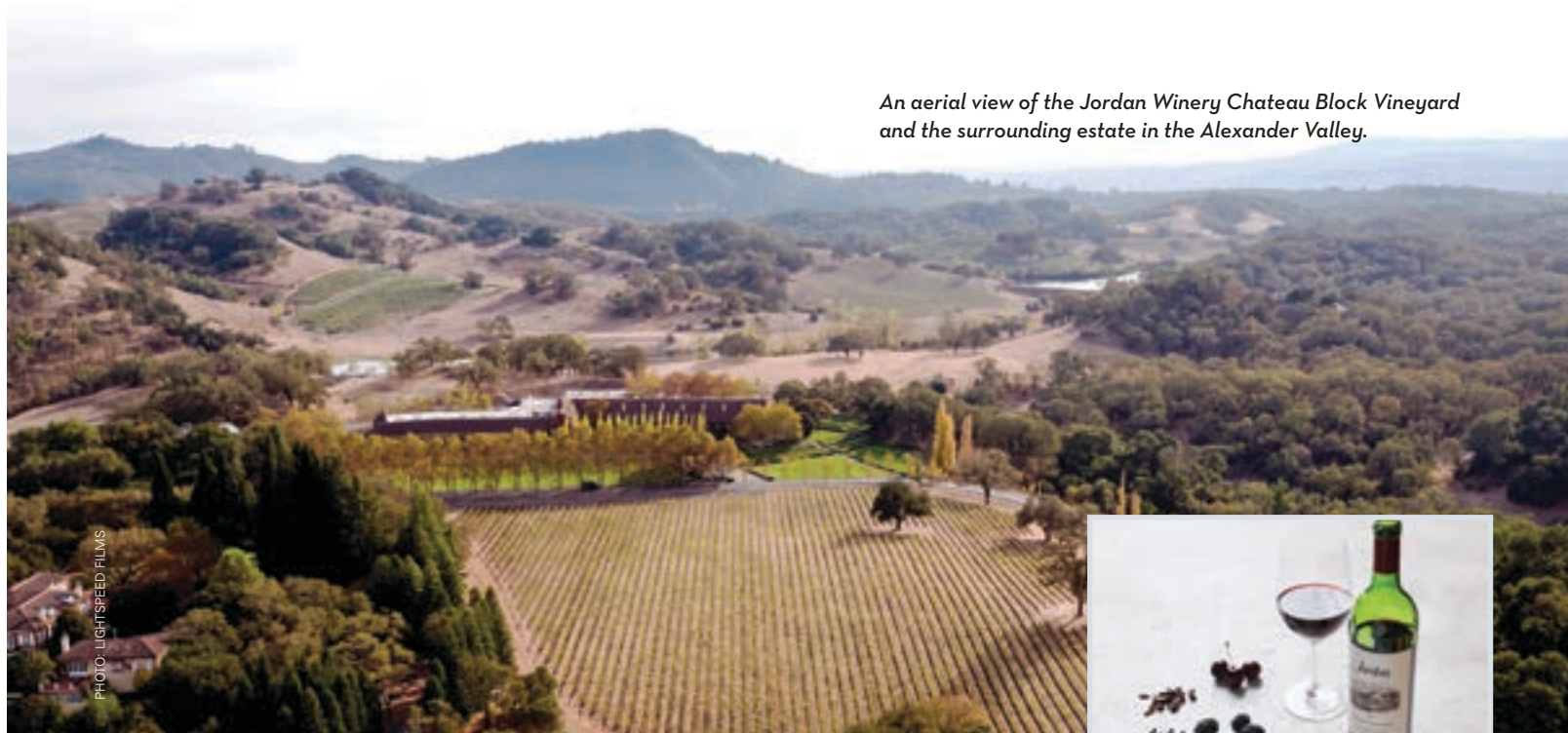


PHOTO: LIGHTSPEED FILMS



## A Paradigm Shift

**WINE:** JORDAN WINERY 2016 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, ALEXANDER VALLEY (\$58)

**PRESENTER:** DANA GRANDE, GROWER RELATIONS MANAGER

**SCALE:** TIPPED TO TERROIR



Before Dana Grande became Jordan Winery's grower relations manager, the Sonoma native served as its estate viticulturist and, for 13 years, its vineyard manager; she left for a spell to work for another family winery but returned last year to assume the newly formed position. In short, her experience perhaps makes her the leading authority on Jordan's terroir.

Grande commenced her presentation by reviewing an exhaustive list of the winery's efforts related to environmental responsibility, which include earning certifications through both the Fish Friendly Farming and Bee Friendly Farming programs; certifying both its winery and its estate vineyards through the California Sustainable Wine Alliance; operating the winery entirely with solar-generated power; and, finally, achieving 100% sustainable certification among all of its growers as of last year.

Located in the Alexander Valley subregion of Sonoma County, the Jordan estate property encompasses 1,200 acres, of which "only about 10% is planted to grapevine," said Grande. "We try to fit the vineyards within the natural landscape rather than make it fit our vineyard footprint."

On that note, Grande posed an inter-

PHOTO: MARC OLIVIER LEBLANC



esting question that was relevant to the webinar's theme: "At Jordan, we asked, does better viticulture impact the overall terroir? Our answer was no. The influence of the site, the terroir, is way more influential than any viticultural proactive can overcome, and that's why we changed our vineyard sourcing. In 2012, John Jordan sold the original property his father purchased in 1972."

The transition marked a generational shift in philosophy: the difference between

the "estate model" established by founder Tom Jordan, who believed that controlling the vineyards "equated to maximum quality in the bottle," and the "explore model" followed by his son John, who believes that the winery should strive to create the best wine possible, even if it's made with fruit sourced from other growers. The prevailing goal, said Grande, became "quality without compromise," and "although we still farm about 120 acres, we've changed a lot in [terms of] technique in the vineyard," among them decisions related to row orientation, the monitoring of soil-moisture levels, irrigation to the effective rootzones, and more. "We know that the wine is made in the vineyard—we believe that very strongly," she continued.

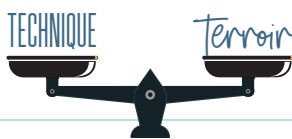
After reviewing a handful of the dozen vineyards Jordan sources from throughout the Alexander Valley, Grande again emphasized the difference between the "old Jordan" and the "new Jordan." Where the former used only estate fruit—mostly Cabernet Sauvignon—and American oak, the latter uses just 10% estate fruit, a larger percentage of other Bordeaux varieties, and French oak. The Jordan 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon she presented embodies this new, uncompromising era.

# Terroir as Technique

**WINE:** BLACK STALLION ESTATE WINERY 2017 LIMITED RELEASE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, NAPA VALLEY (\$60)

**PRESENTER:** RALF HOLDENRIED, WINEMAKER

**SCALE:** BALANCED BETWEEN TERROIR AND TECHNIQUE



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BLACK STALLION ESTATE



Just off the Silverado Trail in the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley, a statue of a rearing stallion greets visitors of the Black Stallion Estate Winery in tribute to the property's former occupant, the Silverado Equestrian Center. "It's a great place to make wine but also grow grapes," said winemaker Ralf Holdenried. But even as he highlighted its unique assets, he emphasized that the team believed equally in the terroir of Napa Valley as a whole, "not just what we grow in the Oak Knoll District." In selecting his vineyard sources to best represent the region, he added, "I'm using terroir as my technique."

The University of California, Davis, graduate was referring to Black Stallion's careful vineyard selection process throughout Napa Valley as well as the equally thoughtful blending process that follows. "We work with a lot of sustainable farmers [and] we are fully sustainable in the winery," he noted. To ensure the terroir is captured in the grapes and then translates to the finished wine, "I get involved [in everything] from pruning and development of the vineyard all the way into the harvesting decisions," Holdenried continued, inferring that technique starts in the vineyard.

Once the fruit that meets Black Stallion's standards arrives at the winery, it remains separated by site until it reaches the blending stage. When it comes to the use of both electronic and manual sorting; maceration technique (he cold soaks the grapes for five days, which helps to contribute to a broader mid-palate); temperature-controlled fermentation in a variety of tanks, differing in both size and material; oak regimen; and yeast selection, Holdenried noted that "I'm tailoring each of these levers to the vineyard itself. Technique for me also is the ability to keep each vineyard and lot separate all the way into the blending."

Once all of the elements are in place, Holdenried uses this nuanced approach to build a wine with multiple layers of flavor that represent Napa Valley as a whole. He presented Black Stallion's 2017 Limited Release Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon as a "quintessential Napa Valley Cab" and parted with a final thought on the webinar's overarching question: "The terroir creates the potential of the wine, and the winemakers use technique to tease those perfect flavors out of the grapes. I've seen some ordinary wines made from world-class vineyards, but I've never seen a world-class wine being made from ordinary grapes."

DELICATO FAMILY WINES



*Located on the property of a former equestrian center, Black Stallion Estate Winery was one of the last undeveloped sites in Napa Valley.*



## The Cocoa Powder Legacy

**WINE:** BEAULIEU VINEYARD 2017 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, RUTHERFORD (\$45)

**PRESENTER:** TREVOR DURLING, CHIEF WINEMAKER

**SCALE:** TIPPED TO TERROIR



For one of the oldest continuously operated wineries in Napa Valley (see also page 26), terroir makes the difference between a good and truly great wine. “At the end of the day, it’s a combo of both [technique and terroir], but here at Beaulieu Vineyard, terroir is the most important thing we need to highlight in the process,” said chief winemaker Trevor Durling.

It’s likely that most of the webinar attendees were already familiar with the story of how Beaulieu Vineyard, often shortened to BV, got its name, but Durling reminded us anyway: When the wife of scrappy French businessman Georges de Latour first saw the land he purchased in Napa in 1900, she exclaimed “*Quelle beau lieu!*”—“What a beautiful place!”

Durling’s fascinating history of BV included too many details to recount in full here, but it’s worth noting that de Latour eventually expanded his original 4 acres to 1,100, and BV managed to thrive even during Prohibition. Latour also benefited the broader wine industry by establishing

a large nursery for grafted, phylloxera-resistant vines after the disease hit California in the early 1900s. Another famous contribution by de Latour to the state’s wine-making prestige came in 1938 when he hired André Tchelistcheff, who was then working at the Pasteur Institute in France as an enologist. Now known as the “Dean of American Winemaking,” Tchelistcheff revolutionized the quality of California wines by not only pushing for producers to embrace the notion of terroir but also driving innovation in the winery. The father of Napa Cabernet served as BV’s head winemaker until 1973, then went on to mentor countless highly regarded winemakers before returning to BV 20 years later to consult until his death in 1994. His legacy continues to influence the winery’s team: “Today we take the same approach [of using] traditional winemaking methods to express the beautiful terroir we have here in Rutherford,” said Durling.

In fact, a term coined by Tchelistcheff—“Rutherford dust”—is still used to

describe the character of the wines from the region. (At the time he was referring to actual dust, but that’s another story.) “It’s kind of a forest-floor, dark-fruit, almost pencil-shaving, really beautiful aromatic profile that exists, but for me, it really is more of a textural thing on the palate. It’s a cocoa-powder flavor that hits you on the mid-palate,” Durling explained.

The winemaker shared an image of the Rutherford AVA dotted with what BV calls “ranches,” which encompass its 1,100 acres of sustainable vineyards throughout the entire region in addition to the Los Carneros and Calistoga AVAs. Most of the fruit for the wine that Durling presented, the BV Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon, comes from BV Ranch 1 and BV Ranch 2. It’s these sites that Durling feels best accomplish their “primary focus, [which is] to beautifully express that [Rutherford dust]. And it’s that combo of terroir in the vineyard [with] the latest and greatest in technology in winemaking that allows us to do so.”

*A tram embarks on a tour of the Benziger Family Winery insectary and vineyards in Sonoma County.*

## Digging into Geological Lasagna

**WINES:** BENZIGER FAMILY WINERY 2016 SIGNATERRA SUNNY SLOPE VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON (\$59)

AND 2018 CABERNET SAUVIGNON (\$20), SONOMA COUNTY

**PRESENTER:** CHRIS BENZIGER, FIRST-GENERATION VINTNER

**SCALE:** DRAMATICALLY TIPPED TO TERROIR



"We believe terroir is what separates good from great," said Benziger Family Winery vintner Chris Benziger, "but how do we maximize that terroir? That's something we've learned from farming for over 40 years on Sonoma Mountain."

In 1980, Mike Benziger purchased the historic Wegener Ranch property with the support of his father, Bruno, and as their family expanded, so did their winegrowing philosophy. By 1995, Benziger Sonoma Mountain Estate had begun transitioning from conventional to Biodynamic farming, and in 2000, the estate was officially certified as Biodynamic by Demeter.

"We're in the southern part of Sonoma, so the wind from the ocean blows over the Santa Rosa Plain and then pushes into the mountains, where it funnels into Lake County or down into the Petaluma wind gap. But where we are, Sonoma Mountain protects us from this wind, so it's kind of like this hot pocket that's perfect for Cabernet Sauvignon," said Benziger. And although taking advantage of ideal Cab

weather is reason enough for any producer to figure out how to "maximize terroir" while farming biodynamically, those aren't the only conditions the Benzigers can use to their advantage.

First, considering that the winery's estate vineyards are located on the site of an ancient volcanic eruption, they benefit from an array of "amazing, complex soil types," Benziger noted. "We call it 'geological lasagna': The basement rock is basalt; then you get this red aggregate; then this beautiful, ashy tufa; then a layer of breccia with obsidian mixed in—just an incredible mélange of different types of soil." Benziger added that the shallow root systems that occur as a result of conventional farming with chemical pesticides aren't able to reach this rich "geological lasagna," but his vines are; meanwhile, his team turns to other methods of combatting insects that can harm the vines. "We have 85 acres in this home

ranch, and we cleared almost half of it out to plant biodiversity areas," he explained. Among them are gardens called insectaries that Benziger likened to "gigantic bug homes"; they host predatory insects that in turn attract a range of other species—rats, rabbits, birds—which the winery has helped to control with the installation of owl boxes. So, in addition to now having "the most paranoid rodents in Sonoma County," he said, they're equipped with a variety of strategies to "eliminate the use of pesticides."

Additionally, to help revitalize the soil, the estate employs a herd of Scottish Highland cattle and, in Benziger's words, a "gigantic flock of Dorper sheep," both of which work to churn the soil, eliminate grasses and weeds, and fertilize the vineyards. Their assistance, combined with the biological preparations typically used in Biodynamic farming, enable the producer to "best show the great terroir of Sonoma County," he said. In the







PHOTOS COURTESY OF BENZIGER FAMILY WINERY



winery, meanwhile, “The only place we use technology is with the optical sorter to cull out any debris or raisins, et cetera, because we ferment with natural yeast, and the sugar in those raisins would mess up the wine’s chemistry.”

Providing two exemplary examples of Sonoma terroir, Benziger presented the concentrated Signaterra Sunny Slope Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon—sourced from a vineyard in the foothills of the Mayacamas for which the winery has a long-term lease—and the Benziger Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon. “The whole of Sonoma County realizes the importance of sustainability, because we’re blessed with great soil here and get to make wines that reflect this sense of place,” Benziger concluded. “We farm over 200 acres, but I work with about 500 acres’ worth of growers, and we help put all these practices into their vineyards, whether it’s full Biodynamics or a high level of certified sustainability—all this to get those [terroir-influenced] flavors into the wines.”



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIJENTA

Juan Coronado, co-founder of Mijenta Tequila, with maestra tequilera Ana María Romero Mena and their newly released Mijenta Reposado.

## “Appreciating the Gift of Terroir”

**SPIRIT:** MIJENTA TEQUILA BLANCO (\$49) AND TEQUILA REPOSADO (\$70), MEXICO

**PRESENTER:** JUAN CORONADO, CO-FOUNDER

**SCALE:** TIPPED TO TERROIR



*Mi gente* means “my people” in Spanish, so it makes sense that new tequila brand Mijenta was established as “a collective of talented industry professionals with the common goal to protect the land and respect the people of that land,” said co-founder Juan Coronado.

That applies to a community far beyond the inner circle of its jimadores: Based in Arandas, Jalisco, Mijenta has established a nonprofit foundation to preserve the art of agave farming and also offers health care and educational development assistance to all of its employees.

Coronado feels strongly that Mijenta embodies the terroir of the Jaliscan Highlands, aka Los Altos; in fact, Arandas is located in the Altos Sur region, which is the center of tequila production in the area. But “to understand the terroir of our product, we must first understand that Mexico is [the] place where cacao, corn, chiles, tomatoes, and avocados are originally from. Its biodiversity is so rich, so well adapted to the soil, that it makes everything that grows there fantastic,” said Coronado. “Of course, the weather helps as well. In Arandas especially, an agave plant will take longer [to mature than in the lowlands], but it will give us more sugar and minerality—and that makes a big impact on the tequila.”

Coronado shared an image of the bright red soil of Los Altos, referred to as *tierra roja*. It’s this soil profile, in addition to the cool weather and higher elevation, that is said to impart a sweeter, more fruit-forward and floral character in both the agave and final distillate. “My Converse are totally pink after walking through this. You can never get rid of it. But it’s this soil that is giving us the most amazing richness and minerality in the tequila,” he explained.

Coronado, whose resume includes stints as a mixologist and Bacardi ambassador, also attributed the complex flavors of Mijenta to maestra tequilera Ana María Romero Mena, whom he refers to as a “master of the senses.” Romero Mena, who’s one of the most respected authorities in the industry, relies on her incredible olfactory training throughout the production process while “appreciating the gift of terroir,” said Coronado.

The small-batch brand aims not only to translate its terroir into its expressions but also to preserve the land through its green initiatives. Mijenta’s labels are made with agave waste, and its packaging as a whole is locally produced and eco-certified.

In September 2020, Mijenta released its Blanco expression, followed by its Reposado a few months later; more are coming, according to Coronado, who left the audience with the proclamation that “Mijenta tequila is designed by nature and crafted by tradition.”

ALTOS PLANOS COLLECTIVE

# Think You Know

# Jack?

THE NEW DOCUMENTARY *CHASING WHISKEY* DELVES INTO THE MYSTIQUE BEHIND AN ICONIC AMERICAN BRAND

by Kelly Magyarics



The swagger that Jack Daniel's has long claimed manifests itself not only in the brand's inextricable link to musical icons like Jimmy Page and Frank Sinatra—who considered it as much a part of their uniform as their six-string guitar or tuxedo, respectively—but through its distinctive square bottle, instantly recognizable on backbars the world over. Yet for all the global fanfare, Jack Daniel's owes its identity to a small, tight-knit family who distills every single drop of its whiskey in the Tennessee town of Lynchburg with a population of 572—in a dry county, no less.

In this era of slick social-media marketing driven by an influx of upstart distillers, the challenge is keeping the brand as authentic as the place. That's the message of *Chasing Whiskey*, a new documentary directed by Greg Olliver—one that flows throughout the narrative of Jack Daniel's as surely as limestone-rich water flows through the town's Cave Spring Hollow, the distillery's source since 1884: "Jack Daniel's is one of the few major brands that has a rich enough story, a big enough following, [and an image] so entwined [with] popular culture that it's worthy of a feature-length film," Olliver

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHASING WHISKEY

says. "It's a 100% authentic brand that isn't trying to sell you any BS, and because of that, it has the ability to connect so many different folks from different walks of life on far corners of the planet."

The film takes the viewer on a global journey to show just how ubiquitous Old No. 7 is, most notably by following a shipping container full of Jack Daniel's on its journey from Lynchburg to a small hotel in the one-stoplight town of Tilpa in New South Wales, Australia. (Capturing video of the container from a van while it was en route to North Carolina on a train led cinematographer Matt Irwin to tell a friend that they were "chasing whiskey," Olliver recalls, providing the inspiration for the title.)

The crew then heads to Havana, where

and musician Shooter Jennings, who was tapped to create the film's original music, is responsible for one of Olliver's favorite lines in the film: "Jack Daniel's would be exactly the same without rock and roll, but rock and roll would never be the same without Jack Daniel's." Olliver adds, "[Jack] has been so deeply ingrained in popular culture, and specifically music culture, for so long that it really helped create an instantly recognizable sense of attitude if a musician was seen with a bottle." As Guns N' Roses drummer Matt Sorum says in the film, musicians don't *pose* with a bottle like Instagram influencers—they just *drink* it. Their enviable style adds to that of the brand, and vice versa, Olliver explains.

The film also prominently features Nelson Eddy, the company's in-house historian;

the first master distiller in 2017—a distinction that made him the first Black master distiller in history.

The scenes recounting the brand's past and present in Lynchburg are what truly drive home its impact and staying power: an employee lighting a pile of sugar maple wood to make the charcoal through which every drop of Jack will be filtered, differentiating Tennessee whiskey from bourbon; a chat with sisters—and Green's descendants—Jackie Harden and Debbie Staples, who have worked side by side for decades and rank among the many families employed by Jack Daniel's; and a post-shift round with Randy "Goose" Baxter and Randall Fanning, 41-year company veterans who question why they'd ever drink anything else.

*The Jack Daniel's distillery in Lynchburg, TN, as seen in Chasing Whiskey.*



one bartender uses Jack to mix up a riff on the Mojito while another shows off his JD tattoo; meanwhile, a woman, her face obscured, shares how she makes a living by smuggling in contraband bottles. Then it's off to Tokyo, where rockabilly-inspired club The Strangers have danced and drunk Jack in the same park every Sunday for the past 27 years, and C-Shell bar owner Yu Makiura stashes the last few swigs of a bottle distilled in 1984. Revelers are then shown imbibing on New Orleans' famed Bourbon Street while a caption cheekily reminds us that "alcohol may be man's worst enemy, but the Bible says to love your enemy."

Grammy Award-winning producer

his declaration in one scene that "a lot of people don't think Jack is really all made in Lynchburg, and a lot of people don't think that Jack Daniel is a real person," was partially what motivated Olliver to tell the brand's story. By now, many of us know that founder Jack Daniel learned the art of distilling not from Lutheran minister Dan Call, whom he lived with after running away from home at age 10, but from a man enslaved by Call named Nearest Green. This major historical inaccuracy was uncovered in part by author and historian Fawn Weaver, who went on to found Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey. In 1866, Daniel made Green his first head distiller, but the company retroactively named him

Toward the end of the film, we return to the bartender at the Tilpa Hotel, who takes a sip of Jack and proclaims that this bottle—which has traveled 12,401 miles and is signed by former master distiller Jeff Arnett—is the best she's ever tasted. That's the beauty of good whiskey, Olliver says: It's about the story and the passion as much as it is about liquid barrel aged in a rickhouse. "The film is actually a deep dive into history, pop culture, and what makes someone thousands of miles away pick up a bottle of Jack and think about everything that went into that bottle—the history, the hard work, the journey—everything," he says. "It's not just a drink, and I think our film proves that." SJ

{ wine families }

# THE MAJESTY OF THE MATRIARCHY

MEET THE  
WOMEN  
BEHIND THE  
LEGACY OF  
MARCHESI DI  
BAROLO

BY LARS LEICHT

*A portrait of Juliette Colbert de Maulévrier, the Marquise of Barolo, who founded the Marchesi di Barolo estate in the early 1800s.*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WMARCHESI DI BAROLO

*Marchesi di Barolo marketing and export manager  
Valentina Abbona, right, with her mother, Anna.*



**J**uliette Colbert de Maulévrier, the Marquise of Barolo, was not a woman to be trifled with—not even by Italian royalty. A descendant of the finance minister to France’s “Sun King,” Louis XIV, she married Marchese Carlo Tancredi Falletti in 1806.

Soon after moving into his castle surrounded by Nebbiolo vineyards in Barolo, Piedmont, her French instinct for winemaking led her to revolutionize the local product, earning her a reputation for producing superior wine.

At the royal court in Turin, as the story goes, King Carlo Alberto of the House of Savoy—the dynasty destined to rule a united Italy—teased the Marquise: He had heard much about her wine but had not yet had the chance to taste it. She promised he soon would and fulfilled her pledge in a big way, sending a long train of oxen-drawn carts, each carrying a 160-gallon cask of wine from her estates, to the royal palace. They numbered 325—one for every day of the year excluding the 40 days of Lent, which was her stern reminder that although he was sovereign, he too had to observe the Catholic precept of abstinence and fasting leading up to Easter.

For Valentina Abbona, the latest successor to Colbert as the public face of the Marchesi di Barolo estate as well as its marketing and export manager, that story remains “ever present in my life today” despite being 200 years old: “She subtly reminded the king that he had to obey rules that went beyond his earthly role,” Abbona adds. “While duly responding to his request, she did not simply placate him—she kept him in line. For the Italy she lived in at the time, that required determination and courage.”

Colbert was the last Marquise of Barolo, but after the Abbona family, who were the proprietors of a neighboring vineyard and winery, purchased the Marchesi di Barolo estate and cellars in 1929, the legacy of strong female leadership continued. After the acquisition, siblings Pietro, Ernesto, Celestina, and Marina actively ran and promoted Marchesi di Barolo in a partnership unusual for the time, with the two sisters playing a role as dominant as that of their brothers—as illustrated by sepia-toned photographs from around the turn of the 20th century of Celestina and Marina



*Celestina and Marina Abbona pouring wine at a trade fair circa the turn of the 20th century.*

pouring wine at a trade fair.

Current proprietor Ernesto Abbona, who is named for his grandfather, recalls that locals visiting the winery would refer to the women as the *marchese*. When questioned why they didn’t correct the visitors, one of the aunts replied, “Work ennobles people. And we had always worked hard.”

That belief in the nobility of hard work remains a family tenet today. Ernesto’s wife, Anna, fully immersed herself in the family business even as a young mother, helping to restore and design the reception area of the Marchesi di Barolo cellars. She also took over management of the winery’s distribution network, earning awards from both regional and national

organizations for her business acumen, and became vice president of Italian wine tourism agency Movimento Turismo del Vino, subsequently collaborating on the publication of the organization's first guide.

The 21st century, meanwhile, has ushered in the ascent of yet another woman, Valentina, the firstborn of Anna and Ernesto—the latter of whom has described the company as a “matriarchy.” Adds Valentina, “Our history is intimately tied to the feminine figure and owes its existence to the intuition of a woman.” She sees the role of men and women in the wine business as complementary: “You need both. The role of a woman is fundamental; we facilitate communications and interpret needs that are not always obvious. A woman tends to be more attentive.”

However, joining that business was not the first choice for the sixth-generation Barolista. “Early on I thought to follow a different path, to be myself, because I am a different person,” admits Valentina. “It’s not easy for any child to fill the shoes of a parent. I was timid, even fearful. I was afraid

to not meet their expectations.” She also had to reckon with her childhood experiences of having a working mother, which was quite rare in Italy at the time. “I had a mother who was not dedicated 100% to the home and family,” she recalls. “When I compared her with my friends’ mothers, I wondered, how can this be?”

That said, Valentina was “never the girl who wanted to run away from home” and always felt the full support of both parents; her relationship with her mother, while always healthy, is closer than it’s ever been due to the perspective she’s gained in adulthood. “I came to realize how hard it was for her,” Valentina says. “If I had to do that, could I make all those sacrifices to get us where we are today?”

When she did decide to join the business, being in a close-knit family helped her to understand that each member has their strengths and their limits, and being aware of that improves their ability to work together. She looks to the example not only of her mother, whom she describes as her “beacon,” but of her father’s

great-aunts, who honored the Marquise’s legacy while forging their own roles. “You have to develop your own personality and reputation that is different yet complementary,” Valentina notes.

So while her travel schedule has ground to a halt during the pandemic, and communication with customers around the world now unfolds online, she remains mindful of the greatest advice she has received from her mother—to pursue her desires. “She is very determined and reminds me that you’ll always be able to achieve something as long as you put yourself to it and get in the game,” Valentina says. The most recent book she read, *I Leoni di Sicilia (The Florios of Sicily)*, offered up a reminder of that philosophy with a Sicilian proverb: *chi esce, riesce*, meaning “who gets out, succeeds.” “It reminds me of Mamma,” Valentina notes. “She taught me that if you stay home, you’ll get nothing, but if you leave the house, you’ll always bring something home.” ❧



*The Marchesi di Barolo estate in the Langhe area of Piedmont.*

# Black History Is American History

by Paris Vasser



## BLACK BEVERAGE PROFESSIONALS WORK TO MAKE EQUITY AN INDUSTRY PRIORITY YEAR ROUND

**THROUGHOUT BLACK HISTORY MONTH,** as in many years before, you no doubt saw an uptick in magazine articles, TV programs, and social media posts honoring Black heroes and highlighting Black culture. But real change doesn't come overnight or even in one month. That's certainly true for the diversity-challenged American beverage industry, but progress is slowly beginning to be made—so in an effort to keep the momentum going, let's take the time to honor four changemakers whose mission is to support, promote, and celebrate Black professionals 365 days of the year.

### WEATHERED SOULS BREWING COMPANY

Marcus Baskerville is the San Antonio, Texas-based brewer behind the globally recognized initiative Black Is Beautiful, which aims to draw awareness within the brewing community to the injustices experienced by BIPOC. His journey into the beer world started with a homebrewing kit that eventually inspired him to establish the Weathered Souls Brewing Company. Putting an emphasis on supporting businesses like his own, Baskerville sources grains and other ingredients such as coffee beans and chocolate from local purveyors in order to give back to a community that has supported him in turn since the brewery's opening in 2016.

Baskerville's desire to bring about positive change was amplified by the reckoning for racial justice that swept the globe last summer, leading him to create a recipe for a traditional, approachable stout and make it available to fellow brewers across the nation so that they could create their own versions of Black Is Beautiful beer, with all proceeds going to local police-reform, legal-defense, and diversity organizations. To date, over 200 participating breweries have raised \$1.3 million, and Weathered Souls' own Black Is Beautiful Imperial Stout has national retail distribution (as do several other offerings, including a West Coast IPA). But beyond raising funds for just causes, Baskerville says, "The beer itself is the message that raises those hard-to-have conversations."

PHOTO: ANDREA MENDOZA



PHOTO: V. SHEREE WILLIAM



## THE WINE NOIRE

Alicia Maria Kidd is the founder of The Wine Noire, an import, export, and wholesale-distribution company operating in Berkeley, California, with the goal of elevating Black women winemakers and getting their wines into the marketplace. Kidd got her start in the industry as an ambassador for Boisset Collection and worked part time in wine brokering, moving from there into not only distribution but consulting for restaurants and educating sommeliers about BIPOC-owned brands.

Since establishing The Wine Noire in 2017, Kidd has built a portfolio of brands from California and South Africa, with an emphasis on those that utilize sustainable farming practices; she's currently in the process of obtaining B Corp certification. And that's not all: After creating an e-commerce platform for direct-to-consumer sales, she has expanded into brick-and-mortar retail with the opening of Coco Noir Wine Shop & Bar, whose staff is women- and minority-led, in Oakland's Black Arts Movement Business District last fall.

While acknowledging that the industry is beginning to diversify, Kidd says that many corporations are making room for only a few Black-owned businesses at a time as a token gesture, creating another problem: "Now we are competing for resources." To combat this, she posits this suggestion to her industry peers: "Utilize and support Black-owned brands [throughout your] supply chain and vendor supplier lists. Do [your] due diligence to treat us like we're any other company, but make it a social responsibility to look for diverse talent."

## CHARLES WOODSON'S INTERCEPT WINES

Football legend Charles Woodson's historic NFL career spanned 18 years and nine Super Bowl wins (he also has a Heisman Trophy). But it was only after stepping off the field that the retired Oakland Raider found success in wine. He launched Intercept in 2019 as a partnership with industry powerhouse O'Neill Vintners & Distillers; in 2020, he and his partners established scholarships through Cal-Poly and Sonoma State universities that provide full tuition for Black students aspiring to enter the industry. "I cannot think of a better way to support the next generation of young BIPOC wine professionals than with scholarships at the top universities in the heart of America's wine country," Woodson said in an October 2020 press release.

PHOTO: CHRISTINA SCHMIDHOFFER



## URBAN CONNOISSEURS

Marcia Jones is the founder of Urban Connoisseurs, an organization that has been offering mentorships, fostering career opportunities, and providing sales consultations for American winemakers of African descent since 2011. Earlier this year, Jones partnered with Angela McCrae, founder of media company and lifestyle brand Uncorked & Cultured, for a virtual winemakers' summit. Over the course of three days, it brought together 12 Black winemakers to honor their contributions to the industry while fostering opportunity for the next generation of Black wine professionals. In addition to discussions on topics such as wine trends and terroir, it featured a virtual brunch with three award-winning chefs.

Meanwhile, Urban Connoisseurs is also promoting its soon-to-launch wine club through a #BuyBlackWine campaign. The club will offer quarterly shipments of four wines from four Black winemakers.

Jones has also released her own label, a Rhône-style blend made in collaboration with six Black winemakers, in honor of yet another project for which the wine is named: an upcoming documentary called *Journey Between the Vines: The Black Winemakers' Story*. She encourages those who want to help open the floor to a wider community of trade members "[to] buy wines from Black winemakers and support the growth of the industry as a whole. Level that field and sip consciously. Next time you drink, ask yourself, who made that?"

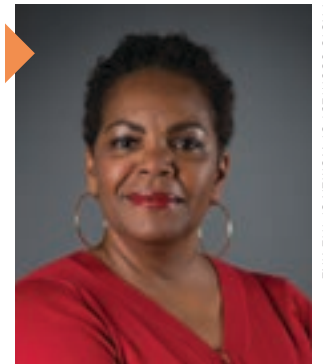


PHOTO COURTESY OF WOMEN OF THE VINE



### Spirit Hub Delivers on Diversity

Online retailer Spirit Hub's platform allows independent distillers to deliver their craft spirits directly to consumers' doors in select states. To highlight Black-owned distilleries, it has curated a special collection of products for year-round purchase. Included on its growing list are: Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey, Toast Vodka, Painted Stave Distilling, IslandJon Vodka, Rising Sun Distillery, Guidance Whiskey, Anteel Tequila, Ten To One Rum, and Jon Basil Tequila.



# Following the Fingerprints

## A RECENT STUDY ON ARGENTINE MALBEC AFFIRMS THE CONCEPT OF TERROIR

**WHAT ARGENTINA'S** savvy winemakers have known for many decades—that certain vineyards reliably produce superlative wines despite vintage variations—is now scientific fact. Researchers at the Catena Institute of Wine in Mendoza used a combination of chemometric data and sensory analysis to group a selection of Malbec wines into distinctive regions and identify the specific vineyard site, or *parcela*, they hailed from with a high degree of certainty.

The study, which is the first of its kind, took its cue from smaller-scale research done in Burgundy and Valpolicella. But it went a step further in analyzing the phenolic profiles of renowned Malbec wines from 23 parcels distributed across 12 geographic indications in the Uco Valley and Luján de Cuyo—located at the foothills of the Andes Mountains at elevations of 900–1,600 meters—that were made under the same winemaking conditions over a period of three vintages: 2016, 2017, and 2018. By using chemical data and statistical tools to avoid the

vintage effect, researchers were able to clearly separate the wines by location and identify distinct terroir signatures—something that wouldn't be possible using the sensory data alone. Not only did they predict the vintage of each wine, 48% of the parcels studied could be identified by chemical analysis with 100% certainty and the remaining 52% could be identified with up to 83% certainty.

To reach their conclusions, the researchers developed fingerprints by matching the individual subregions and parcels with 27 phenolic compounds in the wines, which included a dozen red pigments, yellow co-pigments, seed tannins, wood tannins, several antioxidants including resveratrol, and different floral aroma compounds. The most interesting results were observed in the Uco Valley and the high-elevation subregion of Gualtallary in Tupungato, where the parcels analyzed produced higher concentrations of key anthocyanins and seed tannin.

About 50% of the parcels in the study

belong to Bodega Catena Zapata and the remainder to its contract growers. “Winemakers around the world can tell you that there are differences in their terroirs,” says Dr. Laura Catena, managing director of the family estate, who founded the Catena Institute in 1995 to advance wine quality in Argentina. Catena Zapata was the first winery to plant in Gualtallary in 1992; its high-altitude Adrianna vineyard sits at 1,450 meters, which is the limit for ripening Malbec. By 2002, Adrianna was the source of its finest fruit, and the winery now has 100 hectares under vine in the subregion.

“Adrianna is Winkler Zone I and sometimes Zone II,” says Catena, “but with more sunlight hours and a longer growing season, we can ripen Malbec.” Pointing out that the study is a culmination of 20 years of research largely inspired by winemaking director Alejandro Vigil, who came to Catena in 2007 as a soil scientist, she adds, “Until now, we really didn't know if Malbec could transmit terroir to this degree.” ■

*Tinto Fino  
on the vine  
in Ribera del  
Duero.*

# EVER THE

# Explorer

## FÉLIX SOLÍS AVANTIS TAKES CONSUMERS ON A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF ITS HOME COUNTRY

by Rachel DelRocco Terrazas



In 2021, dreams of safe travel are beginning to seep back into our psyches. But until we can make those bucket lists and itineraries a reality, we can continue whetting our appetites for wanderlust while pleasing our senses by drinking wines from far-off places.

One such locale is Spain, whose varied terrain the Solís family of Félix Solís Avantis has spent 70 years exploring. They established themselves by producing ripe red wines from their home base of Valdepeñas in the Castilla-La Mancha region before they began shipping to restaurants in Madrid, and since the 2000s, they've expanded to craft dense Tempranillos in Rioja, saline and fresh Albariños in Rías Baixas, and a wide array of regional expressions in between. As a result, they've enabled people from all over the world to explore what Spain has to offer at affordable prices, bringing their passion for their home country to every table graced with a bottle from their portfolio.



*The Pagos del Rey winery in the Ribera del Duero DO.*

When founder Félix Solís Fernández established his namesake wine company in his hometown of Valdepeñas in central Spain, he was also establishing a family legacy that would be further shaped by future generations. Valdepeñas, which translates as "Valley of the Rocks," is also the name of the surrounding DO, and here a concentration of chalk bedrock allows for the retention

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FÉLIX SOLÍS AVANTIS



of water in the hot and arid continental climate. This allows a multitude of varieties to thrive—the indigenous white Airen; a local clone of Tempranillo called Cencibel; and hardy international varieties such as Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Garnacha, Merlot, and Syrah.

Given the technological advancements made over the decades in their wine-making methods, the family can produce an extensive selection of approachable bottlings, including a new red blend of Tempranillo and Syrah and a white blend of Verdejo, Sauvignon Blanc, and Chardonnay for the Mucho Más label. Another recent red release, FYI, is similarly modern in style and quaffable, with rich and ripe fruit, savory base notes, and bright minerality imparted by the combination of Tempranillo, Grenache, and Cabernet Sauvignon. The facility in Valdepeñas also produces



*Inside the Pagos del Rey Museo del Vino, located in Morales de Toro in the Spanish province of Zamora.*

six sparkling wines both white and pink under the Prospero label; like their counterparts in Prosecco, these bright and lively expressions are made via the Charmat method and are built for everyday drinking.

The Viña San Juan line of wines, meanwhile, represents the family's presence in La Mancha, where the aforementioned native and international varieties also thrive despite the arid climate. The red is a blend of Merlot, Syrah, and



Tempranillo ideal for pairing with meaty stews, while the white made from Chardonnay, Verdejo, and Viura is rich yet pomaceous. Drink with a starter of shellfish in butter and herbs or a blue cheese plate with apples.

As the family ventured beyond Valdepeñas and launched new and challenging projects like the Pagos del Rey brand, it was only natural that their forward-thinking and hard-working nature would draw



*One of Félix Solís Avantis' vineyards in Rioja.*



them to other regions poised for global success. That includes Rioja, an area in northeast Spain that's known for world-class Tempranillo whose characteristics derive in part from its aging regimen in small American oak barrels. Produced at the Pagos del Rey facility there, the Arnegui line is made with fruit sourced from one of the three subregions, Rioja Alta, which features limestone and clay soils and is higher in altitude than either Rioja Alavesa or Rioja Baja. The red Arnegui is a blend of Tempranillo and Garnacha, which lends freshness to the wine's undertones of black cherry and leather. Its time spent aging in oak imparts subtle notes of dill and vanilla.

Venturing slightly southwest to the upper valley of the Duero River, the family opened another Pagos del Rey winery in the Ribera del Duero DO in the region of Castilla y León in 2002. Vineyards sit at an average of 2,600 feet in elevation and are known for yielding Tinto Fino, the local variant of Tempranillo. The wines it produces tend to be deep in color, with notes of black fruit as well as firm tannins and structure. Exemplifying the style is Félix Solís Avantis' Candado Oriza label, which includes a Reserva and a Gran



Reserva that ages in both American and French oak for 24 months in accordance with the area's strict aging laws. It's a classic pairing with the region's lamb dishes.

The company has also begun exploring some burgeoning areas in Spain's northern DOs. That includes the up-and-coming white wine region of Rueda, where it has invested in planting not only the indigenous variety Verdejo but also grapes like the herbaceous Sauvignon Blanc. The Duero River's tributaries run through the area's gravelly terrain, which contains a high portion of limestone and yields juicy wines with flavors of stone and orchard fruits. The Blume line features a Verdejo with a uniquely refreshing green character and a nutty finish—ideal for serving with cuttlefish and seafood dishes—and a 100% Sauvignon Blanc that's excellent with roasted vegetables, as well as a Verdejo-Viura blend tailor-made for chicken tacos with a splash of lime.

Continuing west along the Duero, the Toro region borders Rueda and is known for its structured and rustic reds known affectionately as "bull's blood." Local Tempranillo variant Tinto de Toro grows here in sand and clay soils covered in brown limestone at eleva-



tions of 2,000–2,400 feet. Bush training, along with cool nighttime temperatures, helps cool the vines despite the hot climate. Like most wines from the region, Félix Solís Avantis' Sentero bottlings offer ripe flavors of red fruit like strawberry and red currant as well as secondary notes of spicy licorice and meaty undertones that are prime for pairing with ragú or meat-topped pizza.

Finally, in the northwestern province of Galicia on the Atlantic coast—known as "Green Spain" for its abundant vegetation and humid climate—the indigenous Albariño is king. The grape produces a lush and floral white wine with rich honeydew flavors offset by slight salinity; those from the Pulpo label complement not only octopus dishes but soft, salty cheeses and shellfish.

In the world of Félix Solís Avantis, there's a wine for almost any dish or mood. As they continue their mission of making affordable Spanish wine accessible for everyone, the Solís family also strives to showcase every facet of Spain, transporting consumers to their homeland in the process. SJ



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**For more information about Cal Poly's Wine and Viticulture program, partnership opportunities, or to learn more about the 26th Annual Winemaker's Showcase being held May 7, contact Allyson Dela Cruz at [adelac20@calpoly.edu](mailto:adelac20@calpoly.edu).**



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# In Valpolicella, Red Is Leaning Green

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES ARE ON THE RISE IN THE ITALIAN REGION

by Lars Leicht

**“SUSTAINABILITY” HAS BECOME A** key word for winemakers in Valpolicella, with three letters—“RRR,” standing for “Reduce, Respect, Retrench”—representing an integral part of their mission. Over the past year, Valpolicella’s consortium of producers, the Consorzio Tutela Vini Valpolicella, certified an additional 12% of the area’s wineries for environmental, economic, and social sustainability in both the vineyard and the cellar, impacting 3,000 acres. Another 1,000 acres were converted to organic farming—a 14% increase over the previous year and doubling the amount over three years—while the process was started for 1,000 acres more.

“The policies implemented by the consortium in recent years had the aim of making the appellation more green,” said consortium president Christian Marchesini, adding that 142 wineries—or one quarter of all the estates in Valpolicella—are now sustainable, including those

already certified by the RRR program and those under conversion. This represents an increase of 74% since the 2018 inception of the program. “Environmental sustainability is not only a value of the consortium—which has also modified the production regulations by allowing pesticides with low or no environmental impact, according to modern scientific surveys—but a strategic driver on international markets, where demand for sustainable and organic wines continues to grow. This path will allow us to strengthen the positioning of Valpolicella wines and at the same time support companies in the challenges linked to climate change.”

RRR is Italy’s first sustainability program for vineyards and wineries, applying to all wineries in the Valpolicella production zone regardless of whether they are members of the consortium. It requires such steps as reduced use of chemical fertilizers and herbicides; waste reduc-

tion and economic efficiency; respecting the rights and conditions of workers; and communicating with the community regarding vineyard treatments and other items of concern.

Climate change’s impact on winemaking and vineyard management was a focus of the Annual Valpolicella Conference, held virtually this year in late February with themed webinars and three tasting sessions. Invitees included wine professionals and journalists from 26 countries, among them Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Spain, and France.

The consortium’s membership includes 272 bottlers and 2,273 grape growers in Valpolicella—one of Italy’s top appellations for wine exports—and represents nearly 21,000 hectares of vineyards in the 19 municipalities of the Verona province. In 2019, about 64 million bottles were produced, with an annual turnover of about 600 million euros. SJ



# Social Medium

**TERTULIA CELLARS**  
COMBINES THE TENETS  
OF ART, TERROIR,  
AND FRIENDSHIP IN  
ITS WINEMAKING  
PHILOSOPHY



## WASHINGTON'S WALLA WALLA

Valley is a desert, receiving about 16 hours of sunshine per day at the peak of growing season. Diurnal shifts in temperature range up to 30 degrees, and rainfall in this region east of the Cascades is about 15 inches a year compared to the 37-inch average in Seattle.

The arid area is home to some of the Western world's most stunning wines, and we have our sights set this month on Tertulia Cellars, founded in 2005. Winemaker Ryan Raber believes wine should be treated as an art form, a philosophy that shows in the label's expressiveness, texture, and style. "It is an intuitive process from the vine to the bottle; each step determines the next," he says.

The word *tertulia* is Spanish for a "social gathering of friends," and the winery was named to reflect the belief that such get-togethers over good juice are the "final component" of its wines.

Raj Patel is  
proprietor of  
Patel Winery.

*Winemaker Ryan Raber (left) with vineyard manager Ryan Driver. Tertulia translates from Spanish as "social gathering," and Raber believes wine should be treated as an art form. Combine the two concepts with Walla Walla terroir for some standout juice.*

PHOTO: RICHARD DUAL



*Tertulia's high-elevation vineyards range from 1,500 feet to over 1,700 feet.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERTULIA CELLARS



**Tertulia Cellars 2019 Viognier, Whistling Hills Estate Vineyard, Walla Walla Valley, Washington (\$25)** This wine is grown on loess soil with a sublayer of sand and gravel in the coolest site on the estate. White floral notes are persistent in their fragrance while also adorning the snappy palate with a tropical sweetness to join lemon verbena, pineapple upside-down cake, and jasmine. Complex minerality surfaces on the finish, star-bright and focused. **92**

**Tertulia Cellars 2017 The Great Schism Reserve GSM, Rivière Galets Estate Vineyard, Walla Walla Valley, Oregon (\$45)**

This vineyard is situated in the sub-AVA of The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater, in a dried-up riverbed on the Oregon side of the Walla Walla Valley AVA. With iron in the basalt soils, this hot site yields smaller berries to result in wines with viscosity and a sweetness of character. Here, a blend of 60% Grenache and 30% Syrah with Mourvèdre, Cinsault, and Counoise is juicy, with notes of grilled meat. Espresso-laced dark chocolate and tobacco add to an earthy core with a cranberry twist. An array of minerals includes crushed rock in a storm of dark fruit. **93**



**Tertulia Cellars Tierra Labrada 2017 Petit Verdot, Elevation Vineyard, Walla Walla Valley, Washington (\$85)**

This vineyard is the second-highest in the Walla Walla Valley, ranging from 1,500 feet to over 1,700 feet in elevation. Fractured basalt and silt soils are ubiquitous. The former contain iron, calcium, magnesium, and other trace minerals, and the vines they harbor are low-yielding (less than a ton per acre). The wine shows an opaque purple-black hue along with aromas of graphite, blackberry, and violets, the latter of which are echoed through dry, chalky tannins that make a rush toward dark-blue fruit on the palate. It's a union of power and elegance. **95**

# minding the STORE

CHECKING IN WITH TWO NYC WINE  
AND SPIRITS SHOPS ONE YEAR  
INTO THE PANDEMIC *by Stefanie Schwalb*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BOTTLEROCKET WINE & SPIRIT



*Tom Geniesse is owner of Bottlerocket Wine & Spirit (pictured below) in New York City's Flatiron District.*

To say that adjusting to the new normal hasn't been easy would be an understatement. We no longer take for granted such pleasures of our weekly routine as heading to a favorite liquor shop after work and talking to the staff—an activity that expanded our knowledge while giving us the comfort of getting what we needed when we needed it. Though wine and spirits retailers were able to remain open in a reduced capacity after the pandemic hit New York City, their owners and employees faced many unexpected challenges, just like the rest of us. We went to Bottlerocket Wine & Spirit and Le Dû Wines to get some insights on how the past year has been going.

"Last March, everyone in Manhattan was terrified—nervous being around strangers, scared to touch anything, and for good reason. So many people were dying that hospitals were setting up refrigerated trucks as temporary morgues," said Bottlerocket founder and owner Tom Geniesse. "Half of our neighborhood is offices. They all completely shut by order of Governor Cuomo, and many of the local residents bugged out for their second homes in the pursuit of safety." Initially, the shop shut its doors to the public, relying solely on pickup and delivery orders, but by June, Geniesse had cautiously reopened to in-store traffic. "Our team has stayed safe and managed to serve our customers without interruption, and I am incredibly proud of them," he said.

At Le Dû, the team has embraced the novelty of doing business online, according to general manager JT Robertson. "We've never been a huge walk-in-type store, but we were known for our events—dinners, in-depth seminars, et cetera—so the inability to interact and share wine with our clients has been a bit of cold water," he





*Le Dû Wines in the West Village neighborhood of Manhattan.*

*JT Robertson is general manager of Le Dû Wines.*



acknowledged. “Fortunately, we’ve shifted to a virtual environment where we’ve actually been able to expand our customer base. Nothing is the same as enjoying a great bottle of wine in the same room, but we’re looking at it as an opportunity to reach a whole new community” through personalized seminars via video chat and somm-led Zoom tastings. Counterintuitively, Robertson finds that engaging customers virtually, while they’re in the comfort of their homes, is in some ways a more personal activity than face-to-face meetings in public; in short, Le Dû is using the digital sphere to make connections more than sales.

Online sales have been a boon for Bottlerocket, which has always done digital business and has even had its own app for years. “We tripled down on e-commerce,” Geniesse explained. “We were [already] on Drizly but expanded our zone. We hopped on Minibar and Instacart. Really, any ecosystem where customers had taken refuge became important to us. Being fast and efficient with delivery helped a lot.” After all, he added, “Anyone who had never bought online suddenly was compelled to for safety reasons. E-commerce grew the equivalent of about ten years in three months.” So even with their experience in the online marketplace, “We had to scramble to adapt.” Meanwhile, Bottlerocket’s greatest

strength remains the level of service its team provides in the store, in Geniesse’s view, so they look forward to a time when customers can truly relax and explore the aisles again.

You would think the most difficult aspect of running a business during the pandemic would be making a profit, but as it turns out, the lack of human contact has proven to be among the hardest obstacles for the stores to overcome. “The most challenging thing, which I think has been true for most people, is the lack of personal interaction—even at a staff level,” said Robertson. “For six months we had the staff divided into two teams [that didn’t] interact to protect from having to quarantine the whole shop. I was talking to my staff every day, but we weren’t in the same room for half a year!”

But as difficult and depressing as it was, there was light at the end of the tunnel. “Honestly, I think our team’s stress level was the most challenging aspect of operating through this time,” Geniesse admitted. “A few people quit, but most remained. Our staff has taken great pains to be safe for each other and built a really powerful level of trust. I am grateful for their courage and determination. It’s really inspiring to me.”

Another bright spot involves what customers have been buying while stuck at

home: In the face of limited access to local bars and restaurants, sales of higher-end wine and spirits seem to be on an upswing. “In general, people have wanted to receive fewer deliveries, and therefore orders have been larger than previously; [what’s more,] we have observed people trading up a bit across the board,” notes Geniesse. “I think people have been willing to splurge a bit since they have not been frequenting restaurants as much. High-end tequila and mezcal sales have shot through the roof—whiskeys, too. We have observed people building out their bars, adding more exotic ingredients, and learning how to make classic cocktails. It’s pretty great.”

The trend is something Robertson has noticed as well and remains optimistic about. “People are trying to hold on to the little treats that make life worth living, even in these difficult times,” he concluded. “There has definitely been an increase in what people are willing to spend. It’s almost as if they’re factoring in the restaurant prices when buying retail!”

For more information, visit [bottlerocket.com](http://bottlerocket.com) and [leduwines.com](http://leduwines.com).

# BROKEN PREMISES

HOW RESTAURATEURS IN TWO WESTERN STATES ARE PICKING UP THE PIECES by Nell Jerome

**AS SHAKEN AS RETAILERS** were by stay-at-home orders, the restaurant industry somehow became the poster child for nonessential business. Almost every state in the U.S. ordered restaurants to shut their doors and/or operate at a reduced capacity for some duration, and many are still enforcing restrictions. Those establishments that remain open were saved by ample financial resources; outdoor dining space; the infrastructure and clientele to support a healthy takeout and delivery business; and/or their owners' sheer survival skills.

to get worse, Volpicelli cut his losses early, permanently closing in Tiburon. He immediately began doing takeout and delivery at the Larkspur location—not to mention offering wine at 25% off. “As soon as we added takeout wine, people did a lot of that,” Volpicelli says.

Since then, he has invested in remodeling his shuttered dining room and expanded outdoor seating from the patio to the parking lot, even adding a live-music lineup on weekends. And today he credits his “surviving instinct” for seeing him through 2020: With his livelihood at



**Don Antonio Trattoria owner Antonio Volpicelli in Larkspur, CA.**

as its ski slopes, but then 2020 arrived. As elsewhere, the resort town faced ongoing regulation changes, from restricted capacity indoors to expanded capacity outdoors (at the expense of parking), as well as a stark drop in tourism. The team at the French Alpine Bistro (which many locals refer to as “The Crêperie”) got by with the help of their loyal guests and community, according to co-owner Karin Derly, who extends her gratitude toward her “truly great” colleagues. “It may not have been the best year we have ever seen; however, we believe it is important to focus on the good—and it was a good year for our creativity,” Derly says. “We were able to seat our guests in our new ‘Chalet’ space, where they used to park their cars. It allowed for a new space that was safe to dine, and [it was] fun to design.” In fact, it was so impressive that it was covered in *The Wall Street Journal*. Other inventive solutions included shipping the kitchen’s famous fondue to guests as far away as California with all the accoutrements as well as wines, candles, napkins, and a link to a Spotify playlist that would recreate the ambiance of the restaurant.

While challenging, says Derly, the year reminded the team of the importance of community to their lives. As for 2021, she adds that—in addition to the health and safety of their guests all over the world—she is looking forward to referring to Corona as a beer again. **\$**



**The “Chalet” at the French Alpine Bistro.**



**Karin Derly is co-owner of the French Alpine Bistro in Aspen, CO.**

Take Antonio Volpicelli, who opened Don Antonio Trattoria in the tony town of Tiburon, California, ten years ago. It has been a hot spot for locals and visitors—so popular, in fact, that he opened a second location in nearby Larkspur five years later. Then, in March 2020, both restaurants were forced to close. There was no viable outdoor space at the flagship location, and the to-go model would have meant adding drivers while keeping a full kitchen staff. With his lease up at the end of the month and a feeling that things were only going

stake, Volpicelli was decisive, resourceful, and graceful in the face of adversity. As a result, the year turned out better for Don Antonio Trattoria than expected.

Looking east to Colorado: Aspen is known globally for its dining scene as much

PHOTO COURTESY OF FRENCH ALPINE BISTRO



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# THE 2020 SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION



# 2020 PREMIUM AWARDS

**THE TASTING PANEL MAGAZINE WINERY OF THE YEAR**  
Inniskillin

**ANDRÉ TCHELISTCHEFF WINEMAKER(S) OF THE YEAR**  
Ledson Winery & Vineyards

**PORTFOLIO OF THE YEAR AWARD: Pinnacle Drinks**

**BEST IN SHOW WHITE WINE/BEST OTHER WHITE VARIETAL**  
Covert Wineworks 2019 Petit Manning, Virginia, USA (\$29)

**BEST IN SHOW RED WINE/BEST MALBEC**  
Robert Hall Winery 2018 Cavern Select Malbec, Paso Robles, USA (\$40)

**BEST IN SHOW SPARKLING WINE/BEST SPARKLING ROSÉ**  
Piper Sonoma NV Sparkling Rosé, Sonoma County, USA

**BEST IN SHOW DESSERT WINE/BEST LATE HARVEST RIESLING**  
Navarro Vineyards 2019 Cluster Select Late Harvest Riesling,  
Anderson Valley, USA

## BEST OF VARIETAL/TYPE

### BEST BORDEAUX BLEND - UNDER \$25

St. Francis Winery & Vineyard 2017 Claret, Sonoma County, USA (\$22)

### BEST BRUT

Trump Winery 2014 Reserve Brut, Monticello, USA (\$80)

### BEST CABERNET FRANC

Mission Hill Family Estate 2018 Vista's Edge Terroir Collection Cabernet Franc, BC VQA, Canada (\$50)

### BEST CABERNET SAUVIGNON

7 Vines Vineyard 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, USA (\$55)

### BEST CABERNET/SYRAH OR SHIRAZ BLEND

New Clairvaux Vineyard 2016 Abbot's Reserve Red Blend, California, USA (\$38)

### BEST CHARDONNAY

Famille Carabello-Baum 2018 Premier Cru Morgeot Chardonnay, Chassagne-Montrachet, France (\$71)

### BEST CHIANTI

Corte Alle Mura 2016 Chianti Reserva DCG, Italy (\$8)

### BEST CIDER

Gowan's Heirloom Cider Macintosh Applewine, Anderson Valley, USA (\$10)

### BEST FORTIFIED WINE

New Clairvaux Vineyard NV Vina Ranch Vino Dolce, Tehama County, USA (\$23)

### BEST HONEY WINE

Camas Prairie Winery 2019 Raspberry Honey Wine, Idaho, USA (\$14)

### BEST ICE WINE

Inniskillin Niagara 2018 Riesling Ice Wine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$80)

### BEST MERLOT

Pedestal 2016 Merlot, Columbia Valley, USA (\$65)

### BEST MOURVÈDRE

Calabria Family Wines 20183 Bridges Mourvèdre, Barossa Valley, Australia (\$25)

### BEST NEBBIOLO

L.A. Cetto 2016 Private Reserve Nebbiolo, Valle de Guadalupe, Mexico (\$23)

### BEST OTHER ITALIAN RED

Messina Hof Winery 2018 Reserva Double Barrel Sagrantino, Texas High Plains, USA (\$35)

### BEST PETITE SIRAH

Garré Vineyard & Winery 2017 Petite Sirah, Livermore Valley, USA (\$32)

### BEST PINOT NOIR

Baileyana 2018 Firepeak Pinot Noir, Edna Valley, USA (\$30)

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

Descendant 2017 Red Blend, Washington, USA (\$38)

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

Amador Cellars 2016 Farmhouse Red Blend, Shenandoah Valley, USA (\$28)

### BEST PRIMITIVO

Oak Farm Vineyards 2019 Estate Grown Primitivo, Lodi, USA (\$35)



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[Best of Varietal/Type Continued]

## BEST RIESLING

Cat Amongst the Pigeons 2020 Riesling, Eden Valley, Australia (\$21)

## BEST ROSÉ BLEND

Cass Winery 2019 Oasis Estate Grown Rosé, Paso Robles Geneseo District, USA (\$24)

## BEST ROSÉ/BEST VARIETAL ROSÉ

Los Robles Hills Winery 2019 Puerta del Cielo Vineyards La Speranza Private Reserve Sangiovese Rosé, Malibu Coast AVA, USA (\$25)

## BEST SAKÉ

HEAVENSAKE 2019 Junmai Daiginjo, Japan (\$85)

## BEST SANGIOVESE

Pope Valley Winery 2017 Estate Sangiovese, Napa Valley, USA (\$36)

## BEST SAUVIGNON BLANC

Echo Bay 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$19)

## BEST SPANISH/ARGENTINE/PORTUGUESE RED

Adega de Pegões 2017 Touriga Nacional, Portugal (\$15)

## BEST SPANISH/ARGENTINE/PORTUGUESE WHITE

Oro de Castilla 2019 Verdejo, DO Rueda, Spain (\$16)

## BEST SWEET SPARKLING

Allini 2019 Asti Spumante DOCG, Italy (\$5)

## BEST SYRAH/SHIRAZ

Kevin O'Leary 2018 Reserve Series Syrah, California, USA (\$25)

## BEST TEMPRANILLO

The Winery at La Grange 2016 Tempranillo, USA (\$60)

## BEST VIOGNIER

English Newsom Cellars 2018 Reserve Viognier, Texas High Plains, USA (\$23)

## BEST ZINFANDEL

Michael David 2017 Earthquake Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$26)

## BEST PINOT GRIS

Wild Goose Vineyards 2019 Pinot Gris, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$17)

## DOUBLE GOLD WINNERS

1849 Wine Company 2017 Anonymous Red Blend, Napa Valley, USA (\$40)

Alejandro Bulgheroni Estate 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$195)

Almquist Family Vintners 2019 Enchanted Riesling, Wahluke Slope, Washington, USA (\$26)

AVA Grace Vineyards 2019 Pinot Grigio, California, USA (\$9)

Babich Wines 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$15)

Baldacci Vineyards 2018 Fraternity Red Blend, Napa Valley, USA (\$50)

Barefoot Cellars NV Pinot Grigio, California, USA (\$7)

Barterra Winery 2018 Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$59)

Bent Oak Winery 2018 Reserve Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$48)

Benziger Family Winery 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, North Coast, USA (\$15)

Bodegas Pinea de Duero 2017 Tempranillo, DO Ribera del Duero, Spain (\$149)

Brancott Estate 2020 FlightSong Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$13)

Bryn Mawr Vineyards 2018 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay, Eola-Amity Hills, USA (\$25)

Campo Viejo NV Brut Reserva, DO Cava, Spain (\$14)

Cardwell Hill Cellars 2016 Dijon Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, USA (\$30)

Carol Shelton Wines 2017 Wild Thing Old Vine Zinfandel, Mendocino County, USA (\$19)

Cass Winery 2017 Estate Grown G\*S\*M Red Blend, Paso Robles Geneseo District, USA (\$25)

Chalkboard 2019 Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina (\$10)

Cinquain Cellars 2017 Nagengast Estate Vineyard Syrah, Paso Robles, USA (\$60)

CJSC Minsk Grape Wines Factory 2019 Khmeninaya Vishnya Wine Cooler, Moldova, Belarus

Cucharon 2018 Red Blend, San Juan, Argentina (\$20)

Cupcake Vineyards 2019 Moscato d'Asti DOCG, Italy (\$13)

Diora 2018 La Splendeur du Soleil Chardonnay, Monterey County, USA (\$20)

Duck Hunter Wines of New Zealand 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)

Duperrey 2012 Brut Champagne, France (\$79)

Eberle Winery 2019 Estate Muscat Canelli, Paso Robles, USA (\$24)

Eden Hill Vineyard 2018 Aglianico, Texas High Plains, USA (\$39)

Edna Valley Vineyard 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Central Coast, USA (\$16)

Estancia 2017 Reserve Meritage, Paso Robles, USA (\$27)

Fazi-Battaglia 2019 Verdicchio, Castelli di Jesi DOC, Italy (\$11)

Four Vines Winery 2018 The Biker Zinfandel, Paso Robles, USA (\$18)

Freakshow 2018 Red Blend, Lodi, USA (\$20)

Frei Brothers Reserve 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, USA (\$27)

Frei Brothers Reserve 2018 Sauvignon Blanc, Russian River Valley, USA (\$20)

Furthermore 2017 Gioia Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$55)

Girl & Dragon 2019 Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina (\$14)

Haak Vineyards & Winery 2018 Touriga Nacional, Texas High Plains, USA (\$35)

Hendry Ranch 2019 Hendry Vineyard Albariño, Napa Valley, USA (\$24)

Hester Creek Estate Winery 2019 Trebbiano, Golden Mile Bench, Canada (\$21)

Houdini 2018 Red Blend, Napa Valley, USA (\$30)

Imagery Estate Winery 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$20)

Inniskillin 2019 Reserve Cabernet Franc Rosé, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$21)

Inniskillin 2019 Cabernet Franc Ice Wine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$100)

Instigator 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi, USA (\$12)

Invivo Wines 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$18)

J. Bucher 2019 Bucher Vineyard Sonoma Rossa Zinfandel, Russian River Valley, USA (\$35)

J. Lohr 2019 Wildflower Valdiguié, Monterey, USA (\$10)

J. Lohr 2018 Pure Paso Proprietary Red Wine, Paso Robles, USA (\$27)

Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate 2017 Grand Reserve Red Meritage, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$26)

Jeff Runquist Wines 2018 Fiddlehead Malbec, El Dorado, USA (\$29)

Jefferson Vineyards 2019 Viognier, Virginia, USA (\$30)

Jip Jip Rocks 2019 Estate Grown Family Owned



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*[Double Gold Medals Continued]*

Red Blend, Padthaway, Australia (\$23)

Josh Cellars 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, California, USA (\$15)

Lady Hill Winery 2016 Cabernet Franc, Columbia Valley, USA (\$38)

Ledson Winery & Vineyards 2017 Estate Old Vine Barbera, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$54)

Leefield Station 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$14)

Leefield Station 2018 Chardonnay, Marlborough, New Zealand

Line 39 2018 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$11)

Lost Hog 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Lake County, USA (\$13)

Luna Rossa 2016 Nini Red Blend, Mimbres Valley, USA (\$23)

Magistrate 2016 Gem Series Cabernet Sauvignon, Spring Mountain, Napa Valley, USA (\$40)

Marisco Vineyards 2013 Craft Series Viognier, Marlborough, New Zealand

Martín Códax 2019 Albariño, Rías Baixas, Spain (\$17)

Materra 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Hidden Block, Napa Valley, USA (\$65)

Michael David 2017 Lust Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$59)

Mirassou Winery 2018 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$2)

New Clairvaux Vineyard 2018 Poor Souls Block Trappist Made Barbera, Tehama County, USA (\$22)

Noble Vines 2018 Marquis Red, California, USA (\$13)

Oak Ridge Winery OZV 2018 Old Vine Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$12)

Ogio NV Sparkling Rosé, Rosso Conero DOC, Italy (\$10)

Pearmund Cellars 2019 South River Vineyard Petit Manseng, Virginia, USA (\$29)

Picchetti Winery 2019 Truchard Vineyards Pinot Noir, Napa Valley, USA (\$53)

Prothro Family Wines 2018 Rodgers Creek Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$45)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2017 Chardonnay, Chalk Hill, USA (\$22)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, USA (\$28)

Ron Yates 2017 Friesen Vineyards Red Blend, Texas High Plains, USA (\$50)

Russian Ridge Winery 2017 Cabernet Franc, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA

Sea Bird 2017 Courtney's Vineyard Chardonnay, Sta. Rita Hills, USA (\$35)

Serene Cellars 2016 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon,

Alexander Valley, USA (\$110)

Sobreiro de Pegoos 2019 Premium White Blend, Portugal (\$8)

Stoneleigh 2020 Wild Valley Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand

Suveg Cellars 2017 Straight Jacket Sangiovese Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$55)

Suveg Cellars 2018 Pardon My French Viognier, Lodi, USA (\$45)

Tamarack Cellars 2017 Firehouse Red Wine, Columbia Valley, USA (\$20)

The Advocate 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, Australia (\$40)

The Storm Cellar 2019 Rosé of St. Vincent, Grand Valley AVA, USA (\$20)

Thomas George Estates 2016 Starr Ridge Amber Block Estate Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$90)

Thomas Goss 2018 Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$12)

Three Sticks Wines 2017 Durell Vineyard Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$60)

Thumbprint Cellars 2016 Ramazzotti Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Alexander Valley, USA (\$52)

Thumbprint Cellars 2016 Andolsen Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$60)

Townhouse 2018 Pinot Noir, Central Coast, USA (\$24)

Trapiche 2019 Oak Cask Cabernet Sauvignon, Mendoza, Argentina (\$12)

Truth Teller 2017 The Miscreant Boldfaced Lie Red Blend, Columbia Valley, USA (\$16)

Tsillan Cellars 2018 Estate Reserve Malbec, Lake Chelan AVA, USA (\$55)

VDR Very Dark Red 2018 Proprietary Red Blend, Monterey, USA (\$25)

VJB Cellars 2017 Estate Montepulciano, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$52)

Wakefield 2018 Aldi Special Release Shiraz, Clare Valley, Australia (\$22)

Yellow Tail NV Moscato, Yenda, Australia (\$7)

AC Byrne & Co 2020 Chardonnay, Margaret River, Australia (\$10)

AC Byrne & Co 2019 Cabernet Merlot, Margaret River, Australia (\$10)

Acquiesce Winery 2019 Estate Grown Rosé, Lodi Mokelumne River, USA (\$25)

Acquiesce Winery 2018 Estate Grown Extra Brut, Lodi Mokelumne River, USA (\$55)

Alamos 2017 Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina (\$20)

Almquist Family Vintners 2013 Sagemoor Vineyard Barbera, Columbia Valley, Washington, USA (\$32)

Almquist Family Vintners 2017 Enchanted Riesling, Wahluke Slope, Washington, USA (\$24)

Almquist Family Vintners 2018 Enchanted Riesling, Wahluke Slope, Washington, USA (\$24)

Almquist Family Vintners 2012 Smitten Winemaker Nebbiolo, Horse Heaven Hills, Washington, USA (\$32)

Anarchist Wine Co. 2016 Conspiracy Theory Red Blend, North Coast, USA (\$38)

Angels & Cowboys 2018 Proprietary Red Blend, Sonoma County, USA (\$20)

Arché 2018 Arche & Six Harts Vineyard Ryan's Red Blend, Texas, USA (\$40)

Arius 2019 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$26)

Arrington Vineyards 2017 KB 11\*17 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, USA (\$60)

Au Contraire 2019 Pinot Noir, Sonoma, USA (\$27)

Avalon 2019 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$11)

B Side 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, North Coast, USA (\$22)

B.R. Cohn Winery 2017 Silver Label Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, USA (\$35)

Babich Wines 2020 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$13)

Balthazar 2019 Shiraz, Barossa, Australia (\$46)

Barboursville Vineyards 2019 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, Virginia, USA (\$22)

Barefoot Bubbly NV Extra Dry, California, USA (\$10)

Barefoot Spritzer NV Raspberry Summer Red Wine Based Spritzer, California, USA (\$7)

Battle Creek Cellars 2016 Yamhela Vineyard Pinot Noir, Yamhill-Carlton, USA (\$62)

Be Human 2018 Red Blend, Columbia Valley, USA (\$18)

Be Human 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley, USA (\$18)

Bear Flag 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, USA (\$30)

Becker Vineyards 2018 Petite Sirah, Texas, USA (\$40)

## GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

1924 2018 Scotch Barrel Aged Chardonnay, Lodi, USA (\$20)

50th Parallel Estate 2018 Chardonnay, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$49)

50th Parallel Estate 2019 Pinot Gris, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$23)

7 Vines Vineyard 2019 Vin Dore Peltier Dessert Wine, Minnesota, USA (\$45)

Becker Vineyards 2017 Farmhouse Vineyards Counoise, Texas High Plains, USA (\$40)

Bent Oak Winery 2019 Viognier, Texas High Plains, USA (\$28)

Benziger Family Winery 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, USA (\$20)

Bingham Family Vineyards 2017 Estate Dugout Red Blend, Texas High Plains, USA (\$30)

Bookcliff Vineyards 2018 Souzao, Colorado, USA (\$30)

Brancott Estate 2020 Letter Series B Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$30)

Bream Creek Vineyard 2018 Old Vine Reserve Riesling, Tasmania, Australia (\$48)

Browne Family Vineyards 2017 Cabernet Franc, Columbia Valley, USA (\$36)

Bryn Mawr Vineyards 2018 Barrel Aged Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, USA (\$28)

Buchanan House Winery 2016 Old Man's Creek Traditional Method Sparkling Edelweiss, Iowa, USA (\$24)

Burrowing Owl Estate Winery 2018 Syrah, BC VQA Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$32)

Buttercup 2018 Chardonnay, California, USA (\$13)

Calabria Family Wines 2019 Montepulciano, Riverina, Australia (\$15)

Calabria Family Wines 2018 Griffith Vineyard 2 Bridges Durif, Riverina, Australia (\$25)

Caladeverde 2019 Nero d'Avola, Sicily, Italy (\$7)

Caladeverde 2018 Bianco, Sicily, Italy (\$7)

Cameron Hughes 2018 Lot 729 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$16)

Cameron Hughes NV Lot 738 Prosecco Superiore, Valdobbiadene DOCG, Italy (\$15)

Campo Viejo 2018 Tempranillo, DOPa Rioja, Spain (\$11)

Canvas 2019 Chardonnay, California, USA (\$30)

Caravan 2020 Petite Sirah/Durif, South Eastern Australia (\$12)

Cardwell Hill Cellars 2016 Wadenswil Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, USA (\$30)

Cartlidge & Browne 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$13)

Casanel Vineyards 2017 Estate Carménère, Middleburg AVA, USA (\$48)

Cass Winery 2019 Estate Grown Marsanne, Paso Robles Geneseo District, USA (\$32)

Cass Winery 2019 Estate Grown Mr. Blanc White Blend, Paso Robles Geneseo District, USA (\$15)

Cat Amongst the Pigeons 2020 Fat Cat Riesling, Eden Valley, Australia (\$29)

Cat Amongst the Pigeons 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa, Australia (\$21)

Cellardoor Winery 2016 Aurora Red Blend, USA (\$32)

Cellardoor Winery 2017 Merlot, USA (\$24)

Cellardoor Winery 2019 Estate Vin Doux Naturel Port, Maine, USA (\$20)

Cellardoor Winery 2016 Cabernet Franc, USA (\$24)

Charles Woodson's Intercept 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$20)

Chateau Souverain 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, California, USA (\$13)

Chloe Wine Collection 2017 San Lucas Merlot, Monterey County, USA (\$18)

Chloe Wine Collection 2018 Pinot Noir, Monterey County, USA (\$18)

Chloe Wine Collection 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, USA (\$17)

Chris Ringland 2019 Shiraz, Barossa, Australia (\$30)

Chronic Cellars 2018 Sofa King Red Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$22)

Cinder Wines 2019 Dry Viognier, Snake River Valley, USA (\$23)

Cinder Wines 2018 Syrah, Snake River Valley, USA (\$30)

Clayhouse Vineyard 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$17)

Clos de los Siete 2018 by Michel Rolland Red Blend, Uco Valley, Argentina (\$20)

Constant Diamond Mountain Vineyard 2016 Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$325)

Corner 103 2017 Corner Cuvée Red Wine, Sonoma County, USA (\$50)

Corte Alle Mura 2018 Chianti DOCG, Italy (\$5)

Cosentino Winery 2018 Old Vine Cigar Zin Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$20)

Criterion 2018 Chardonnay, Napa Valley, USA (\$16)

Cupcake Vineyards 2019 Pinot Grigio delle Venezie, Italy (\$11)

Cupcake Vineyards 2019 Vintner's Select Rosé, California, USA (\$11)

Dancing Coyote Wines 2018 Lost Slough Petite Sirah, Clarksburg, California, USA (\$14)

Dandelion Vineyards 2019 Barossa Lionheart Shiraz, South Australia (\$30)

Davis Family Vineyards 2019 Cuvée Luke White Blend, Mendocino County, USA (\$32)

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

Don Miguel Gascon 2018 Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina (\$15)

Draxton 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, USA (\$36)

Dry Creek Vineyard 2017 The Mariner Red Blend, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$50)

Dutcher Crossing Winery 2017 Proprietor's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$35)

Dutcher Crossing Winery 2016 Cooney Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, USA (\$51)

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

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

Ecluse Wines 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$49)

Ecluse Wines 2018 Ensemble Red Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$48)

Eden Hill Vineyard 2019 Oswald Vineyard Roussanne, Texas High Plains, USA (\$32)

Eden Hill Vineyard 2018 Montepulciano, Texas High Plains, USA (\$35)

Edna Valley Vineyard 2018 Pinot Noir, Central Coast, USA (\$17)

Effingham Manor Winery 2018 Ransom Red Blend, Virginia, USA (\$44)

Effingham Manor Winery 2018 Tannat, Virginia, USA (\$44)

Estancia 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$14)

Estancia 2018 Pinot Noir, Monterey County, USA (\$14)

Ficarra Cellars 2018 Cremisi Nero Carménère, Peumo, USA (\$30)

Finca La Capilla 2016 Crianza Tempranillo, Ribero del Duero, Spain (\$33)

Firesteed Cellars 2019 Riesling, Willamette Valley, USA (\$16)

Firesteed Cellars 2019 Pinot Gris, Willamette Valley, USA (\$16)

Fog Crest Vineyard 2018 Laguna West Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$37)

Fog Crest Vineyard 2018 Estate 548 Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$54)

Fog Crest Vineyard 2018 Estate Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$59)

Fog Crest Vineyard 2018 Laguna West Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$47)

Fortnight 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Hopland, USA (\$20)

Foundry 2019 Morgaen Lee Vineyard Sauvignon

# THE 2020 SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION

[Gold Medals Continued]

- Blanc, Yountville, Napa Valley, USA (\$50)
- Freakshow 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi, USA (\$20)
- Frei Brothers Reserve 2017 Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$20)
- Frogtown Cellars 2017 Disclosure Reserve Cabernet Franc, The Dahlenega Plateau, USA (\$57)
- Frogtown Cellars 2019 Reserve Enabler Roussanne, The Dahlenega Plateau, USA (\$54)
- Furthermore 2017 Gloria Vineyard Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$55)
- GAZE Coconut Water Moscato Chardonnay Wine Cocktail, California, USA (\$6)
- Ghost Pines 2017 Winemakers Blend Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$23)
- Gianelli Vineyards 2018 Montepulciano, Tuolumne County, USA (\$38)
- Gruet Winery NV Blanc de Noirs, New Mexico, USA (\$19)
- Hakushika 2020 Junmai Saké, Hyogo, Japan (\$15)
- Hans Fahden 2015 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Fountain Grove, USA (\$85)
- HEAVENSAKE 2020 Junmai 12 Saké, Japan (\$27)
- Heirloom Vineyards 2019 Barossa Shiraz, South Australia (\$40)
- Heirloom Vineyards 2019 McLaren Vale Aveno Fortress Red Blend, South Australia (\$80)
- Herzog Lineage NV Momentus Sparkling White Wine, California, USA (\$20)
- Herzog Variations 2018 Four Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$25)
- Hester Creek Estate Winery 2019 Pinot Blanc, Golden Mile Bench, Canada (\$16)
- Hester Creek Estate Winery 2019 Ti Amo Frizzante, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$20)
- Hook and Ladder Winery 2019 Olivet Ranch Estate Bottled Sauvignon Blanc, Russian River Valley, USA (\$26)
- Hook and Ladder Winery 2019 Estate Bottled Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, USA (\$26)
- Hook and Ladder Winery 2016 Los Amigos Ranch Estate Bottled Merlot, Chalk Hill, USA (\$32)
- Hook and Ladder Winery 2016 Los Amigos Ranch Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon, Chalk Hill, USA (\$32)
- Houdini 2018 Merlot, Napa Valley, USA (\$35)
- Houdini 2019 Pinot Noir, Napa Valley, USA (\$30)
- Imagery Estate Winery 2019 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$20)
- Inniskillin 2019 Reserve Pinot Gris, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$21)
- Inniskillin 2018 Reserve Pinot Noir, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$26)
- Inniskillin 2018 Vidal Ice Wine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$50)
- Inniskillin 2018 Gold Vidal Ice Wine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$90)
- Inniskillin 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon Ice Wine, Niagara Peninsula, Canada (\$125)
- Invivo Wines 2019 Pinot Noir, Central Otago, New Zealand (\$26)
- Invivo Wines 2020 Graham Norton's Own Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$17)
- Iris Vineyards 2018 Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, USA (\$22)
- Isolde's Rapture 2017 Syrah, Monterey County, USA (\$20)
- J. Lohr 2016 Cuvée St. E Red Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$50)
- J. Lohr 2018 Hilltop Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$35)
- J. Lohr 2016 Carol's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, St. Helena, Napa Valley, USA (\$60)
- J.D. Hurley 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$30)
- Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate 2017 Grand Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Niagara, Canada (\$35)
- Jeff Runquist Wines 2019 River Junction Viognier, San Joaquin County, USA (\$23)
- Jeff Runquist Wines 2018 Three Way Graciano, Paso Robles, USA (\$28)
- Jeff Runquist Wines 2018 Massoni Ranch Zinfandel, Amador County, USA (\$26)
- Jeff Runquist Wines 2018 Barbera, Amador County, USA (\$26)
- Jeff Runquist Wines 2019 Three Way Grenache, Paso Robles, USA (\$28)
- Jeff Runquist Wines 2019 Silvaspoons Grenache, Alta Mesa, Lodi, USA (\$25)
- Jeff Runquist Wines 2018 Three Way Syrah, Paso Robles, USA (\$32)
- Jeff Runquist Wines 2019 Dolcetto, Amador County, USA
- Jefferson Vineyards 2019 Jefferson's Own Estate Reserve Viognier, Monticello, USA (\$35)
- Josh Cellars 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$17)
- Josh Cellars 2018 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, North Coast, USA (\$22)
- Josh Cellars 2018 Reserve Bourbon Barrel Aged Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$19)
- Kim Crawford Wines 2020 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$18)
- Krondorf 2018 Shiraz, Barossa, Australia (\$19)
- Krondorf 2018 Founders View Shiraz, Barossa, Australia (\$26)
- Krondorf 2018 Old Salem Shiraz, Barossa, Australia (\$35)
- Krondorf 2018 Founders View Grenache, Barossa, Australia (\$26)
- Krondorf 2018 Grenache Shiraz Mataro, Barossa, Australia (\$19)
- Krondorf 2018 Symmetry Shiraz, Barossa, Australia (\$50)
- L.A. Cetto 2018 Petite Sirah, Valle de Guadalupe, Mexico (\$15)
- LangeTwins Winery 2018 Diablo Vineyard Petite Sirah, Clarksburg, USA (\$32)
- Lower Estates 2016 Vineyard 600 Cabernet Sauvignon, Calistoga, USA (\$65)
- Lower Estates 2016 Vineyard Select Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville, Napa Valley, USA (\$115)
- Lower Estates 2018 Betsy's Vineyard Pinot Noir, Knights Valley, Sonoma County, USA (\$32)
- Lawson's Dry Hills 2018 Pinot Gris, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$22)
- Layer Cake 2019 Shiraz, South Australia (\$16)
- Le Chanceux 2015 Belles Filles Vineyard Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$85)
- Le Chemin du Roi NV Castelnau Brut Rosé, Champagne, France (\$325)
- Ledson Winery & Vineyards 2017 Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$90)
- Ledson Winery & Vineyards 2017 Old Vine Zinfandel, Howell Mountain, USA (\$60)
- Ledson Winery & Vineyards 2018 Estate Old Vine Reserve Zinfandel, Dry Creek Valley, USA (\$50)
- Leeffield Station 2018 Pinot Gris, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$14)
- Line 39 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, California, USA (\$11)
- Lost Creek Winery 2019 Viognier, Loudoun County, Virginia, USA (\$29)
- Lost Slough 2019 Estate Grown Wild Ferment Falanghina, Clarksburg, California, USA (\$24)
- Lost Slough 2015 Estate Grown Barrel Aged for 5 Years Verdelho Canteiro, Clarksburg, California, USA (\$45)
- Luna Vineyards 2017 Sangiovese Classico, Napa Valley, USA (\$42)
- Luna Vineyards 2017 Winemaker's Reserve Pinot Noir, Sta. Rita Hills, USA (\$45)
- MacMurray Estate 2017 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$30)

MAN Family Wines 2018 Bosstok Pinotage, WO Coastal Region, South Africa (\$12)

Mansalto 2018 Castello Rapale Toscana Rosso IGT, Italy (\$35)

Ménage à Trois 2019 Pinot Grigio, California, USA (\$12)

Ménage à Trois 2018 California Red Blend, California, USA (\$12)

Messina Hof Winery 2018 Artist Series Sangiovese, Texas High Plains, USA (\$16)

Mezzacorona 2019 Pinot Grigio, Trentino DOC, Italy (\$10)

Mezzacorona 2019 Rosato, Vigneti delle Dolomiti IGT, Italy (\$10)

Michael David 2018 Petite Petit Petite Sirah, Lodi, USA (\$18)

Michael David 2017 Earthquake Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi, USA (\$26)

Michael David 2019 Chardonnay, Lodi, USA (\$24)

Miles From Nowhere 2019 Shiraz, Margaret River, Australia (\$18)

Mirassou Winery 2019 Pinot Grigio, California, USA (\$12)

Mission Hill Family Estate 2017 Reserve Merlot, BC VQA, Canada (\$27)

Mission Hill Family Estate 2019 Five Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc, BC VQA, Canada (\$15)

Mon Frere 2018 Chardonnay, Sonoma, USA (\$16)

Mr. Riggs 2018 Shiraz, McLaren Vale, South Australia (\$28)

Mrs. Q 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra, Australia (\$15)

Navarro Vineyards 2019 Table Wine Chardonnay, Anderson Valley, USA (\$18)

New Clairvaux Vineyard 2018 St. James Block Trappist Made Syrah, Tehama County, USA (\$21)

Nichelini Winery 2018 Estate Bottled Red Blend, Napa Valley, USA (\$35)

Nichelini Winery 2019 Estate Bottled White Blend, Napa Valley, USA (\$26)

Nobilo 2020 Regional Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$14)

Nobilo 2019 Icon Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)

Northern Sky 2017 Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$13)

Oak Farm Vineyards 2019 Chardonnay, Lodi, USA (\$19)

Oak Farm Vineyards 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Lodi, USA (\$19)

Oberon 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, USA (\$19)

Oberon 2018 Chardonnay, Los Carneros, USA (\$22)

OG Cellars 2018 Tempranillo, Texas High Plains, USA (\$33)

Oleandri 2018 Courtney's Vineyard Chardonnay, Sta. Rita Hills, USA (\$45)

Opaque 2018 Zinfandel, Paso Robles, USA (\$40)

Oyster Bay Wines 2020 Rosé, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$15)

Oyster Bay Wines 2019 Merlot, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand (\$15)

Pedernales Cellars 2017 Graciano, Texas High Plains AVA, USA (\$40)

Pedroncelli Winery 2018 Signature Selection Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$22)

Penman Springs Vineyard 2017 Aglianico, Paso Robles Geneseo District, USA (\$32)

Picchetti Winery 2019 Leslie's Estate Chardonnay, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$55)

Picchetti Winery 2018 Tempranillo, Estrella District, Paso Robles, USA (\$45)

Picchetti Winery 2017 Vino di Vicino, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$60)

Piper Sonoma NV Reserve Brut, Sonoma County, USA (\$25)

Pontanario de Pego 2018 Reserve Castela, Portugal (\$15)

Pope Valley Winery 2019 Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, USA (\$20)

Poppy Wine Company 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$15)

Poppy Wine Company 2017 Pinot Noir, Monterey County, USA (\$17)

Portalupi Wines 2018 Dolinsek Ranch Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$60)

Portillo 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Mendoza, Argentina (\$11)

Prophecy 2019 Rosé, France (\$14)

Prothro Family Wines 2017 Stagecoach Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Atlas Peak, USA (\$68)

Ranch 32 2018 Cooper's Red Blend, Monterey, USA (\$26)

Ransom Wines 2015 Selection Pinot Noir, Eola-Amity Hills, USA (\$29)

Rapp Ranch 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$60)

Reckless Love 2018 Red Blend, California, USA (\$15)

Reign Wine 2018 Merlot, Napa Valley, USA (\$45)

Replica 2018 Label Envy Pinot Noir, North Coast, California, USA (\$20)

Rippee Family Vineyards 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$65)

Rippee Family Vineyards NV The Crossing Red Blend, Napa Valley, USA (\$30)

Roaming Dog 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé, Columbia Valley, USA (\$16)

Robert Hall Winery 2018 Dusi Vineyard Cavern Select Zinfandel, Paso Robles, USA (\$42)

Robert Hall Winery 2018 Cavern Select GSM, Paso Robles, USA (\$50)

Robert Mondavi Private Selection 2018 Merlot, California, USA (\$11)

Robert Mondavi Private Selection 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$11)

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, USA (\$22)

Ron Yates 2017 Lost Draw Vineyards Tempranillo, Texas High Plains, USA (\$32)

Rosecreek 2018 Gavi DOCG, Italy (\$8)

Rue de Perle 2019 Grand Vin de Bordeaux, France (\$11)

Ruffino 2017 Modus, Toscana IGT, Italy (\$28)

Russian Ridge Winery 2017 Mannstand Merlot, Santa Clara Valley, USA

San Simeon 2017 Stormwatch Estate Reserve Red Blend, Paso Robles, USA (\$80)

Sand Point Family Vineyards 2019 Chardonnay, California, USA (\$12)

Sandeman NV 20 Year Old Tawny Porto, Portugal (\$65)

Sea Bird 2017 G III Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford, USA (\$129)

Seaglass 2019 Riesling, Santa Barbara County, USA (\$12)

Seaglass 2019 Pinot Grigio, Santa Barbara County, USA (\$12)

Sean Minor 2019 4B Sauvignon Blanc, California, USA (\$15)

Sean Minor 2019 Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$22)

Shiloh 2017 Secret Reserve Merlot, Judean Hills, Israel (\$45)

Shottesbrooke 2016 Reserve Series Eliza Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$38)

Shottesbrooke NV 1337 Sparkling Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$28)

Sidewood 2018 Mappinga Road Vineyard Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$25)

# THE 2020 SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITION

[Gold Medals Continued]

- Sidewood 2016 Mappinga Road Vineyard Shiraz, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$50)
- Sidewood 2018 Mappinga Road Vineyard Shiraz, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$50)
- Sidewood 2019 Estate Pinot Noir, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$25)
- Silvara Vineyards NV Blanc de Noirs, USA (\$38)
- Silver Spur 2017 Jamieson Ranch Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$30)
- Sisters Run Wine Co. 2019 Coonawarra Old Testament Cabernet, South Australia (\$28)
- Sitalia 2018 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$10)
- Skipper's Knot 2017 Pinot Noir, California, USA (\$5)
- Spicewood Vineyards 2017 Estate Tenny Wren Red Blend, Texas Hill Country, USA (\$35)
- Stemmari 2018 Nero d'Avola, Sicilia DOC, Italy (\$10)
- Storyteller 2018 Pinot Noir, Sonoma County, USA (\$15)
- Sutter Home Winery NV Pinot Grigio, California, USA (\$8)
- Sutter Home Winery NV Moscato, California, USA (\$8)
- Suveg Cellars 2017 Table Dancer Syrah, Monterey, USA (\$55)
- Taylor Made 2020 Pinot Noir Rosé, Adelaide Hills, Australia (\$22)
- Tehachapi Winery 2018 Argyle Ranch Reserve Merlot, Cummings Valley, California, USA (\$38)
- Tehachapi Winery 2018 Reserve Vintage Syrah, Tehachapi Mountain Range, Cunningham Valley, USA (\$38)
- Terra d'Oro 2017 Amador Zinfandel, Amador County, USA (\$18)
- Terra d'Oro 2019 Chenin Blanc Viognier, Clarksburg, USA (\$16)
- The Crusher 2017 Petite Sirah, California, USA (\$15)
- The Dreaming Tree 2018 Red Blend, California, USA (\$15)
- The Dreaming Tree 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, California, USA (\$15)
- The Great Bonza 2020 Reserve Shiraz Cabernet, South Eastern Australia (\$11)
- The King's 2019 Favour Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$15)
- The King's 2019 A Sticky End Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)
- The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey 2017 Red Blend, Colorado, USA (\$50)
- The Winery at La Grange 2017 Cabernet Franc, USA (\$45)
- Theave 2019 Pinot Noir, Los Carneros, Sonoma, USA (\$20)
- Theopolis Vineyards 2018 Estate Grown Petite Sirah, Yorkville Highlands, USA (\$40)
- Therese Vineyards 2016 Estate Signature Selection Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Cruz Mountains, USA (\$60)
- Therese Vineyards 2017 Private Reserve Red Blend, Santa Clara Valley, USA (\$38)
- Thirty-Seven Winery 2017 Reserve Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$40)
- Thirty-Seven Winery 2018 Grenache, Petaluma Gap, USA (\$26)
- Three of Cups L'Astre 2017 Syrah, Walla Walla Valley, USA (\$30)
- Three of Cups Le Voeu 2019 Stillwater Creek Sauvignon Blanc, Columbia Valley, USA (\$18)
- Three Sticks Wines 2018 Gap's Crown Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$70)
- Three Sticks Wines 2018 Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast, USA (\$55)
- Trapiche 2018 Broquel Cabernet Sauvignon, Mendoza, Argentina (\$17)
- Trapiche 2016 Medalla Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina (\$25)
- Trotter 1/16 Winery 2017 Oak Canyon Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon, Coombsville, Napa Valley, USA (\$95)
- True Myth 2019 Paragon Vineyard Chardonnay, Edna Valley, USA (\$18)
- Truth Teller 2017 The Clever Fool Cabernet Franc, Yakima Valley, USA (\$40)
- Tsillan Cellars 2018 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Lake Chelan AVA, USA (\$48)
- V. Sattui Winery 2019 Rosato di Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley, USA (\$31)
- V. Sattui Winery 2018 Collina d'Oro Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, USA (\$49)
- V. Sattui Winery 2018 Pilgrim Vineyard Old Vine Zinfandel, Lodi, USA (\$39)
- V. Sattui Winery 2018 Duarte Vineyard Zinfandel, Contra Costa County, USA (\$36)
- V. Sattui Winery 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$52)
- V. Sattui Winery 2017 Vittorio's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, St. Helena, Napa Valley, USA (\$78)
- V. Sattui Winery 2017 Morisoli Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford, Napa Valley, USA (\$95)
- Valley Mills Vineyards 2019 Vermentino, Texas High Plains, USA (\$28)
- VARA 2018 Garnacha, Campo de Borja, Spain (\$18)
- VARA 2017 Tempranillo, USA (\$30)
- VARA NV Silverhead Brut Reserva, DO Cava, Spain (\$23)
- Vega del Cega 2018 Tinto, DO Valdepeñas, Spain (\$4)
- Veritas Vineyards & Winery 2015 Vintage Sparkling Wine, Monticello, USA (\$35)
- Victor Hugo Winery 2017 Estate Petite Sirah, Paso Robles, Templeton Gap District, USA (\$26)
- Wakefield 2018 St. Andrews Shiraz, Clare Valley, Australia (\$50)
- Washington Gold Cider 2019 Raspberry, Lake Chelan, USA (\$11)
- Weinstock Cellar Select 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles, USA (\$25)
- Wellington Cellars 2017 Estate Petite Sirah, Sonoma Valley, USA (\$68)
- Whitecliff 2016 Red Blend, New York, USA (\$20)
- Whitehaven 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)
- Wild Goose Vineyards 2019 Autumn Gold White Blend, Okanagan Valley, Canada (\$17)
- Winehaven Winery and Vineyard NV Stinger Mead Honeywine, Minnesota, USA (\$18)
- Wolf Mountain Vineyards 2015 Instinct Red Blend, Dahlenega Plateau, USA (\$43)
- Yellow Tail 2019 Big Bold Red, Yenda, Australia (\$7)
- Yorkville Cellars 2019 Rennie Vineyard Vin D'une Nuit Malbec, Yorkville Highlands, USA (\$22)
- Z. Alexander Brown 2018 Uncaged Cabernet Sauvignon, California, USA (\$18)
- ZD Wines 2019 Pinot Noir, Carneros, USA (\$56)
- ZD Wines 2018 50th Anniversary Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$75)
- ZD Wines 2017 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, USA (\$215)
- Zonte's Footstep 2018 Langhorne Creek Shiraz, Lake Doctor, Australia (\$28) <sup>SJ</sup>



*The Man Behind the Brands*



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"2021 Winery of the Year" awarded by the prestigious Gambero Rosso.

Thank you to our extraordinary Italian family and partners for your continued passion  
and dedication to delivering excellence in every bottle.



