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THE tastingpanel MAGAZINE

GRUPPO *Mezzacorona*

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VITICULTURE

The Dolomites mountain range in Italy's Trentino region—where Mezzacorona grows its Pinot Grigio grapes—is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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in growing my American
Vodka. Could you please
put my favorite cocktail
on your menu?

Thanks!

-Tito

Tito's All-Time Favorite

This is our man Tito's signature spin on a classic "Vodka Soda," and it's become a company staple. The orange adds a bit of sweetness, the lime adds a bit of tartness, and mixed together it tastes fresh and clean.



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April 2018 • Vol. 76 No. 4

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CORRECTION

In April's Publisher's Picks, we omitted the vintage for Meridith May's review of the Edna Valley Vineyard 2016 Chardonnay, which was awarded **93** points.

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When to Drink?

PHOTO: JEREMY BALL



My parents took me to Burgundy when I was 11 years old. While my classmates were playing baseball and swimming that summer, I was tasting wine with my father in damp Côte de Beaune cellars. Admittedly, this was a rather unorthodox introduction to wine, but it prepared me for a lifetime of balanced enjoyment.

At home, there was wine on the table every night at dinner. If I wanted to taste it, I could. As I grew up, the fact that I was exposed to wine throughout my formative years brought me to the cusp of young adulthood as someone who never had to sneak alcohol.

In college I was elected social chairman of my fraternity and was put in charge of purchasing beer, wine, and spirits. And while my compatriots had a definite tendency to overindulge, I was the picture of measured sobriety (most of the time). And here I am, the editor-in-chief of a magazine focused on wine and spirits.

The point of this exposition is not to brag: I want to illustrate the fact that a sensible and deliberate approach to alcohol by parents and caregivers typically creates an adult with a mature, measured attitude toward drinking.

Forbidding young people to touch alcohol until they reach the age of 21 is counterproductive and just plain stupid. If an 18 year old is old enough to vote and die for their country, then this young adult is certainly capable of handling alcohol.

Louisiana State Senator Eric LaFleur recently introduced a new bill that would allow 19 and 20 year olds in the state to purchase and consume alcohol if they receive certification and parental consent. According to his press office, LaFleur believes that because drinking is off limits to them, teens are more likely to consume alcohol irresponsibly. LaFleur says lowering the permissable age will help remove the allure for minors while potentially lowering incidents of binge drinking on college campuses that sometimes turn deadly.

This is a start. The brutally restrictive prohibition against alcohol for people under the age of 21 should be abolished. Even 18 is an arbitrary age, but it's preferable to 21. The editors of *The Tasting Panel* are unanimous on this issue.

Kudos to Senator LaFleur. Maybe that's why they named a Bordeaux château after him. ■■

UPFRONT

A man wearing a brown hat, a brown jacket over a blue shirt, and jeans is standing in a vineyard. He is leaning on a wooden post. The background shows green grapevines and a clear sky.

Anthony Riboli
is the fourth-
generation family
winemaker for
Riboli Family
Wine Estates.

Coastal CONNECTION

**SAN SIMEON WINES
PERSONIFY THE SPIRIT OF
CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST**

by Michelle Ball
photos by Jeremy Ball

The coastline that runs
along Highway 1 from San Simeon through Big Sur is one of the most rugged yet inspiring vistas on the West Coast. For decades, this epic landscape has intrigued many high-profile visitors, including newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst. In 1919, the tycoon broke ground on his colossal estate, Hearst Castle, which overlooks the coastal town.

That landscape also served as the inspiration for a collection of estate wines made by the Riboli family: San Simeon Wines. The collection's recent packaging update vividly illustrates the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse, a historic structure that illuminates the

rocky shore along San Simeon. The name evokes the spirit of the Central Coast and its maritime effect on the winegrowing regions to the east, which are home to the Riboli family's estate vineyards.

The Ocean's Influence

"The ocean is what's creating all of the influence here," says San Simeon Wines Winemaker Anthony Riboli as he describes the coastal impact on his family's estate vineyards in both Paso Robles and Monterey. He represents the fourth generation of winemaking in the Riboli family, whose viticultural tradition began in 1917.

In Paso Robles, a series of passes in the mountain range create an opening for airflow from the west. Known as the Templeton Gap, this geological feature pushes cool breezes east into the otherwise hot, arid climate, fanning the vines in the late afternoon.

This juxtaposition causes large diurnal temperature swings of up to 50 degrees Fahrenheit, which allow for solid ripening and acid retention. In addition to the climatic influence, the vines also benefit from the region's widespread calcareous soils: the result of marine deposits laid down over millions of years. "Those are two very critical parts of Paso Robles that make it unique, and they're both directly related to the ocean," adds Riboli.

North of Paso Robles lies a deep marine canyon known as Monterey Bay. Nicknamed the "Blue Grand Canyon," this icy body of water pushes fog inland, where it hovers over the Santa Lucia Highlands and Arroyo Seco AVAs into the late morning. Without the marine factor, this area would have been a warm-climate growing region, which is why the University of California, Davis

Hot days and cool nights allow for even ripening and acid retention, making Paso Robles an ideal growing region for Cabernet Sauvignon.



suggested growers plant Bordeaux varieties here in the 1970s. In reality, the bay creates an environment better suited for cool-climate grapes such as Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

"We began owning vineyards here in the 1980s, and that's given us the opportunity to understand the nuances of these sub-AVAs and try out different clones," Riboli says as we discuss his family's estate properties in Monterey. For example, their Chardonnay from the Sarmiento Vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA tends to display racier green-apple characteristics, while the same grape from their vineyards in the lower Arroyo Seco AVA exhibits rounder, more tropical fruit flavors. Blended together, they create the **San Simeon Monterey Chardonnay**, a refreshing yet approachable wine with supple yellow fruit and balanced acidity.

Paso Possibilities

During the past few years, the Riboli family has made significant investments in Paso Robles, where they've planted five estate vineyards and built a new state-of-the-art winery. The Ribolis previously contracted with growers throughout the region and made their wine at custom-crush facilities before their experience steered them to properties in the El Pomar District and



San Simeon's 2017 Rosé and Sauvignon Blanc are perfect for summer sipping.

The view overlooking the rolling hills of Stefano Vineyard in the El Pomar District of Paso Robles.



The Riboli Family Wine Estates team: Arnaud Debons, Head Winemaker for the Los Angeles winery; Anthony Riboli, fourth-generation family winemaker; and Ben Mayo, Winemaker for the Paso Robles winery.

Creston District sub-AVAs. There, they continue to innovate within the realm of viticulture while exploring the eastern reaches of Paso Robles. “We’re jumping feet first into these areas: using new clones, higher-density plantings, and really pushing the boundaries of the quality that can be achieved in these sub-AVAs,” explains Riboli. “There’s a new frontier occurring in Creston and El Pomar, which are just coming into their own. They’re still in their infancy in many ways.”

In 2013, vines for their first estate vineyard in the El Pomar District were planted on what was once cattle-grazing land. They named the property Stefano Vineyard after Riboli’s grandfather, who celebrated his 96th birthday last year. Although summer temperatures often reach the triple digits, the vineyard is in the path of the Templeton Gap and its afternoon breezes, which provide cooling relief for the vines.

The undulating slopes of the property allowed them to carefully map the vineyard and plant varieties equipped to thrive at each site. Viognier, for example, was planted on a north-facing slope to better preserve acidity. The

2016 vintage also marked the family’s very first vineyard designate release from Stefano: The lively wine displays notes of fresh pineapple and aloe with restrained opulence, serving to highlight the acidity that can sometimes be lost in warm-climate Viogniers.

Beating the Heat

Steady rains and moderate temperatures in 2017 made for an ideal growing season for San Simeon, and its first two releases from the vintage have made their debut just in time for summer. “Frankly, I’m a big rosé drinker, so we decided we’d make some this year,” Riboli says. The **San Simeon 2017 Stefano Vineyard Grenache Rosé** was grown and harvested intentionally to be an easy sipper on a hot day alongside a plate of charcuterie. Produced from grapes planted on the upper part of a south-facing hillside, the salmon-colored rosé is full yet refreshing with flavors of wild strawberries and a tanginess reminiscent of watermelon Jolly Ranchers.

Vibrant and expressive, the **San Simeon 2017 Sauvignon Blanc** feels like summer in a glass, with aromas of

ripe guava, lime zest, and ocean air. A small portion was fermented in neutral French oak with lees stirring for several months, adding weight and elevated flavors of white grapefruit pith, tarragon, and golden berries.

As this prolific family continues to expand and push the limits in their vineyards and winery, we’re excited to see the evolution of the San Simeon brand and the expressions released from these estate properties. ■■

San Simeon 2014 Estate Reserve Stormwatch, Paso Robles

(\$70) One of the most dramatic Bordeaux blends from the region: the substantial body, the aromas of graphite and blackberry-licorice, and the measurable layers of flavors. Violets surge through lively black fruit, etching a dimensional palate of soil and dark chocolate-espresso. Chewy with a decisively long, expansive finish. **98** —*Meridith May*

San Simeon 2014 Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles

(\$30) Bright raspberry and currant jam on the nose along with a hint of spearmint lead to a weighted wine with dense boysenberry on the palate. A fine acidity keeps the fruit fresh, and tannins are round and silky. The wine is dotted with black pepper and a dusty coating of cocoa. **94** —*M.M.*

San Simeon 2017 Grenache Rosé, Stefano Vineyard, Paso Robles

(\$18) Personality-plus! Ripe red berries, salted peach, and juicy melon combine for a crisp, expressive wine. Dried rose petals are a lovely mark on the finish. **92** —*M.M.*

San Simeon 2015 Estate Reserve Chardonnay, Monterey County

(\$18) A charming perfume of honeyed lemon, a drop of caramel, and an herbal essence of chamomile support a winning start for this modern Chardonnay. Mouth-filling with medium weight, melon and lemongrass—as well as a ripe pineapple middle—create an effect of light on the oak for a wine heavy on brightness! **93** —*M.M.*

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PHOTO: CHRIS GRANGER

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The Whiskey Drinker's Vodka



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TRENTODOC





Matthew Owings Joins Rombauer Vineyards as Chief Financial Officer

Rombauer Vineyards, a family-owned winery based in St. Helena, California, in March appointed Matthew Owings as Chief Financial Officer. Owings joins Rombauer after nearly ten years with Jackson Family Wines, where he served most recently as Vice President of Finance.

“His experience in the wine industry, the management consulting field, and manufacturing, coupled with his impressive educational background, will be vital to Rombauer Vineyards as we continue our trajectory of growth and success,” says Rombauer Chief Operating Officer Bob Knebel.

Tecate Challenges Patrons to Bring Their Pride to The Grill This Summer

Tecate is inviting beer drinkers to “Bring Your Pride to the Grill” this summer with its new retail initiative. This new multi-channel promotion includes bilingual POS, display enhancements, digital and social media, TV advertising, and a Tecate Grill Truck activation plan in select markets. The initiative also features a partnership with Kingsford charcoal to drive cross-merchandising, as well as a sweepstakes in which winners will attend the Weber Grill Academy in Monterrey, Mexico.

“Bring Your Pride to the Grill” is designed to drive sales, maximize brand awareness, recruit new consumers, and generate shopper engagement by reinforcing the idea that Tecate is brewed to be enjoyed with food: this summer, this season, this party, or this game.



3 Badge Beverage Corporation Adds Unoaked Chardonnay to Plungerhead Line of Wines

The Sonoma-based 3 Badge Beverage Corporation recently introduced an unoaked Chardonnay to its Plungerhead brand.

With a March debut, this new bottling (SRP \$14) includes fruit sourced from top vineyards in California’s Lodi winegrowing region following a growing season of hot days and cool nights. Grapes were harvested earlier than usual and, after undergoing fermentation, were cold-stabilized in stainless steel with no oak influences. “Unoaked Chardonnay is not widely available,” said August Sebastiani, President of 3 Badge Beverage Corporation. “This wine is a great expression of Chardonnay’s wonderful fruit character.”



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*Landmark
Vineyards*

Crown Point Vineyards Welcomes New Director of Sales and Marketing

Crown Point Vineyards, the producer of distinguished Bordeaux-style wines from its Happy Canyon-based estate vineyard in the Santa Barbara County AVA, has appointed Karl Ziegler as Director of Sales and Marketing.

With previous experience at Southern Wine and Spirits of Nevada, Allied Domecq Wines, Cline Cellars, Robert Oatley, and Terroir Selections, Ziegler brings his passion for fine wine and expertise in sales and strategic partnerships to his new role. "Karl brings great breadth and depth of luxury wine experience that naturally make him a great fit for Crown Point," says General Manager David Francke. "His relationships will be critical as we work to expand our wholesale activity into more markets, and we're lucky to have him on the team."



David Galzignato Appointed General Manager and Senior Winemaker at Provenance Vineyards

David Galzignato will return to Napa as the newly-appointed Senior Winemaker and General Manager at Rutherford's Provenance Vineyards. Galzignato most recently served as Winemaker at boutique winery Jada Vineyards in Paso Robles, though his Napa pedigree includes time at Charles Krug, Lewis Cellars, and Paraduxx.

Galzignato says his winemaking style can be described as "living on the edge between classic and contemporary," combining modern techniques with an appreciation for more well-established methods. "I have always felt at home in Napa Valley," he says. "The 2018 harvest will be my 21st vintage focusing on estate- and vineyard-designate varietal-focused wines. I'm excited by what the Provenance winery, vineyards, and team have to offer."

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Heineken USA: Coalitions and Collaboration Key to “Brewing A Better World”

Heineken USA President and CEO Ronald den Elzen delivered the keynote at The Responsible Business Summit New York in March, where he highlighted the need for long-term coalitions to promote environmental and social progress.

Den Elzen cited Heineken’s Brewing a Better World approach for creating shared value for the business and its stakeholders by focusing on areas where Heineken believes it can make the biggest difference globally: protecting water resources, sourcing sustainability, advocating responsible consumption, promoting health and safety,

growing with communities, and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Heineken also recently announced its Drop the C program, which aims to grow the company’s share of renewable thermal energy and electricity in production from the current level of 14 percent to 70 percent by 2030. Since 2008, carbon emissions at Heineken breweries have decreased by 41 percent; as of last year, the company has also already reached its 2020 production emission targets.

In the U.S. specifically, Heineken’s Brewing a Better World agenda focuses on promoting recycling and sustainability; promoting respon-

sible consumption and reducing alcohol-related harm, including incidents of drunk driving; and supporting projects and charities that build inclusive communities and celebrate diversity.

Heineken USA’s national partnerships include +Pool to help filter water in New York’s Hudson River; The Recycling Partnership, which provides recycling support to more than 29 million households; Formula 1, which promotes Heineken’s “When You Drive, Never Drink” campaign; as well as the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, and more. ■■



Historic Dallas Amphitheater to be Renamed Dos Equis Pavilion

In April, Heineken USA announced a marketing alliance with events promoter and venue operator Live Nation that gives the company’s key Mexican import Dos Equis exclusive naming rights to the Starplex Pavilion in Dallas, Texas.

As the largest amphitheater in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, the 20,000-seat Dos Equis Pavilion will host top music talent throughout 2018, keeping the popular Mexican imported beer at the forefront among music lovers and beer drinkers in the brand’s top market.



d7

AMAZING MONTEREY

DISTRICT 7

VINCENT CATALAA, Winemaker

"I'm originally from France and discovered Point Lobos while working as an enology intern. My parents were visiting and so I consulted several guidebooks that described Point Lobos as a must-see. I immediately fell in love with the place. To me, it's one of the most beautiful and relaxing spots in Monterey County."



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Santa Monica Smog Cutter

- ▶ 2¾ oz. mix (¾ oz. Caña Brava Rum, ½ oz. Smith & Cross Traditional Jamaican Rum, ¾ oz. Cognac Park, ¾ oz. Fords Gin)
- ▶ ¾ oz. lime juice
- ▶ ½ oz. orange juice
- ▶ ½ oz. pineapple juice
- ▶ ½ oz. hibiscus orgeat (1 oz. dried hibiscus: 8 oz. orgeat)
- ▶ ¼ oz. PX Sherry
- ▶ 2 dashes cinnamon tincture

Whip ingredients and top with crushed ice in a Collins glass. Float PX Sherry. Garnish with a pineapple leaf and mint sprigs topped with powdered sugar, then serve with nuts, and chocolate.

Buzzworthy Beverages

MIDCENTURY
MODERN BAR **BIRDS
& BEES** DELIVERS
FRESH SENSIBILITIES
TO POST-PROHIBITION
COCKTAILS
by Rich Manning

Getting to cocktail bar Birds & Bees is almost like exploring a time-bending labyrinth. After you walk through a Downtown Los Angeles parking lot and down a staircase, you'll see a narrow alleyway funneling past brick walls. Keep going until you reach a bright yellow door. You don't need a password to enter the midcentury modern-themed joint—just walk right in.

A period sometime between World War II and the Summer of Love exists on the other side, where Atomic Age furniture and a corner hi-fi coexist with old episodes of *The Twilight Zone* playing on TV. The time warp slightly morphs once you approach the bar: The staff here defiantly shun the ready-made mixes and artificial juices that gradually seeped into the cocktail scene around the midcentury era's latter half. "That era of mixes and blended drinks was the worst thing to happen to the American cocktail scene, and that includes Prohibition," says Bar Manager Jake Larowe. "At least you could get a decent drink during Prohibition!"

A healthy slice of Birds & Bees' menu plays on popular Post-Prohibition cocktails, transforming them into the bar's own appropriately-named renditions (its take on the daiquiri, for example, is called the Desi Arnaz). Yet the use of housemade tinctures and fresh ingredients—several of which Larowe procures at L.A.'s sprawling epicurean center Grand Central Market a block away—rockets these old-school drinks into the 21st century, much to the enjoyment of the more knowledgeable modern-day palate.

While the spirit of these beverages ties into the bar's fun and funky aesthetic, the craftsmanship connects to something much more "of the moment." "There's a lot of great things happening in Downtown Los Angeles right now—great bars, restaurants, art, culture," Larowe explains. "We want to be part of that, and one of the best ways for us to do so is making these drinks the right way without shortcuts."

Larowe does reserve space on Birds & Bees' seasonally-rotating menu for classically-inspired creations like the Santa Monica Smog Cutter: a mélange of rum, Cognac, gin, and fresh fruit juice bound by dried hibiscus and cinnamon tincture. Regardless of what timeline his drinks are inspired by, however, his philosophy remains the same. "If you're not going to make a drink with the best ingredients you can use," Larowe says, "you really shouldn't bother making it at all." ■■



Birds & Bees Bar Manager Jake Larowe uses fresh, locally-sourced ingredients to craft drinks that reflect the Los Angeles establishment's midcentury modern aesthetic.

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ForceBrands is the leading recruiting and staffing firm for the beverage, food, and beauty industries. We offer executive recruiting services, board of director assembly, and industry-specific job boards including BevForce—which connects global beverage companies with future leaders.

Jean-Marie Heins has been named Chief Marketing Officer at **Broken Shed Distilleries**. She had been Executive Vice President of Marketing and Sales Operations at Sidney Frank Importing Co., Inc.

Courtney Aiken has been named Marketing Manager at **Whistlepig Whiskey**. She had been an independent marketing and sales consultant.

William Skelley has been named Division Manager of **Luxco, Inc.** He had been Region Manager-Midwest at Terlato Distell Artisan Spirits.

Erica Amster Kraypohl has been named NY/NJ Market Manager at **Virginia Distillery Company**. She had been NY Area Manager for the Innovative Wine & Spirits Division at Phusion Projects.

CAREER CORNER

Three Tips to Improve Productivity

What's the secret to workplace productivity? Happiness. Research has found happy employees are up to 20 percent more productive than their less satisfied counterparts. One study found that happiness has a particularly noticeable impact on salespeople and has proven to increase sales by roughly 37 percent.

Read on for tips on creating a happier workplace.

1. Respect Time

As a productivity expert and author of *The Art of Winning Conversation*, Morrie Stettner touts the 80/20 rule when it comes to time management: 80 percent of meaningful work results from 20 percent of our daily efforts. He encourages people to focus on their top three priorities at the beginning of each day.

2. Forge Friendships

You likely spend more time at work with your colleagues than at home with your family, so it makes sense that there has long been a connection between workplace friendships and happiness. A survey conducted by the Virgin Pulse Institute found that nearly 40 percent of respondents identified their co-workers as the leading reason behind why they loved their company. Additionally, 66 percent of respondents said these relationships positively impacted their focus and productivity at work.

3. Make Happiness a Priority

An employer can only go so far to provide employees with a workplace full of perks, so the rest is on you. Invest in wellness programs, take PTO, or make work-life balance a priority—do whatever it takes to put yourself first. ■■

Want to connect with beverage industry leaders? Tap into BevForce at www.bevforce.com or email info@bevforce.com for more information.

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POINTS

THE TASTING PANEL 2016



NEW AMSTERDAM VODKA®

Two Under-the-Radar Wine Regions That Are Set to Impress

story and photos by David Ransom

Wine regions come in and out of focus as tastes and buying habits change and evolve. This past month, I had the opportunity to taste releases from some well-established regions that produce wonderful wines but are sometimes overlooked due to their minimal exports.

Vinexpo, a wine and spirits trade show long-established in France, has only been held in the U.S. a handful of times. At the New York event this spring, I sampled wines from the country of Uruguay. While quite well known for its Tannat, which comprises almost 40 percent of vineyard production, Uruguay is South America's fourth-largest wine producer and actually makes a breadth of wines from a long list of grape varieties, including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cab Franc, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, and even Albariño.

Like with many globally-emerging



Tasting Panel East Coast Editor David Ransom with Anna Ehrbar of Zanini/Castello Luigi, Raphael Garcia of Provins, and Gilles Besse of Domaine Jean-René Germanier.



Alvaro Lorenzo of Uruguay's Alto de la Ballena at Vinexpo New York.

regions, price-to-quality ratio is high, making for good value on restaurant lists. However, with only about 3 percent dedicated to export, Uruguay is currently no match for neighbors like Argentina and Chile in the U.S. market. With exposure to buyers at shows like Vinexpo, this will surely change. Participating producers included Alto de la Ballena, Antigua Bodega Stagnari, and Bodega Garzón, among others.

Next, at a dinner at the Michelin three-starred Eleven Madison Park, I got acquainted with wines from one of Europe's most elusive winemaking countries: Switzerland. Though less than 2 percent of production is exported, the Swiss actually have a very robust wine industry with approximately 40,000 acres of vineyards.

Fifty-eight percent are dedicated to red grapes including Merlot, Syrah, and Pinot Noir (sometimes called Blauburgunder), and 42 percent to white grapes including Chardonnay, Sauvignon, and the indigenous Chassalas. Three regions—Ticino, Valais, and Vaud—provide the bulk of the wines.

Fortunately for us non-Swiss residents, as a new generation of winemakers takes over the industry, they are more focused on entering the global market and are taking steps to ramp up production accordingly. Three producers were on hand to pair their wines with Swiss-born chef Daniel Humm's inspired cuisine: Ticino-based Castello Luigi and Valais producers Domaine Jean-René Germanier and Provins. ■■



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Whisky Adventures for Spring

by Ian Buxton

There's much to report this issue from both Scotland and Ireland.

One of my favorite Irish whiskies is **Writers' Tears Copper Pot** from the Walsh Whiskey Company. Apart from the great name, it's a fine example of a style of whiskey that is unique to Ireland. Made from a mash of malted and unmalted barley (but no grain whiskey, hence not a blend), it's unpeated and matured and aged in American oak bourbon casks to deliver delicious spice notes and a rich mouthfeel.

With renewed distribution efforts backed by Disaronno International, Writers' Tears should shortly be available in more than 40 states (SRP \$40; 40% ABV).

Longtime favorite The Glenlivet has set out to challenge its many fans with **The Glenlivet Code**. This mysterious single malt has been released without



cask information or tasting notes in order to take whisky connoisseurs on a journey of discovery while also testing their whisky knowledge with a limited edition described as “a labyrinth of flavours that will test the senses of even the most discerning whisky drinker.” So, no clues here! Instead, scan the code on the back of the carton to enter a virtual underground room where you will be greeted by a hologram of The Glenlivet's Master Distiller, Alan Winchester. The challenge: Decode the taste of the liquid by selecting four aromas for the nose and four flavors for the palate from thousands of possible combinations. All will be revealed at year's end (\$120; strength—you guess!).

Following two years of development, Whyte & Mackay are launching a new look and new expressions from the Isle of Jura, Scotland's smallest island distilling community. **Jura Seven Wood** and **Jura 18**, now available nationwide through Gallo Spirits, join the award-winning 10 Year Old expression and really mark a major renaissance for this distillery and its rapidly-growing reputation. Under owner Emperador, Jura is finally receiving the stability and investment it has long required.

According to Kirsteen Beeston,



Global Head of Brand for Jura, “The introduction of these two expressions in the U.S., on the back of the success of Jura 10, is testament to our confidence in the new range and style. Furthermore, we believe that there is a strong opportunity to expand the range and consumer choice in the U.S. market as part of our growth ambitions and vision.” The new Jura Seven Wood (\$75; 42% ABV) and Jura 18 (\$125; 44% ABV) are part of the Signature Series and are set to replace the current range of Origin, Superstition, Diurachs' Own 16 Year Old, and Prophecy.

Finally, reinforcing last month's column on the growing contributions of women in whisky, look out for rare limited releases and new expressions from Master Blender Rachel Barrie. Among the collection imported by Brown-Forman Beverages, standout releases include **The GlenDronach 24 Year Old Grandeur** and **BenRiach 21**, alongside single-cask expressions and some of the best and most sought-after whiskies from these two relatively little-known distilleries. Retail prices range from \$95 to \$1,100 depending on age, strength, and availability—all palates and pockets seem to be covered here! ■■





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BarMagic of Las Vegas' Tobin Ellis leads a workshop on bar design and beverage program strategy.

Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On

CHARITABLE EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS DAZZLE DURING THIS YEAR'S NIGHTCLUB & BAR CONVENTION

by Xania V. Woodman



PHOTO: TE ANN LANEOTES

John Lermayer, Owner of Sweet Liberty in Miami, FL; Charlotte Voisey, Director of Brand Advocacy for William Grant & Sons USA; Tobin Ellis of BarMagic in Las Vegas, NV; and Ross Simon of Bitter & Twisted in Phoenix, FL.

All eyes were on Sin City during the recent **Nightclub & Bar Convention and Trade Show**, held at the Las Vegas Convention Center. And the show floor was exactly the spectacle you'd expect, showcasing everything from the latest in Bloody Mary mixes, hangover recovery and "precovery" aids, and spiked cold brew to acrylic glassware and reservations software. By night, the Strip's nightclubs entertained attendees, with a dozen industry honors (as well as four Vegas-specific nods) being awarded one evening at XS Nightclub in Encore Resort.

But before any badges were donned or awards handed out, the action kicked off with an explosive **BARMANIA 4** competition at Herbs & Rye. Proprietor **Nectaly Mendoza** queued up a *Star Wars*-esque intro video to introduce the 27 bartenders who traveled from across the nation and overseas to vie for bragging rights. Brands doled out cocktails and swag to the estimated 500-plus spectators who helped raise more than \$20,000 for the St. Baldrick's Foundation. It's no surprise that Speed Rack Las Vegas 2016 champion **Emily Yett** took the prize with her combined speed and precision as she made eight drinks, poured a shot, and popped a beer bottle—all while dressed to slay as her alter ego "Sweaty Yeti" in a getup that screamed Jane Fonda-meets-*GLOW*-meets-*American Gladiators*.

Meanwhile, back on the convention floor, BarMagic's **Tobin Ellis**—creator of the Tobin Ellis Signature Cocktail Station by Perlick—debuted his first line extension with the brand, a draft cocktail system that can be customized to hold either 5- or 10-gallon self-agitating, four-port Cornelius kegs.

He also took to the stage to teach seminars on bar design and beverage program strategy. "The bar is the engine that drives every hospitality business; it's where the profit comes from," Ellis says. "The better the engine, the faster the business can go. And for far too long, bars have been designed by people who have no idea what real bartending is all about—so the stations are almost always wildly inefficient. I can't think of any aspect of designing or building a bar, club, hotel, or restaurant that is more important to health, happiness, or profitability than the bar. It's time bars were designed by people who actually use them." ■■

Xania V. Woodman has been writing and editing at the intersection of dining, beverage, and nightlife for 13 years. You'll either find her at the bar (and frequently behind it) or en route to her next beverage-centric travel destination. Follow her on Instagram at @SinCitizenX.

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90 POINTS

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Shenandoah spring lamb was paired with Krug Grande Cuvée at Bourbon Steak's "No 'Pagne No Gain" dinner.



PHOTO: KELLY MAGYARICS

Springtime Sips

MARCH IN D.C. WAS ALL ABOUT SHERRY FLIGHTS, TABLESIDE TEQUILA, AND CHAMPAGNE by Kelly Magyarics, DWS

PHOTO COURTESY OF MXDC



MXDC Cocina Mexican now offers a tequila experience along with a three-course prix fixe menu on Wednesday evenings.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ESTADIO



Estadio's Sherry Blossom Festival includes specialty cocktails like the frozen Sherry Colada.

I'm a cherry-blossom Grinch. There, I said it. Fighting for parking and elbowing through crowds only to be underwhelmed by flowering trees is not my idea of springtime fun. Way better? Estadio's annual Sherry Blossom Festival, which celebrates Jerez's fortified wine with flights, cocktails, and a special four-course menu.

During the preview, a flight of Fino, Amontillado, and Oloroso Sherries from El Maestro Sierra selected by Wine Director Max Kuller washed down shrimp *croquetas* with romesco and *pintxos Gilda*—the classic Basque pepper, anchovy, and olive skewers named for a femme fatale played by Rita Hayworth. Not to be outdone, Bar Director Adam Bernbach created a hand-drawn list of Sherry-based cocktails like the Tiki-Taka, which mixed Fino and PX Sherries with cocoa butter-infused rum, Campari, Angostura bitters, and housemade passion-fruit soda. Guests ended the evening by passing the porron and sipping a Cesar Florido Moscatel Sherry Float with vanilla gelato and a crunchy chocolate topping. *Viva España!*

Proving that bottle service needn't translate to velvet rope-lined tables set with overpriced designer vodka, tonic, and soda water, MXDC Cocina Mexicana recently launched a three-course prix fixe for four that includes a bottle of Patrón Reposado Tequila from a barrel hand-selected by Chef Todd English at the distillery in Jalisco. At the inaugural dinner, we played bartender by mixing our own Margaritas with fresh juices; muddled blackberries and mango; and spicy, smoky, and pink salts. (If you aren't mixology-inclined, your server is more than happy to do the shaking for you.) The tang of a Mango Margarita made shrimp ceviche with smoked peppers and tomato pop, while the classic version, rimmed with smoked salt, was a match for *carne a la parrilla* with chipotle corn on the cob and grilled avocado. And if you don't (gasp!) finish the whole bottle of tequila? Staff will keep it safe and sound behind the bar for your next visit.

Bourbon Steak's new Tour de Force, a quarterly series of themed wine dinners, kicked off as it should have: with Champagne. Wine Director Winn Robertson paired five courses from Executive Chef Drew Adams with five stellar bottles: Think tender escargot over potato mousseline with the elegant, nuanced, versatile Ruinart Blanc de Blancs; Shenandoah spring lamb with spring peas and buttermilk alongside the rich, textured, multilayered Krug Grande Cuvée; and thin petals of Tête de Moine cheese from Switzerland in strawberry-basil sauce with the delicate, berry-tinged 2006 Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame Rosé. There was lots of 'pagne that evening, but definitely no pain. ■■

Kelly Magyarics, DWS, is a wine, spirits, and lifestyle writer and wine educator in the Washington, D.C. area. She can be reached through her website, kellymagyarics.com, or on Twitter and Instagram @kmagyarics.

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For more information, email **SOMM Journal Events Director Francesca Marciano** at Francesca@TastingPanelMag.com.



Dean Lars Leicht leads a seminar in the Cru Artisan classroom at the San Francisco Wine School in spring 2017.



Andrea Sartori, Family Proprietor of Sartori di Verona, addresses the Cru Artisan College grads in Washington D.C. last year.



The 2017 Cru Artisan College students of Chicago participate in a competitive blind tasting for a cash prize.

***There will also be a special 90-minute "encore performance" seminar at SommCon in Washington, D.C. on July 22 at 3 p.m.**

THE TOP-LEVEL SYLLABUS

Milestones: Driving Wineries in Iconic Regions

As Castello Banfi celebrates its 40th anniversary and Satori di Verona celebrates its 120th, the educational cadre of the Cru Artisan College have crafted a particularly reflective syllabus for the 2018 tour.

- This year will also offer additional seminars in a more condensed format to heighten the scholastic experience.
- View a sampling of this year's schedule here and visit the Cru Artisan College website at cruartisancollege.com for the most up-to-date curriculum.
- A full day of back-to-back seminars will run from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Alta Langa Introspective

Italy offers one of the most diverse selections of rosé in the world based on various grape varieties. In the Alta Langa DOC of Piemonte, Pinot Noir is grown on hilltop vineyards in a mix of clay and calcareous soil.

Cuvée Aurora Rosé

Washington State Perspective

Thanks to the Missoula Floods, Washington provides unique soil profiles enabling us to explore key varieties.

Pacific Rim Riesling and more

Verona Retrospective

In its 120 years of business, Sartori di Verona has amassed a vast collection of wines which will serve as the focal point of this seminar.

Sartori di Verona Ferdi, Valpolicella, Regolo, Amarone, Corte Brà, and I Saltari Amarone

Abruzzo Luncheon

Home to Montepulciano, one of the most beloved grapes in Italy, Abruzzo also ranks the variety among its most widely-planted.

Cerulli Spinozzi Cortalto, Cerasuolo, and Torre Migliori

Coyam Super Chilean Component Tasting

The Cochagua Valley offers a patchwork of colluvial-based soils. When these profiles are combined with its climate, the Cochagua Valley enables winegrowers to grow organically, and, in the case of Emiliana, Biodynamically.

Emiliana Coyam

Castello Banfi Brunello Builder Perspective

No producer has advanced the clonal development of Brunello (Sangiovese) more so than Castello Banfi.

Castello Banfi

Marsala Florio Introspective

The development and aging of a serious Marsala is very precise process.

Targa Marsala Superiore Riserva and Florio Fernet

Graduation and Diploma Awards

THE PROFESSORS



Alberto Lazzarino,
*Directing Winemaker,
Banfi Piemonte,
Strevi, Italy*

Professor Lazzarino has served as the Principal Winemaker at Banfi Piemonte since 2002 and is a graduate of the prestigious Agricultural University of Alba, one of the world's leading enology schools.



Andrea Sartori,
*Family Proprietor,
Sartori di Verona,
Negrar, Italy*

Professor Sartori is the great-grandson of Sartori di Verona founder Pietro Sartori and is now at the helm of the family company, which is one of the Veneto's leading wine producers. The former president of Italy's producer trade group, the Unione Italiana Vini, Sartori will help impart generations of family experience at Cru Artisan College.



Gabriele Pazzaglia,
*Cellarmaster,
Castello Banfi*

Armed with a degree in winemaking with a specialty in viticulture, Montalcino native Gabriele Pazzaglia started at Banfi as a Technical Cellar Assistant in 1999. Professor Pazzaglia has received his doctorate in enology in from the University of Florence and manages Banfi's Horizon vinification winery, as well as winemaking for ASKA.



Enrico Cerulli,
*Family Proprietor,
Cerulli Spinozzi,
Teramo, Italy*

With his family roots in Abruzzo dating back generations, Professor Cerulli's passion lies in producing high-quality wines from the Colline Teramane subregion, Abruzzo's only DOCG. Cerulli places a particular focus on the Montepulciano grape, using 100% DOCG fruit in his winemaking.



Benedetta Poretti,
*Family Proprietor,
Florio, Italy*

Professor Poretti's family, which built Italy's best-known spirits brand, Disaronno, took stewardship of another iconic Italian name—Florio—in 1998. A student of natural sciences, she loves exploring the relationship between nature and sustainability through the world of wine.



Noelia Orts,
*Winemaker,
Emiliana Organic
Vineyards, Chile*

Professor Orts, along with Álvaro Espinoza, is responsible for Emiliana's world-class Biodynamic wines, Coyam and Gê. Orts graduated from the Polytechnic University of Valencia with a degree in viticulture and enology; in 2009, she pursued a master's degree in enology and viticulture at the University of Chile and subsequently joined the Emiliana team in 2011.



Nicolas Quille,
*Winemaking Director,
Pacific Rim,
Washington State,
U.S.*

Although he's the only U.S.-based wine producer in our faculty, Professor Quille is a native of Lyon, France, where he is a third-generation member of the wine business. After working in Burgundy, Dijon, Reims, and Champagne, Professor Quille came to the United States in 1997 and landed in Washington State to earn his MBA.

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PRESENTATION IS EVERYTHING

We've partnered with Chef's Roll & Somm's List, the global culinary and wine professional networks, to learn more about beverage experts from across the country.

PHOTO: ALANNA HALE



AARON PAUL

Beverage Director for Alta Group in San Francisco, CA

You've created bar programs for a diverse array of concepts. What's your process?

We always start with the following questions: Who are our guests at this restaurant, and what will they want to drink with this food? When we're developing our beverage lists, we always keep in mind that we want to use those products/ingredients in a way that will be the most pleasant for our guests without challenging or alienating them.

At Kaya, the cocktail list is all rum-based and the presentations are silly, colorful, fun, and fruity. It's our fantasy of what we would make if we opened a beach bar in Montego Bay. At Alfred's, we use much more classic ingredients and old-time recipes as our jumping-off point before infusing modern products and fresh California flavors. For our forthcoming Alta Group restaurants, we're excited about embracing new flavors and spices not often associated with beverages to create inspiring cocktails.

How would you describe your hospitality philosophy?

When you walk into a restaurant or a bar, it should always feel like a big hug. My dad's parents were incredibly party throwers—they would always cook too much food, hoping that people would just show up for dinner (which often happened), take your cocktail order, and make you something custom from their fully-stocked bar. If your guest doesn't have the feeling like they will die if they can't return to your home, then you haven't done your job.

MICHAEL CARROLL

Co-Founder and Head Brewer for Band of Bohemia, Chicago, IL

You're popular for creating multiple layers of flavor in your beers. How have you worked to perfect and refine this creative process?

A lot of it comes from my background as a cook, making stocks and using that liquid for sauces, soups, braising liquids, and so on. Each step creates a level of flavor or complexity that can be perceived in the final product. It's that mentality that I brought into the brewery that really defines Band of Bohemia and the beers that we create. I don't immediately consider my mash bill first; I consider the final product first and find the right path to get there. Once we have transferred the mash into the boiler, we can layer ingredients and add an array of aromatics as we see fit.

When developing new seasonal brews, does having a cohesive pairing with your kitchen's menu play a role?

We start with the beer first with a high consideration factor toward seasonality, so once we've made a beer, we taste and discuss it with our chefs and work from there. To make it work for food, we as brewers need to be conscious of how to make the marriage happen. It's not about what is trending—it's what is best for the guest and making the experience memorable. ■■



PHOTO: KRISTEN MENDIOLA

If you are a mixologist or wine professional interested in being featured here or want more information on Chef's Roll and Somm's List, please email featured@chefsroll.com.

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BARTECA RESTAURANT GROUP
WINE & SPIRITS DIRECTOR

Gretchen Thomas

by Michelle Metter



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOMMCON

Gretchen Thomas serves as the Wine & Spirits Director for Barteca Restaurant Group, overseeing all wine, spirits, and beer selections for Barcelona Wine Bar & Restaurant and Bartaco concepts. *The Tasting Panel* had a quick chat with Thomas in anticipation of her participation as a speaker at SommCon, which will be held in Washington, D.C. July 22–24.

What led you to a career in wine?

I went to the Culinary Institute of America and fell in love with wine during my second year. I received a scholarship from the school and Kobrand [Wine & Spirits] to study wine abroad for a summer, and that solidified my career path.

What is your approach to building wine lists for restaurants as part of the Barteca group?

My approach has so many angles! I want a fun, eclectic, value-driven, geeky, food-friendly wine list. Spain is our forte, but there's no rule that the list needs to be only Spanish wine. I hunt for wines everywhere I go that have great personality, as well as terroir-driven styles from producers that really care about their impact as farmers.

What is a trend sommeliers/beverage directors need to abandon as part of their wine program?

Making wine lists of completely unknown wines and varietals. I love the esoteric and hip wines that are trending right now, but I also think balancing them with great comfort-zone wines is important. Just because something is old hat to those of us who work in the wine biz doesn't mean it isn't still a delicious new discovery for many people. This trend of "I'm a wine snob and so is my wine list!" needs to go away.

Are you seeing differences in the palates of Millennial wine consumers?

Millennials and other young generations are wonderfully adventurous and are more confident in knowing what they do and don't want in a wine. It's not necessarily that their palates are that different, but their willingness to try new things is more elevated.

Which Spanish wine should be on everyone's list?

R. López de Heredia Viña Gravonia Blanco. It has all the personality of Spain in a bottle and will pair with any food you put it up against.

What role does training and education play at Barteca?

It is *the* role. I fly around teaching classes every month and we have great people dedicated to developing innovative training materials and experiences. In order to find success on our service team, you have to embrace the continuing education!

You have five minutes and one glass of wine. Who are you with and what are you drinking?

I'm with my sister-in-wine-adventures [and newly-appointed Barcelona Wine Bar Wine Director] Emily Nevin-Giannini, who supports my whims for changing the list all the time. We'll be drinking Château le Puy Emilien and probably not saying much to each other—just silently enjoying our five minutes of peace.

The Tasting Panel and The SOMM Journal are proud to serve as the media sponsors of SommCon D.C. (July 22–24) and SommCon San Diego (November 14–16). For schedule and registration details, visit sommconusa.com. ■■

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Associate Editor
Mara Marski
is The Tasting
Panel's resident
bartender.

It's ~~Not~~ Easy Being Green

EASY SUSTAINABILITY TIPS
FROM CLAIRE SPROUSE OF THE
TIN ROOF DRINK COMMUNITY

Waste is an unfortunate reality of our industry, but that doesn't stop my heart from breaking a little bit every time I drag out a bulging bag of trash from behind the bar.

I'm always looking to reduce waste while on the clock, and this month I went straight to the experts. Claire Sprouse and fellow bartender Chad Arnholt co-founded the Tin Roof Drink Community, which focuses on making the industry more sustainable via bar design/retrofitting, drinks programming, and community outreach. Read on for some of Sprouse's tips for reducing your environmental impact behind the bar.

Talking Trash You need to understand what you're throwing out before you can change it. I used to work at a bar with little trash—mostly tasting straws and napkins. We replaced these with reusable coasters, switched to paper straws, and in some cases, changed our drinks so they didn't need straws. Non-plastic straws are very accessible now, and they're also an easy way to engage your guests about what you're doing to cut down on waste.

A Bright Idea Look for easy ways to save energy. Conserve water by waiting until the dishwasher is full to run it or curb your electricity usage by switching to more efficient bulbs. On the Food Service Technology Center website (fishnick.com), you can see the amount of money you save per bulb per year: Switching eight incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescents can save you \$365 annually and also pays off in terms of reducing your carbon footprint.

Shop Local When you buy from local farmers, your produce tastes better, has more nutrients, and keeps longer. Many techniques that bartenders love—like dehydrating fruit or making bitters and tinctures—evolved as a way to preserve flavors and reduce waste before refrigeration was an option.

Sprouse's parting advice is to start small as you establish a guiding ideology for cutting down on waste. As she says, "Little things add up when you implement them across a whole industry." To join the sustainability discussion, visit tinroofdrinkcommunity.com. ■■



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIN ROOF DRINK COMMUNITY

Practical Application

For the Copper Corn cocktail, Sprouse and her team took corn scraps and infused them into vodka. The resulting cream/curds were then turned over to the kitchen staff, who whipped them into ice cream with a slight corn and citrus flavor. This milk punch is clarified, which prolongs its shelf life for at least a few weeks.

Copper Corn

Makes one batch

- ▶ 12 oz. corncob- and husk-infused Absolut Elyx
- ▶ 12 oz. Chardonnay
- ▶ 6 oz. orange juice
- ▶ 3 oz. lemon juice
- ▶ 3 oz. simple syrup
- ▶ 12 oz. whole milk

Combine all ingredients except milk and let sit for 30 minutes to fully incorporate. Slowly stir the mix into a larger container holding the milk. Let sit for 30 minutes. Strain through a coffee filter, allowing the curds to build up (this cream can be set aside for other uses) and strip away any solids until the punch runs clear. Store refrigerated and serve over an ice cube.

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History Makers

EXPLORING THE INGENUOUS INVENTIONS
THAT HAIL FROM HUNGARY by Izzy Watson

Pens, matches, seltzer water, Rubik's cubes, computers, vitamin C—they're things we frequently use in our everyday lives that make us healthier or more efficient, entertained, and informed. But they have another thing in common, as well: These items can all trace their origin or part of their lineage to Hungary, the home of many creative minds and inventors throughout history.

Join *The Tasting Panel* on a time-hop through the decades as we explore inventions with Hungarian roots!

An Intro to Tokaj

One of Hungary's most well-known wines, Tokaji Aszú, hails from the Tokaj region. During harvest, the aszú (the Hungarian word for botrytized grapes, or those affected by noble rot) berries are collected one by one before they're soaked in fermenting wine for one to two days. After pressing, the wine is fermented and aged for at least three years. Those who sip this nectar for the first time may be inclined to agree that the greatest inventions of all can be found in the natural world.



1826



In Hungary, one of the most popular beverages in summer is *fröccs*, which blends white or rosé wine with soda water. While the drink is replicated in many countries today, the first version surfaced in Budapest, where **seltzer water** was also invented by Ányos Jedlik in 1826. The story goes that during a wine tasting, Jedlik prepared his favorite beverage and called it a "spritzer," but his friend Mihály Vörösmarty—a great Hungarian novelist and veritable patriot—didn't like the German moniker and gave it a much more Hungarian-sounding denomination.

1838



This year we celebrate what would be the 180th birthday of famous grape breeder János Mathiász, known as the savior of the vineyards and wineries of the Tokaj wine region after it was struck by a phylloxera epidemic. The historic wine region of Tokaj has been under protection since 1737, when a royal decree declared the area to be a closed wine region: the first of its kind.



1937



Hungary's most vital contribution to the nutritional realm may very well be the discovery of **vitamin C**—which earned well-known Hungarian scientist Albert Szent-Györgyi a Nobel Prize in 1937—but Hungary's most ingenious gastro-nomic innovations have perhaps been those related to winemaking.

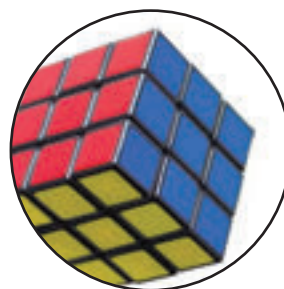
1938



Not long after Hungarian László József Bíró patented the indispensable **ballpoint pen** in 1938, prolific mathematician John von Neumann pioneered early concepts of computing, including improved methods of memory and program storage. These breakthroughs helped pave the way for modern computers.



1974



While drinking *fröccs* on a summer afternoon at the shores of Lake Balaton, you can tinker with a **Rubik's cube** or **Magic cube**, developed by Hungarian inventor Ernő Rubik in 1974. But if you prefer to solve your puzzles by candlelight, you're welcome to do so thanks to the contributions of János Irinyi, a native of the former Hungarian town Albis (now part of Romania) who invented the **safety match** in the 1800s. ■

A LITTLE *Clever* WITH A LITTLE
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92

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THE
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A New Squeeze

Malibu Rum has always evoked images of idyllic island life and tropical drinks, and the company has introduced a citrus zing to its coconut rum with its new Malibu Lime expression (SRP \$14/750mL).

Given that lime is the most popular fruit paired with rum, Malibu found the citrus to be the natural choice for its new flavor, which will be released just in time to inspire bartenders and consumers to whip up some inventive cocktails during the summer months.

Following a production process similar to the original Malibu Rum, Malibu Lime features a blend of Caribbean rum and natural lime flavors. At 21% ABV, the rum is the newest addition to Malibu's flavor lineup, which already includes pineapple, mango, banana, and passionfruit.

"Malibu Rum has seen great success over the years with our popular flavor offerings, and with the flavored rum category continuing to grow, the brand decided to add a new expression to the portfolio," says Malibu Rum's Brand Director USA Daniel R. Clarke. "Lime is a flavor that consumers know, understand, and often drink with rum, which is what led the brand to capitalize on this trend and add lime to the portfolio."

By marketing its new expression to 21–29 year olds, Malibu aims to appeal to consumers who live for the moment and try new things. With a focus on both on- and off-premise accounts, the company has launched a national campaign with the tagline "Just in Lime for the Summer" and will also provide classic recipes incorporating Malibu Lime as well as branded bar products. With tiki drinks re-emerging on cocktail menus around the country and warm weather kicking into gear, Malibu Lime is ready to bring a refreshingly bold flavor to your bar this summer. ■■

THE ICONIC CARIBBEAN RUM ADDS MALIBU LIME TO ITS PORTFOLIO

by Izzy Watson



Frozen Lime Daiquiri

- 2 oz. Malibu Lime
 - 1 oz. lime juice
 - 1 oz. simple syrup
- Blend with 1 cup ice, garnish with a lime wheel, and serve in hurricane glass.



Malibu Lime Mojito

- 2 oz. Malibu Lime
 - ¾ oz. fresh lime juice
 - ½ oz. sugar
 - 3 oz. soda water
- Lightly muddle mint leaves with sugar in a highball glass. Garnish with a mint sprig.



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NEW ZEALAND

The fruit in the 2017 Kim Crawford Signature Reserve Sauvignon Blanc was sourced from New Zealand's Wairau Valley, where "rich, fertile soils produce healthy canopies that drive powerful flavors into the grapes," Chief Winemaker Anthony Walkenhorst says.

Trading Up . . . KIWI STYLE

WITH THE
INTRODUCTION OF
**KIM CRAWFORD
SIGNATURE RESERVE
SAUVIGNON BLANC**,
THE NEW ZEALAND
POWERHOUSE CREATES
A NEW LUXURY TIER
POSITIONED FOR
TODAY'S MARKET

by David Gadd



The Kim Crawford Signature Reserve Sauvignon Blanc is the first offering in the winery's new luxury tier.

Marketing gurus call it "premiumization." Consumers call it "trading up." Whichever way you slice it (or, in this case, pour it), there's no question that today's savvy wine drinkers seek upscale wines not only for special occasions, but for everyday enjoyment as well.

Fortunately, Kim Crawford—the number-one New Zealand brand in the U.S. and producer of the leading Sauvignon Blanc in the U.S. market—has heeded the call for more options in the super-premium-plus range. Leveraging the brand's instant name recognition and longtime reputation for quality, Kim Crawford recently introduced the first offering in its new luxury tier: the **Kim Crawford Signature Reserve Sauvignon Blanc**.



Chief Winemaker Anthony Walkenhorst selects grapes in New Zealand's Wairau Valley for the new Kim Crawford Signature Reserve Sauvignon Blanc.

With a suggested retail price of \$25, the Signature Reserve Sauvignon Blanc appeals to “trade-up” consumers already familiar with the Kim Crawford brand while also attracting luxury shoppers who seek a fresh and compelling entry in their preferred price range.

“A Deeper Dive”

The new Signature Reserve Sauvignon Blanc builds on the 20-plus-year legacy of the Kim Crawford Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, which assisted in establishing Marlborough—located on the northernmost tip of New Zealand’s South Island—as an internationally-renowned winegrowing region. The benchmark wine also helped define the style of crisp, racy Sauvignon Blanc that would become a New Zealand trademark to palates around the globe.

“The Kim Crawford Signature Reserve is a deeper dive into what Kim Crawford does best: delicious, high-quality New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc,” says Anthony Walkenhorst, Kim Crawford’s Chief Winemaker since 2010. “There’s a strong movement in the U.S., and around the world, of consumers buying higher-end wines for every occasion, from relaxing at home to bringing a bottle to a celebration.

The Kim Crawford Signature Reserve Sauvignon Blanc provides loyal Kim Crawford drinkers with an opportunity to explore a more luxury version of the brand while furthering their exploration of Marlborough.”

Vineyard Matters

Marlborough is responsible for putting New World Sauvignon Blanc on the world map, so selecting the region’s best vineyard parcels for the new Signature Reserve Sauvignon Blanc was no simple feat. “We considered a wide range of viticultural factors, including soil, sun exposure, and ocean winds, to ensure that we sourced the highest quality fruit that would give us the intensity of flavor we were looking for,” Walkenhorst says.

The initial vintage was drawn from the Springfields and Steam Wharf vineyards, which are located in the lower Wairau Valley. “This valley’s coastal climate keeps the vineyards frost-free and helps fruit ripen slowly, while its rich, fertile soils produce healthy canopies that drive powerful flavors into the grapes,” Walkenhorst explains. “We’ll reassess small-lot sourcing each year, ensuring that only the highest-performing vineyards of any given vintage make it into our next luxury Sauvignon Blanc bottling.”

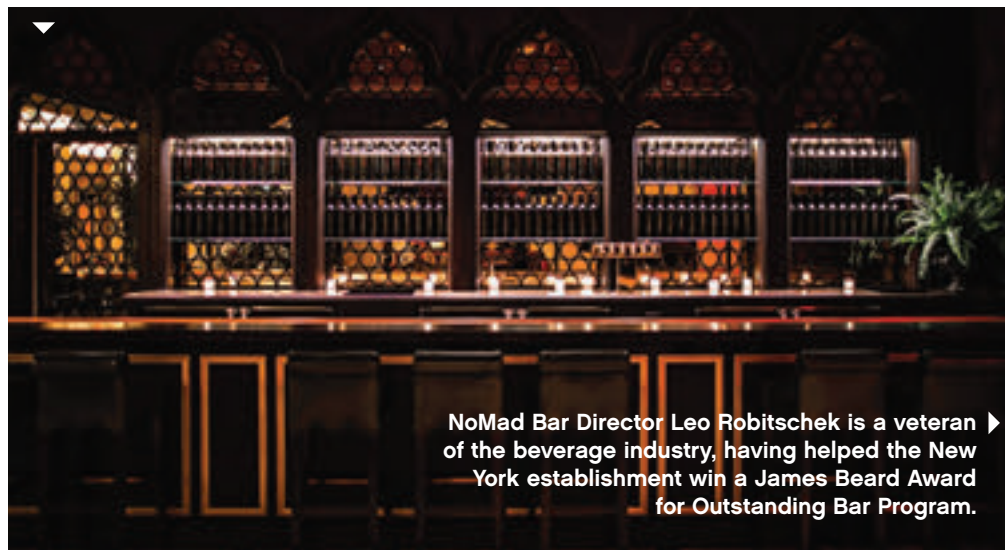
The full potential of high-quality fruit would be squandered if not for meticulous care in the cellar, and this steadfast attention to detail serves to distinguish the new tier from its sibling Sauvignon Blanc in the core Kim Crawford Marlborough range. “Fermentation was long, slow, and cool, with [Zymaflore] X5 yeast selected for the process to express the wine’s grapefruit and passionfruit flavors and aromas,” notes Walkenhorst. “After fermentation concluded, we tasted through the lots and further narrowed down the selection to get the very best wine for the 2017 Signature Reserve bottling.”

Deep Experience, Rich Palate

Compared to Kim Crawford’s core Sauvignon Blanc, the Signature Reserve offers a rounder, more fruit-forward expression of New Zealand’s signature white varietal. With its rich palate and intense tropical fruit aromas, the wine “pairs perfectly with dishes such as seafood risotto with mussels or a spinach and goat cheese salad,” says Walkenhorst, for whom “trading up” refers not just to price point, but to flavor as well. “We’re thrilled to be utilizing our deep experience in New Zealand’s Marlborough region to bring this new luxury Sauvignon Blanc to Kim Crawford fans everywhere,” he adds. ■■

OPENINGS

The sleek and luxurious Giannini Bar in NoMad's Los Angeles lobby is not your average hotel lounge.



NoMad Bar Director Leo Robitschek is a veteran of the beverage industry, having helped the New York establishment win a James Beard Award for Outstanding Bar Program.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NOMAD

Landing in the Golden State

NOMAD BRINGS ITS AWARD-WINNING COCKTAIL PROGRAM TO LOS ANGELES

by Jesse Hom-Dawson



The Ma Cherie cocktail is a cool refresher with Fino Sherry, lime, falernum, Green Chartreuse, celery, cucumber, and salt.

Any cocktail lover or industry veteran worth their salt has heard of the NoMad hotel. Known more for its exceptional food and beverage program courtesy of hospitality group Make It Nice than its hotel rooms, the NoMad bar is the hipper, less formal sibling of Make It Nice's other dining establishment: the famed Eleven Madison Park.

With a stylish lobby bar, a mezzanine dining area that gives a stunning view of the 1920s architecture, and restrooms within a former bank vault, NoMad has now landed in Downtown Los Angeles to make an indelible mark on the West Coast cocktail scene.

Cocktails at NoMad come courtesy of Bar Director Leo Robitschek, who previously helped develop the cocktail programs at Eleven Madison Park and the New York branch of the hotel. The beverage program at the Los Angeles location features NoMad classics like the Nod to Nothing with gin, lemon, Cocchi Americano, jasmine pearl green tea, apricot liqueur, yuzu, and sage, as well as new creations like the Ma Cherie with Fino Sherry, lime, falernum, Green Chartreuse, celery, cucumber, and salt.

According to Robitschek, NoMad's bar menu will change four times a year, with the cocktail approval process rivaling the rigorousness applied to vetting new dishes in the kitchen. "We host weekly research and development meetings in both cities, where our bar team can come to present ideas," he explains. "We ask all in attendance to come with an open mind and to be ready to both give and take constructive criticism."

Robitschek sources many of his ingredients from the chef-favorite Santa Monica Farmers Market, and produce gets a chance to shine in the "soft cocktail" list full of tasty and booze-free libations. Mocktails like the Peter Piper with pineapple, lime, black pepper, passionfruit, and white balsamic vinegar are as inviting as the hard cocktails—offering a reprieve from the typically soda/water/coffee options most bars offer for non-drinkers. "We wanted to have fun and diverse options for our guests who could not consume alcohol, or for guests that wanted to have a 'cocktail experience' without the added alcohol before they embarked on their multi-course dinner with pairings," Robitschek says.

NoMad's next menu reiteration will see more Los Angeles-tinged cocktails as the hotel's clientele seek experiences they can't find anywhere else, Robitschek says. "I've been blown away by our guests' openness and willingness to be adventurous with their drinking habits," he adds. "Los Angeles has just been so gracious in welcoming us with open arms and adventurous palates." ■■

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Steven Varga

CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES EXECUTIVE,
COLUMBUS DISTRIBUTING CO.

Steven Varga spent the first 20 years of his career at Fortune 500 companies before he ventured into the world of consulting, which led him to his current role as the Chief Human Resources Executive at Columbus Distributing Co. Read on for insights into what it's like working in the fast-paced beverage industry and how hiring strategies are evolving as the industry changes.

ForceBrands: What excites you most about working in the beverage industry?

Steven Varga: It's exciting to see

how much the business has evolved over the past 20 years. It's become much more dynamic and competitive, and there are always new challenges to confront so it's never boring. Plus, if you can't have fun in the beverage industry, where can you?

FB: Given all the changes in the industry, including consolidation, which major trends do you foresee regarding hiring strategies?

SV: I believe the changes in workforce demographics and expectations, as well as demand, will completely change and shape the future of hiring

strategies. We're already seeing it now; the focus is no longer on a lifelong career with one company, nor is it solely focused on compensation. Factors such as flexibility, work-life balance, and value/purpose along with work atmosphere are becoming much more important.

FB: Just for fun—what's your favorite alcoholic beverage outside of Columbus Distributing's portfolio?

SV: I enjoy celebrating special occasions and holidays with a nice bottle of Asti with dinner and a fine Scotch afterward. ■■

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CLASSIC COCKTAILS

BACK TO THE BASICS

BARTENDERS RIFF ON JACK DANIEL'S CLASSICS
TO HIT THE (HIGH)BALL OUT OF THE PARK

by Mara Marski

Parker Davis, Bartender
at Carousel Bar & Lounge in
New Orleans, LA.

PHOTO: CHRIS GRANGER

“Highballs are the one cocktail everyone can make,” says Jack Daniel’s U.S. Brand Ambassador Eric “ET” Tecosky. Highballs have earned their spot in cocktail history due to their accessibility, versatility, and endless possibilities for customization. As Tecosky says, “They can stay true to form and be perfect, or people can add their own unique touch to create something different and delicious.”

From the Jack and Coke to the Lynchburg Lemonade, Jack Daniel’s iconic cocktails are almost interchangeable in the bar community’s lexicon when it comes to the ever-popular Highball. To honor this legacy, *The Tasting Panel* spoke to bar professionals across the country about the role Jack Highballs have played in their careers and how they’re incorporating their own distinct style into the classic drink.

SEAN ANDERSON

BAR MANAGER AT NORTH THIRD,
PHILADELPHIA, PA

Sean Anderson, Bar Manager of North Third in Philadelphia, is in awe of the universal appeal of Jack Daniel’s. “When your namesake is on any sort of generic drinks manual like the Jack and Coke or Jack and Ginger, that’s crazy brand recognition,” he explains.

North Third is a high-volume bar, with Anderson and his staff cranking out too many Jack Highballs to count nearly every night. “A Jack Highball is classic because it’s a really well-made product,” says Anderson. “It sells itself and people order it without thinking about the quality of the Coke or the bar cola—it’s just the name Jack.”

Like North Third’s other ingredients, the soda in Anderson’s Jack and Ginger is house-made; with its embrace of lime and Angostura, the cocktail is a light and breezy take on a bar standard. “To do something on a craft level that appeals to the masses is the element [of this drink] that really intrigues me,” he says.

Considering the ubiquity of the Jack Highball, Anderson aims to take a gentle approach toward nudging his drinkers out of their comfort zone by elevating classic flavors they’re already familiar with. “You can never replicate a Jack and Coke, but you can experiment with the pop culture and the drinking culture status of it,” he adds. “Playing with that is really fun.”



PHOTO: FELICIA PERRETTI

Jack and Ginger

- ▶ 1½ oz. Jack Daniel’s Old No. 7
- ▶ 3½ oz. housemade ginger beer
- ▶ ¼ lime wedge
- ▶ 3 dashes Angostura bitters

Build in glass starting with ginger beer. Add ice. Float Jack Daniel’s, then squeeze lime and dash Angostura on the lime wedge. The guest will push the lime wedge into the drink with their straw to fully incorporate all the flavor elements.



PHOTO: FELICIA PERRETTI



PHOTO: FELIX SANCHEZ

PARKER DAVIS

BARTENDER AT CAROUSEL BAR & LOUNGE, NEW ORLEANS, LA

The Big Easy's Carousel Bar & Lounge has served a dizzying number of patrons since opening in the French Quarter in 1949. The bar has a high-end craft cocktail menu replete with New Orleans' originals like the Vieux Carré and the Sazerac, but according to bartender Parker Davis, Highballs are what keep the bar spinning. "Craft cocktails aren't a fad and I don't knock them—it's the business that we do," says Parker. "But you can make ten Highballs to one craft cocktail, and when someone comes in and orders a Jack and Coke, you think, 'Thank you!'"

One of Carousel's best-selling Highballs is, naturally, the Jack and Coke: "International visitors come in and want one; college kids come in and want one—it's the Highball of the world," Davis says, adding that the bar used to have a dedicated shelf just for Jack because of how much they pour on any given night.

The establishment's newest Jack Highball is a riff on a Jack and Ginger made with Jack Daniel's Tennessee Straight Rye that features elements of pomegranate and mint. Davis thinks the drink will be a crowd pleaser: "People are into ginger and mules, and race season is coming up so everyone will be looking for mint," he says. "Now that there's a rye with ginger, I think it will pop off real good." ■■

MICHAEL NEFF

BAR DIRECTOR AT THE COTTONMOUTH CLUB, DALLAS, TX

Cottonmouth Club Bar Director Michael Neff describes himself as having a Japanese mentality behind the bar. "I like breaking things down and trying to replicate them," he explains. "I also like to riff on things—like trying to make a Jack and Coke with neither Jack nor Coke" in a cocktail he named—what else?—Jack and "Coke."

Neff says he's seen bars of all types serve Jack and Cokes with the Mexican-made version of the classic American soda, as it's widely regarded as the highest-quality version on the market. But rather than follow in other bartenders' footsteps, Neff decided to elevate the soda component of the drink on his own. "We're using old-fashioned soda technique and cola syrup to make our own blended soft drink," he explains. "Then we carbonate it with a soda siphon and dry ice."

Because it's frozen carbon dioxide, dry ice becomes gaseous and effective for carbonating when it hits its sublimation point. "Making our own soda lets us control the whole drink-making process," says Neff. "It's nice to offer something people are used to while introducing them to things they wouldn't think to drink otherwise, and know they'll enjoy the flavors."

Jack and "Coke"

- ▮ 1½ oz. Jack Daniel's
 - ▮ ¾ oz. "Coke" syrup (made in-house)
 - ▮ 2 oz. Topo Chico sparkling water
- Build in a glass and garnish with a lemon wheel.

Jack Rye and Ginger

- ▮ ½ oz. PAMA Pomegranate Liqueur
 - ▮ 1¼ oz. Jack Daniel's Tennessee Straight Rye Whiskey
 - ▮ 3 oz. ginger ale
 - ▮ 1 sprig slapped mint leaves
- Add PAMA liqueur and mint to an 8–10 oz. highball or rocks glass. Fill with ice. Pour in Jack and top with ginger ale. Garnish with lime and mint.



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For more information and facts about Mad Furmint please visit: winesofexcellence.com



BAND OF ROSES Takes the Stage

CUE THE
DRUMROLL
FOR CHARLES
SMITH'S
LATEST
CREATION

by Ruth Tobias



After managing indie bands on tour for years, Charles Smith achieved rock stardom in his own right back in 2001 with the release of his Walla Walla Valley Syrah. The self-taught winemaker has been producing chart-toppers ever since, including the cult-hit-for-cool-kids Kung Fu Girl Riesling. His deceptively simple style—clean and pure, lively yet poised—has proven as irresistible as it is unmistakable.

The purchase of the Charles Smith Wines Collection by Constellation Brands in 2016 did nothing to alter that aesthetic. “What I find so great about working with [Constellation] is that we don’t have to change the company that we are,” Smith says. “They get what I’m doing, and they allow me to keep making my wines the way I like while introducing them to new consumers by giving them the distribution they deserve.”

Case in point: Band of Roses Rosé. For Smith, the first new product to launch since the acquisition presents the “perfect complement” to the portfolio’s widely-recognizable reds and whites from Washington State. Just as The Velvet Devil Merlot, Boom Boom! Syrah, Chateau Smith Cabernet Sauvignon, Eve Chardonnay, and the aforementioned Kung Fu Girl Riesling have become household names for their “truth to typicity and their place



Former tour manager Charles Smith has been making wine under his namesake label for 17 years.

of origin,” Smith explains, Band of Roses has an equally vital story to tell about Washington Pinot Gris—and it’s a tale he believes consumers will be more than ready to hear this patio season.

This isn’t Smith’s first foray down the rosé path. As prolific as he is, however, he’d never worked with Pinot Gris, a variety he says “is plentiful in Washington State but underutilized.” Intrigued by the aromatics of the red-skinned white wine grape, Smith decided utilizing it would “give me a chance to put my own spin on this hot category”—one that could in turn give pink drinkers “a whole new way of enjoying rosé.”

Made with fruit sourced from four different vineyards in the Columbia and Yakima valleys, the 2017 Band of Roses should make for an auspicious debut: The vintage in Washington was a good one, marked by a late-season cooldown that encouraged even ripening while minimizing excess sugar development. Shipping began just after the time of this writing, but preliminary tasting notes for the wine—which saw 24–48 hours of skin contact before fermentation in stainless steel—indicate “a fresh, penetrating perfume, giving way to lilac, guava, tangerine, and passionfruit. . . delivered on a silky palate.” Smith himself describes it simply as “a cool wine.”

“It’s vibrant, it’s fresh, and it’s not only delicious and modern, but also affordable and accessible,” he adds.

That trademark appreciation of what’s “cool” is, as always, telegraphed by the comic book–bold black-and-white artwork on Smith’s labels. “Our goal is to communicate the language of wine to everyone, and we’ve found a lot of success doing this through our label designs,” he explains. “I use straightforward words and symbols that everyone can understand to help tell the unique story behind each wine and to describe what’s in the bottle.”

In this case, the sense that his Pinot Gris “truly marches to the beat of its own drum” led him back to his passion for music: “We all find our own rhythm in life,” he muses. “Some people prefer hip-hop, others prefer jazz, but the underlying love of music unites them—and the same is true for wine. Although people may have different preferences and discover wine through different experiences, their love of wine bands them together.”

To illustrate that sentiment, Smith and his longtime collaborator Rikke Korff—whom he met while managing concert tours in Europe—conceived the drum kit image that graces the bottle. The ultimate symbol of unity, though, could prove to be the SRP: At \$13, everybody can get into the swing of this Band. ■■



The new Band of Roses rosé joins the ranks of other Charles Smith Wines like Boom Boom! Syrah, Kung Fu Girl Riesling, Chateau Smith Cabernet Sauvignon, Eve Chardonnay, and The Velvet Devil Merlot.

A Treasure in *Chianti Classico*

NOW CERTIFIED ORGANIC,
LAMOLE DI LAMOLE
CONTINUES TO BRING
LUSTER TO TUSCANY'S
QUALITY-DRIVEN DOCG

by David Gadd
photos by Rebecca Peplinski

cl Chianti is the heart of Tuscany, Chianti Classico is the heart of Chianti. In the tiny village of Lamole, high on a hill above the Greve Valley, Lamole di Lamole captures the essence of Tuscany's best-known wine in a site dating back to the mid-14th century: a former storehouse of the Lamole castle.

Even before Chianti Classico was established as a subzone of Chianti in 1967 to recognize the superior quality of this area (it became a separate DOCG in 1996), Lamole had been treasured as a cradle of excellent wines. In the early 1990s, population attrition briefly caused the remote village to fall upon hard times, but much-needed revitalization arrived when Italy's Santa Margherita Group purchased the Lamole di Lamole property in 1993.

The Lamole di Lamole Chianti Classico DOCG and Gran Selezione Vigneto di Campolungo at Acanto in Chicago.



The new owners invested heavily in bringing the historic estate back to life: In addition to restoring the dilapidated vineyard terraces, they reintroduced native flora like the Florentine iris—source of botanical orris root—to the area. After converting to organic practices several years ago, the property achieved official Organic Certification from Italy's ICEA (the E.U.-sanctioned Istituto per la Certificazione Etica e Ambientale) beginning with the 2017 vintage.

Kristina Sazama, Wine Educator for Santa Margherita USA, explains that the differences among Lamole di Lamole's three Chianti Classicos result in part from their respective blends of grapes from the estate's five vineyards. "The Chianti Classico contains some Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot; its nice core of fruit makes it ready to drink on release," says Sazama. "The Chianti Classico Riserva is an old-school expression containing indigenous grape Canaiolo; it has stronger minerality and is more savory in style. The Gran Selezione comes solely from the Campolungo vineyard, is made with the oldest fruit parcels, and is the smallest-production wine made at Lamole di Lamole."

In summing up the appeal of these wines, Sazama notes that "consumers love all things Tuscan. The challenge is to get them to understand the higher quality level of Chianti Classico." As a bright star in the DOGC, Lamole di Lamole sets a shining example. ■■

Jon McDaniel, Corporate Wine Director and Sommelier for Chicago's Gage Hospitality Group, calls Lamole di Lamole "a quality iconic wine of Italy."

Lamole di Lamole *On-Premise*

Jon McDaniel, Corporate Beverage Director and Sommelier for Chicago's Gage Hospitality Group, regularly features Lamole di Lamole at the group's upscale Italian concept Acanto. One of six establishments he oversees, the restaurant has an exemplary wine list that serves as "a study of everywhere in Italy," McDaniel says.

"The goal of the restaurant is to showcase the past, present, and future of Italian wine," notes the award-winning somm. "I can think of no better example of this than in Lamole di Lamole, with the historic bottling of DOCG Chianti Classico and the iconic Gran Selezione."

McDaniel notes that "Chianti Classico always speaks of quality to the guest," and Lamole di Lamole is "one of our top-selling Chianti Classicos—a quality iconic wine of Italy." For spring, he prefers to serve the Lamole di Lamole Gran Selezione with Chef Christopher Gawronski's housemade rigatoni with lamb ragu. "The wine's dried-cherry herbaceousness pairs with the meaty juiciness of the ragu and the caciocavallo cheese," McDaniel says.



NOTES FROM THE WINE DIRECTOR

by Jon McDaniel, Corporate Wine Director and Sommelier, Gage Hospitality Group, Chicago

Lamole di Lamole 2014 Chianti Classico DOCG Tradition means modern thinking in this wine, which is packed with ripe raspberry flavors layered on top of Santa Claus spices and hand-smacked basil, as well as a pretty significant note of oaky texture and flavor that's a bit dried rosemary and a bit Nilla Wafer. This is a great pairing with a classic Bolognese sauce that brings the rich meatiness of the dish to the forefront without being too dense or acidic for the tomato.

Lamole di Lamole 2012 Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Vigneto di Campolungo The balance and harmony of the Sangiovese and Cabernet meet with pretty, plush, and concentrated red fruit, like huckleberry meets Swedish lingonberry punch. Deep notes of dried pine needles, Italian herbs, and forest rain add to a huge barrel-driven wine that lovers of Bordeaux, Bolgheri, and Bond will fill their cellars with vintage after vintage.

◀ **At Acanto in Chicago, Lamole di Lamole Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Vigneto di Campolungo pairs with Chef Christopher Gawronski's housemade rigatoni with lamb ragu.**



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The Driving Force of Water

JO DIAZ REVIEWS JAMES CONAWAY'S *NAPA AT LAST LIGHT*

People travel from around the world to visit Napa, but the area's "happy valley" veneer starts to give way under the meticulous scrutiny of *New York Times* bestselling author James Conaway in his new book *Napa at Last Light: America's Eden in an Age of Calamity*: the final installment in a trilogy focused on America's most famous winemaking region.

In *Napa at Last Light*, there's a quiet war brewing between ag tourist advocates and preservationists. Is it true that Napa is slowly becoming the land of the top 2 percent? Conaway's nuanced exploration of this issue will engage you: After spending decades covering Napa as he conducted research for these books, he's an expert source that can be trusted to unravel the narrative surrounding the region's diminishing ability for continued, expansive growth.

The crux of Conaway's angst lies in the notion that there are two paths forward for ag tourism: either remove

vineyards and build more razzle-dazzle on the valley floor, or go up the hillsides and raze Mother Nature in the process. The ultimate consideration, however, is that there needs to be more thoughtful respect given to agriculture's growth in either direction so that water sources aren't negatively impacted.

According to Conaway, therein lies the handle of a double-edged sword: the issue of water, which divides and simultaneously unites all of the major players in this struggle, among them multinational corporations, vintners, local residents, and tourists. Water, then, has created the controversy that's vital to this historical piece, and as Conaway dares to expose the underpinnings of all parties, the reader soon discovers that the collision of these competing interests is far from pretty.

This quote from the book further illustrates that point: "The common element in all Napa's conflicts has

been neither industrialism nor tourism, but water. Sometimes a minor player, usually a major one, water dogs almost all discussions. It was waste runoff that first drew . . . [people] into [each other's] world . . . and the use of city water that heightened contention between [more people]. Run-off from a proposed vineyard on Howell Mountain brought St. Helena into a fray, too, and both state and federal regulatory machinery. And in [another] epic, water played the lead in all its guises; purity, destructive potential in flood, utter ruin when absent."

A former Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University as well as an Alicia Patterson Foundation Journalism Fellow, Conaway is the author of 13 books, including the first two installments in his Napa trilogy: *Napa: The Story of an American Eden*, published in 1990, and *The Far Side of Eden: New Money, Old Land, and the Battle for Napa Valley*, released in 2002. ■■



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At NoMad in New York and Los Angeles, a classic dish of roasted chicken with foie gras is basted in butter and served two different ways.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NOMAD

The Rise of Fine Hotel Dining

by Merrill Shindler

Sooner or later, even adventurous diners have to eat at hotels. In Europe, there's a grand tradition of hotel dining; some of the world's most iconic restaurants are found in venerable hostelryes from London, Paris, Venice, Barcelona, and Berlin to Edinburgh, where Number One at the Balmoral Castle has had a Michelin star for the past 15 years. With 400 selections of single-malt Scotch, it can get you through even the coldest Scottish days.

By contrast, hotel dining in the U.S. has often meant generic buffet breakfasts where quantity far outweighs quality or room-service meals that taste of sadness and desperation (no wonder the windows don't open). But there are exceptions: Take Las Vegas, where world-class chefs offer their names as clickbait for tourists in need of a break from gambling losses. Thus, we have Restaurant Guy Savoy at Caesars Palace, Joël Robuchon at the MGM Grand, and é by José Andrés at The Cosmopolitan, where Andrés' wondrous tapas-and-paella palace, Jaleo, also awaits. Nobu Matsuhisa has a restaurant both at the Hard Rock and in his own hotel attached to Caesars. Wolfgang Puck is here too, along with Tom Colicchio, Emeril Lagasse, Gordon Ramsay, Bobby Flay, and Guy Fieri, whose overwrought cooking style may reflect the Vegas vibe best: It might kill you, but you'd die happy.

This push to keep diners in-house has spread to hotels nationwide as well. Daniel Humm of New York's three-Michelin-starred Eleven Madison Park has NoMad in New York and a new location in Los Angeles. James Beard Award winner Eric Ziebold runs CityZen at the Mandarin Oriental in Washington, D.C. The "founding father of New World cuisine," Norman Van Aken, oversees Norman's at The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes, in Florida. Andrés also has Bazaar at the SLS Beverly Hills.

These big-name chefs are inspiring others to up their game. The newly-opened Sea Level at Shade hotel in Redondo Beach, California, offers opal basil- and tamarind-glazed barramundi or pan-roasted tai snapper with roasted sunchoke to diners watching beachgoers roll by on their skateboards. Even more unexpected is the sumptuous EST. Prime Steakhouse in the Sheraton Los Angeles San Gabriel Hotel—an unwieldy name for an upscale property in the heart of an Asian enclave filled with dim sum and seafood palaces.

Here, businesspeople gather in groups at the large chef's table to partake in the \$123 Ultimate Seafood Tower for four (or \$68 for two) and 34-ounce wagyu tomahawk rib eyes that look like weapons of war. Served on a large wooden board and sliced tableside with exceptional skill, they can be "enhanced" with add-ons ranging from lobster tail to hand-shaved black truffles. Robots may serve as bellboys in the hotel lobby, but at EST., real people cook real food—for the really well-heeled. ■■

The Ultimate Seafood Tower at EST. Prime Steakhouse at the Sheraton Los Angeles San Gabriel Hotel features caviar, oysters, lobster, crab legs, uni, and prawns.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EST PRIME STEAKHOUSE

HOW DO YOU *Aperitif?*

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Lillet Spritz

3 Parts Lillet Blanc or Lillet Rosé
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Build over 3 large ice cubes in a tall wine glass and garnish with cucumber, mint and strawberry.

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Kim Beto,
VP of Key Accounts
for Southern Glazer's/
American Wine &
Spirits of California

Interviews
Tara Patrick,
Wine Director
for Mourad in San
Francisco



Kim Beto and
Tara Patrick.

photos by John Curley

I recently stopped for drinks at San Francisco's Mourad, which has a Michelin star to show for its stupendous Moroccan cuisine and sleek, modern décor.

Wine Director Tara Patrick began her career at Kokkari, then moved on to Michael Mina and Quince before arriving at Mourad. The wine list was just two pages when she started two and a half years ago, prompting her to work with Chef Mourad Lahlou to expand the program to 1,000 wines from all over the world. Because Moroccan food has such a varied flavor profile, Patrick constantly looks for new and distinctive wines to pair with the intricate dishes.

With a focus on education, Patrick also encourages her four-person team to go to events and tastings in search of wines they can recommend for the list. The sommeliers also take turns attending seminars and making trips to wine country, which has impacted knowledge tremendously and enhanced the diversity of list offerings—resulting in a strong impact on wine sales for 300 covers a night.

Patrick is already working on the list for Lahlou's next concept, which is slated to open in June. Located in the old Aziza space, it's a Moroccan-Mexican meeting of the minds called Amara.

Q Kim Beto: Why did you choose the **Aurélien Verdet 2015 Hautes-Côtes de Nuits Le Prieuré** for today's discussion?

Tara Patrick: Verdet has received a lot of recognition for making pure and elegant wines, and this is lovely with our house signature, basteeya, which is duck confit wrapped in phyllo dough with a banana cream sauce. It really works well due to the bright acidity in the Verdet.

We are also doing a scallop dish with kohlrabi, and I wasn't sure what to pair with it. Then I discovered that a domestic Chardonnay with a little oak was the key. The Flowers 2015 Sonoma Coast Chardonnay works perfectly.

I also love Champagne, and I find that the Alfred Gratien Brut Classique works wonders with a variety



Mourad Wine Director Tara Patrick.

of dishes, as does Ferrari Brut Rosé. One of my favorite wines is Darioush Shiraz from Napa. It's such a big, expressive wine that works well with many of our bolder dishes. I am also working with a lot of Mediterranean wines like Spain's Terroir al Limit, a new project in the Catalan region of Priorat.

Q Beto: What got you into this amazing business?
Patrick: I studied English, philosophy, art, history, science, and geography, and I have always been culturally inclined. I actually thought I would be a college professor, but this is more fun. And all those things I studied play a huge role in food and wine. Where the wine is from, its history, the science of it, and the art of producing and serving it—this is what I am really passionate about. I love the human element and the interaction with our guests, as well as with the sommelier community in the Bay Area. It's welcoming and supportive, and the camaraderie is second to none.

Beto: That was eloquently stated, and I must thank you for the beautiful Verdet! Cheers! ■■■



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FAST FORWARD
Events, PR, Joy.

*As of April 20, 2018. Schedule is subject to change.

Schedule at a Glance

WASHINGTON D.C. JULY 22-24, 2018

Sunday, July 22

French Wine Scholar Challenge*

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Certified Cicerone Exam *

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Discovering Italian Wine Certificate*

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Digging into the Unique Terroirs of La Bella Italy presented by SOMMJournal and Tasting Panel

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

SommCon Opening Night Reception + Tasting

4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Monday, July 23

Registration Desk Open

7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Networking Coffee & Pastries

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Seminars:

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

History of Wine: Pangea to Pasteur

Wes Hagen, WSET2; Winemaker & Brand Ambassador; J Wilkes Wines

Drinking Stars – The History and Details of Prestige Cuvee Champagne

David Cohn, Dom Perignon USA

Expressions of Grenache presented by Rhone Valley Vineyards

Lisa M. Airey, Wine Scholar Guild

Vinho Verde

Tasting Break presented by Wines of Virginia

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Fireside Chat presented by the WSET

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Seminars:

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Finding the Right Wine Credential for You and Your Career

Geralyn Brostrom, Co-Founder and Educational Director of Italian Wine Central, CWE

Geoff Labitzke, Master of Wine / Director of Sales & Marketing for Kistler Vineyards

A Retrospective on the 40th Anniversary of Castello Banfi, Builders of Brunello

Christina Mariani-May, President & CEO, Banfi Vitners

Wines of Medoc: A Travel Around the 8 Appellations, 8 Variations on Excellence

Mary Dardenne, Bordeaux Wine Educator

Iconic Wines of Virginia

Jay Youmans, Master of Wine, CWE, Educational Director at Capital Wine School

Break

12:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Seminars:

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Old & Rare Wines: Sourcing, Selling & Serving

Christopher Hoel, Founder, Harper's Club

Game of Wines presented by SOMM Journal

Meridith May, Publisher

Bill Brandl, VP Marketing The Tasting Panel & SOMM Journal

40th Parallels of New World Pinot Noir

Bree Boskov, Master of Wine

Everything You Never Dared to Ask About Bourgogne's Climate

Jay Youman, Advanced Sommelier; MW, CWE

Tasting Break

3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Fireside Chat presented by the WSET

3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Seminars:

4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Madeira: The Time Traveling Machine

Michael Scaffidi, Wine Director, DaDong NYC

Managing a Successful Restaurant Beverage Program

Gretchen Thomas, Wine & Spirits Director, Barteca Restaurant Group

Delve into the Different Styles of Sake

Toshio Ueno, MSS, CSW, FWS | Vice President & Executive Instructor, Saké School of America

The Path to Spirits Certification Through SWE

Ira Norof, CSE, CWE, Director of Education & Events Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, Past

President Society of Wine Educators

Tuesday, July 24

Registration Desk Open

7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Networking Coffee & Pastries

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Seminars:

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Build Your Own Personal Brand

Frans van der Lee, Co-Founder and President/COO, Somm's List

Cab Franc

Jay Youmans, MW Capital Wine School

Geoff Labitzke, MW, Kistler

Defining Local in the Mid Atlantic

Dave McIntyre, Wine Columnist, Washington Post

Tasting Break presented by Banfi and Bravium

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Fireside Chat presented by the WSET

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Seminars:

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

The Nuevo South America

Gretchen Thomas, Wine & Spirits Director, Barteca Restaurant Group

The Rose(y) Side of Languedoc

Jay Youmans, MW Capital Wine School

Break

12:15 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Seminars:

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Blind Taste with the Masters (MW)

Moderator: Joe Spellman, MS

Panelists: Geoff Labitzke, MW; Mary Gorman McAdams, MW; Caroline Hermann, MW; Jay Youmans, MW

Tasting Break presented by Gloria Ferrer

3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Fireside Chat presented by the WSET

3:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Seminars:

4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Getting High: Appellation Elevation

Joe Spellman, MS, Justin Winery

The Secret to Creative Italian Wine Lists That Sell

Geralyn Brostrom, Co-Founder and Educational Director of Italian Wine Central

Kathy Morgan, Master Sommelier, Southern Glazer Wine & Spirits

How Sand Helps Create The World's Best Wines

Will Costello, MS

France: Then & Now

Lisa M. Airey, Wine Scholar Guild

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tastingpanel

Castello Banfi



Rhone Valley Vineyards

Bourgeois

M



BRIVIUM



GLORIA FERRER

Kistler Vineyards

SOMM'S LIST

CHEF'S ROLL



SANTA BARBARA

**CASA DRAGONES SETS
THE STAGE AS A FOCAL
POINT OF OJAI VALLEY
INN'S DISTINCTIVE
MIXOLOGY PROGRAM**

DEFYING THE ORDINARY

PHOTOS BY JEREMY BALL

The Ojai Valley Inn in Ojai, CA, lies on 220 acres filled with oak trees, a golf course, and multiple pools, as well as an artist cottage and apothecary.

Just north of Ventura, California, not far from the 101 Freeway, one can find the consummate place to decompress from the stresses of life nestled within a rare coastal valley on 220 oak-studded acres. The hidden resort that is the Ojai Valley Inn has an enchanting appeal for its clientele, who count on their visit to provide enviable service and amenities while creating a sense of serenity that defies the ordinary.

Established in 1923, the sophisticated getaway offers an abundance of both active and peaceful pursuits, with a legendary golf course, 31,000-square-foot spa, artist cottage and apothecary, multiple pools, and seven dining outlets with settings that range from fast-casual to poolside to fine dining.

Selected by the *Travel + Leisure* readers as one of the best hotels in the world, the Ojai Valley Inn affirms its reputation as a treasured destination that authentically combines the region's unspoiled spirit with 21st-century luxury.

Among those indulgences is the presence of Casa Dragones Tequila in the Inn's mixology program: The spirit's refined character and soft clean finish express themselves in every handcrafted bottle of the small-batch brand. Founded in 2008, Casa Dragones is the product of a collaboration between MTV creator/iHeartMedia CEO Robert W. Pittman and tequila industry expert Bertha González Nieves, the first woman to be certified as a "Maestra Tequilera" by the Academia Mexicana de Catadores de Tequila.

Casa Dragones' name, which refers to the Los Dragones of San Miguel de Allende, offers its own historical relevance. During the 17th century, the Queen of Spain's most elite cavalry, the Dragones, were strategically stationed in San Miguel to protect the queen's interests. Some say it was the passion and fortitude of these Dragones that forever changed the face of Mexico, as they led a movement that later helped incite the country's fight for independence.

With its exceptional balance and extraordinary taste, the 100-percent blue agave tequila blanco proves itself ideal both for use in cocktails or for sipping with a meal.

The Wallace Neff Lounge at the heart of the Inn could be the most famous room in all of Ojai. Well-appointed in a historically-compelling setting, the lounge is named after the original architect commissioned to build the clubhouse at Ojai. It's also home to the Inn's signature tequila cocktail created by mixologist Sam Gay: The Father Junipero, which serves to highlight the complexity and depth of Casa Dragones Blanco.

With herbaceous flavors, bright citrus notes, and hints of spice, the drink is balanced with a touch of sweetness from rosemary syrup and elegantly finished with a lime wheel and rosemary sprig. Casa Dragones is also featured in the Inn's signature Tequila Mule, served in a copper mug at the Indigo Pool bar.

With the spectacular surrounding landscape, impeccable service, and attentive staff, the Ojai Valley Inn offers unparalleled charm that's apparent in all aspects of guests' visits. Combined with the opulence and smoothness of Casa Dragones Tequila, it becomes a match for the ages. ■■



Sam Gay is the Head Bartender at the Ojai Valley Inn and the creator of the resort's signature tequila cocktail, the Father Junipero.



Father Junipero

- ▮ 1 oz. Casa Dragones Blanco
- ▮ 1 oz. mezcal
- ▮ ½ oz. rosemary simple syrup
- ▮ ½ oz. lime juice
- ▮ 4 pieces green bell pepper
- ▮ 3 fresh basil leaves

Muddle all ingredients, shake with ice, and double strain into coupe glass. Garnish with a lime wheel and rosemary sprig.

ALPINE EXCELLENCE

GRUPPO MEZZACORONA
PIONEERS THE TASTE OF
HIGH-ALTITUDE VITICULTURE

BY RANDY CAPAROSO



The Mezzacorona Pinot Grigio's pure, steel-fermented style displays floral, mineral, and stone fruit qualities: Crisp and elegant, it shows a touch of saltiness and a round finish.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MEZZACORONA

Fizzled wine professionals may be familiar with Mezzacorona Pinot Grigio, but even they can often overlook the pedigree of this crisp and bright white wine abundant in minerality. Grown in Italy's Dolomites mountain range, the label's grapes hail from a high-elevation alpine region recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Site precisely for its phenomenal geology. The spectacular peaks replete with limestone have raised up from coral reefs over a period of 250 million years.

Beyond harnessing the distinctive terroir it calls home into its diverse portfolio of wines, Gruppo Mezzacorona also owes its achievements to an element that's decidedly human. Originally established in Italy's Trentino region in 1904 by just 20 growers, the cooperative has since expanded to more than 1,500 members, and the company's authenticity lies in the notion that it has always been owned and run by farmers.

"These 1,600 growers cultivate their own vineyards, which average about three acres in size—some less than an acre, others as much as 15 acres," says Lucio Matricardi, Ph.D., Mezzacorona's widely-respected winemaker. "Many of them may have second jobs, but farming is their first calling, and in many cases, these are vineyards that have been in families for hundreds of years."

Mezzacorona's Pinot Grigio is also still grown on traditional pergola trellises—not because of stubborn adherence, but because this method is scientifically proven to be among the most effective system for high-elevation viticulture. When wineries grow grapes in cool-climate alpine terroir, they need a canopy management system that spreads out the leaves in order to soak up every bit of sunlight while keeping clusters sufficiently apart to minimize rot.

"In Trentino, what we consider 'mountain' vineyards are sites with up to 50 percent slopes and 400-meter [1,300-feet] altitude or more," says Matricardi. "The higher you go, the more difficult it is for the vine, which lowers the yield but heightens the quality. At higher altitudes you also get higher UV [ultraviolet light] radiation, which increases flavor, color, and anthocyanin."

Matricardi describes Trentino's terroir as typical of continental climate regions. "In July and August, we average 27–28 degrees Celsius [80–82 degrees Fahrenheit] during the day and 14–16 degrees Celsius [57–60 degrees Fahrenheit] at night." Within this moderate diurnal range, grape ripening is optimized through a longer growing season. This means Mezzacorona's Pinot Grigio "is harvested at least 20 days later than Pinot Grigio grown at sea levels," Matricardi says.



Lucio Matricardi, Ph.D., serves as Mezzacorona's Winemaker.

"These are the most motivated, passionate farmers in the world—you have to be to work in these mountains, so when you taste their wines, you also find an unmistakable complexity of aroma and flavor. You taste the natural high acidity and also the unique minerality we get in the Dolomites."

Tasting Notes



Mezzacorona 2017 Pinot Grigio, Trentino DOC Like all Mezzacorona wines, the Pinot Grigio is 100% estate-grown and -bottled, as well as sustainably farmed in accordance with Italian winemaking regulations. The pure, steel-fermented style evinces floral, mineral, lemon, and Pippin apple qualities; crisp and airy, it shows a sliver of fruitiness in its finish.



Mezzacorona 2016 Vigneti Cliffhanger Vineyards Pinot Grigio, Trentino DOC This partially-barrel-fermented wine is slightly fuller yet still sleek and medium-bodied; long and fluid on the palate, it exhibits an apple skin aroma and stony tactile sensations.



Mezzacorona 2016 Chardonnay, Dolomiti IGT The positively-restrained clarity of fruit is marked by fresh apple and peach fuzz notes in a moderately-full (13% ABV) body, with a palate-scrubbing complexity in the finish.



Mezzacorona 2016 Rosé, Dolomiti IGT If you're looking for mountain-grown rosé that stands out from the crowd, this is it. This 100% Lagrein pushes watermelon, raspberry, and rose petal-nuanced fruit tinged with mineral and baking spice. Structurally, the wine offers the slightest grip of skin tannin through its firmly dry, meaty flavors.



Mezza di Mezzacorona Italian Glacial Bubbly, Dolomiti IGT A very "alpine" blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco, and Müller-Thurgau, this wine has a lemon cream pie/pineapple perfume. A smidgen of yeastiness creeps into its lightly-sweet, foamy, and prickly flavors.



Mezzacorona 2015 Pinot Noir, Dolomiti IGT There's tons of bang for your buck in this fruit-focused varietal rendering, which carries strawberry notes with twists of pepper and shavings of cinnamon stick. The soft tannic structure is filled out by mildly *digestivi*-like cherry pit sensations.



Mezzacorona 2015 Vigneti Cliffhanger Vineyards Proprietary Red Blend, Dolomiti IGT This blend of Teroldego (70%) and Lagrein (30%) is an amazing value at this price, with an inky color and nose saturated in plump blackberry/black cherry fruit with suggestions of pomegranate syrup. Tannins are mildly gripping in the meaty, medium body (a moderate 13% ABV), while coffee spice and earthen notes mix with dark fruit sensations.



Mezzacorona 2009 NOS Teroldego Riserva, Rotaliano DOC The purplish-red color all the way to the rim belies this bottling's age. The concentrated black cherry aroma is filled out by peppery, loamy/earthy mineral notes; fairly full at 13.5% ABV, this wine is thick and muscled with tannins yet also svelte and pliant. The earthy fruit flavors push through the fibrous texturing.

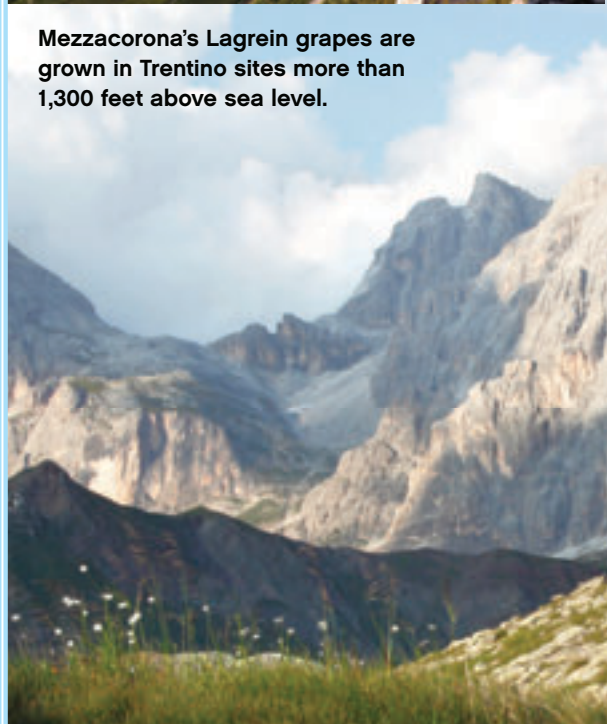
Elevating Trentino's Indigenous Varieties

Trentino—or more specifically, the Piana Rotaliana alluvial plain—is also home to the red Teroldego grape, another member of Mezzacorona's portfolio. Because it cannot be found in any other region of Italy, "Teroldego is 100-percent Trentino," Matricardi says. "We call our Teroldego 'NOS,' which in the local dialect is the name for the Noce river. It created the area where our Teroldego plantings are concentrated—a plateau at about a 250-meter [820-feet] elevation, primarily alluvial with river rock soils at least ten meters deep," he adds. "Teroldego loves this kind of soil."

The indigenous Lagrein grape also has a long history in Trentino: a history that overlaps that of Teroldego. Matricardi says Lagrein is ideal for rosé due to its "beautiful color,



Mezzacorona's Lagrein grapes are grown in Trentino sites more than 1,300 feet above sea level.





Mezzacorona's Pinot Grigio grapes are still grown on traditional pergola trellises, proven to be one of the most effective methods for high-elevation viticulture.

red fruit aroma and natural acidity,” prompting Mezzacorona to expand cultivation of the grape to make its own mark on the burgeoning category. “Our newest plantings are in even higher elevation sites at more than 400 meters [1,300 feet],” he adds.

According to Matricardi, Teroldego draws part of its lineage from Lagrein and “probably emerged as a separate selection sometime in the 14th or 15th

century.” The family tree only expands from there, as “Lagrein itself is a cousin of Syrah, and is even more difficult to grow than Teroldego, since it prefers hillsides with rockier soils,” Matricardi explains. “It has been cultivated here

since the days of the monks and Romans. As a red wine, Lagrein has less color but more flesh and most of the tannin level found in Teroldego.”

And because the grape thrives in “cool mountain climates,” Matricardi says Pinot Noir has proved another valuable addition to the Gruppo Mezzacorona portfolio. “We began to produce Pinot Noir shortly after I arrived in 2004, although every year we have been improving our site selection: removing about 50 acres, and replanting another 50 in more ideal, cooler-climate areas,” Matricardi explains. Pinot Noir is also combined with Chardonnay to produce Mezzacorona’s *methode champenoise*-style Rotari Brut.

Matricardi admits that few wineries can channel terroir quite like Mezzacorona can, considering the “250 million years of geology that lives on in [its] rocks.” But he reiterates that what truly drives Matricardi’s winemaking is the company’s relationship with the surrogates who help translate this terroir into its portfolio. “These are the most motivated, passionate farmers in the world—you have to be to work in these mountains,” Matricardi adds. “So when you taste their wines, you also find an unmistakable complexity of aroma and flavor. You taste the natural high acidity and also the unique minerality we get in the Dolomites.” ■■

New Label, Higher Standards



Mezzacorona continues to shine a spotlight on its heritage with a new label that rolled out early this year for the 2017 Pinot Grigio Trentino DOC. Each bottle depicts one of the brand’s 1,600 wine growers hand-harvesting its estate grapes. “Our new label is designed to communicate who we are, where we come from, and what our wines offer,” explains CEO Fabio Macari.

In addition to honoring the growers themselves, the new label features the SQNPI Qualita Sostenibile certification. This seal of sustainability—from Italy’s national system for integrated production quality—is earned by following strict protocols that include a guarantee of perfect traceability of each batch and bottle, as well as an assurance that the wine comes from the grapes that have been controlled and certified by the SQNPI.

“The SQNPI certification is a clear indicator of our commitment to sustainability, and in highlighting the families of growers on our new labels, we are telling our story of authenticity, beauty, and value,” says Macari.

Anthony Dias

BLUE *REVIEWS*

Presented by  **BLUE LIFESTYLE**


In each issue, Editor-in-Chief Anthony Dias Blue selects a wide range of the best wines and spirits from among the more than 500 he samples over the course of a month. The reviews are subjective editorial evaluations, made without regard to advertising, and products are scored on a 100-point scale:

85-89: VERY GOOD

90-94: OUTSTANDING

95-100: CLASSIC

Once products are selected for publication, producers and importers will be offered the option of having their review accompanied by an image (bottle photo or label art) for a nominal fee. There is no obligation to add an image, nor does the decision affect the review or score in any way.

 The “twisty” icon indicates wines sealed with a screwcap closure.

For additional Blue Reviews, go to www.bluelifestyle.com.

Prices are for 750 ml. bottles unless otherwise noted.

DOMESTIC

91 **Domaine Anderson 2013 Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley (\$40)** Ripe cherry nose; bright and racy with cherry notes and some earthy elements; savory, balanced, and long from Roederer Estate.

MAISONS MARQUES &
DOMAINES



93 **Gamba Vineyards and Winery 2015 Family Ranches Old Vine Zinfandel, Russian River Valley (\$45)** Deep ruby color; lush and spicy with blackberry fruit; beautifully structured and complex; rich and balanced with a lengthy finish.



95 **Guarachi Family Wines 2013 Beckstoffer Las Piedras Heritage Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley (\$250)**

Opulent and dense with luscious texture and bright fruit; juicy, intense, and ripe; a complex, deep wine from one of Napa's most celebrated vineyards.



GUARACHI WINE PARTNERS



95 Penner-Ash Wine Cellars 2015 Pas de Nom Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley (\$125) Smooth and succulent with cherry notes; elegant, classic, and Burgundian; savory, balanced, and refined; a stunning example of what Oregon winemaking can accomplish.

JACKSON FAMILY WINES

91 Three Sticks Wines 2016 Durell Vineyard Pinot Blanc, Sonoma Coast (\$50) Polished and creamy with a core of crisp acidity; balanced and elegant with considerable depth. It's nice to see an influential winery paying attention to this underrated variety.



93 Three Sticks Wines 2016 PFV Estate Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast (\$65) A deep ruby blend of fruit from Three Sticks' estate vineyards; bright, fresh, and tangy cherry fruit; smooth texture and juicy notes; ripe and generous with a lasting finish.



92 The Prisoner Wine Company 2016 Saldo Zinfandel, Northern California, USA (\$32) Rich and spicy nose; dense, earthy, and tangy. The Prisoner strikes again: yet another winner from this mysterious producer and its winemaker Chrissy Wittmann.

CONSTELLATION BRANDS

91 Ponzi Vineyards 2015 45th Anniversary Reserve Chardonnay, Willamette Valley (\$40) Silky and rounded with juicy and lush style. The Ponzis have been at it for a long time (45 years to be exact) and daughter Luisa has assumed winemaking duties. This cool-climate release demonstrates subtlety and finesse.

VINTUS WINES

93 Villa Ragazzi 2014 Faraona, Napa Valley (\$54) Vivid color; smooth and clean with tangy berry fruit and lush texture and depth; a stunning blend that preserves the character of the two components (75% Sangiovese and 25% Cabernet).



93 Shafer Vineyards 2015 One Point Five Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District (\$95) Rich vanilla and plum nose; silky texture with tightly-wound fruit and lush, graceful style; elegant, long, and neatly balanced.



IMPORTED

90 Gustave Lorentz NV Crémant d'Alsace AOC, France (\$30) Lively pink hue; smooth, dry, and tangy; a stylish sparkler with finesse and depth from an Alsatian family that's been involved in winemaking since 1836.

QUINTESSENTIAL WINES



92 Château La Nerthe 2016 AOP Châteauneuf-du-Pape, France (\$60) Creamy and complex with minerality and floral notes; rich, aromatic, and elegant; a fine example from this great appellation.

KOBRAND WINE & SPIRITS

92 Château Lascombes 2015 Margaux AOC, France (\$125) Smooth, juicy, and nicely structured; 55% Merlot, 45% Cab. Elegant, but give it time to mature. Kosher.

ROYAL WINE CORP

93 Elvi Wines Clos Mesorah 2014 Montsant DO, Spain (\$70) Earthy nose; smooth and spicy with blackberry and cherry fruit; a kosher wine made by a Sephardic family expelled from Spain in the late 15th century who later returned to claim their former vineyards.

ROYAL WINE CORP

91 Gush Etzion Winery 2012 Blessed Valley Special Reserve Red, Judean Hills, Israel (\$60) Dark ruby color; silky with nuanced flavor, depth, and intensity; bright, balanced, and long. Kosher.

ROYAL WINE CORP

BLUE REVIEWS

90 Tenute del Cabreo 2015 Il Borgo, Toscana IGT, Italy

(\$60) Refined and juicy with tangy berry fruit and spice; earthy and long from the Folonari family, who produce two Super Tuscan wines from two properties in Chianti Classico.

KOBRAND WINE & SPIRITS

90 Kim Crawford 2017 Merlot Rosé, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand (\$18)

Bright pink color with a strawberry nose; dry and lush; soft, rich, and aromatic with a lasting finish. ☺

CONSTELLATION BRANDS



91 Massolino 2015 Moscato, Moscato d'Asti DOCG, Italy

(\$23) Sweet, smooth, and luscious with spritz and rich flavors of spice and fresh fruit; long, energetic, and balanced from a winemaking family spanning four generations.

VINEYARD BRANDS

92 Agricola Punica 2016 Montessu, Isola dei Nuraghi IGT (\$35)

This property, owned by Sassicaia, is located in Sardinia. Mostly Carignan with bits of Syrah and Cabernet, the blend is lush and juicy with deep berry fruit, velvety texture, and a long, rich style.

KOBRAND WINE & SPIRITS

90 Feudo Maccari 2016 Nero d'Avola, Terre Siciliane IGP, Italy (\$16)

Refreshing, racy, and crisp; tangy and succulent with spice and blackberry from one of Sicily's most exciting producers.

KOBRAND WINE & SPIRITS

VALUE

90 Calista Wines 2016 The Coast Range Pinot Noir, Mendocino, Monterey, and Sonoma Counties

(\$20) Smooth, ripe, and lively; fresh, bright, and balanced; generous and tangy from three coastal California counties.



88 Larkspur 2016 Pinot Noir, Dundee, Oregon (\$17)

Clean and simple, but a solid effort for a bargain Pinot; smooth and bright with hints of cherry and earth.



88 Martini & Rossi NV Extra Dry Prosecco, Prosecco DOC, Italy (\$13)

Fresh and juicy with lively acidity; crisp, bright, and smooth; clean, dry and tangy; a terrific value.

90 Simonsig 2015 Kaapse Vonkel Brut, Western Cape, South Africa (\$25)

A very impressive sparkler from South Africa that blends Chardonnay and Pinot Noir with a bit of Pinot Meunier; clean, fresh, and round with elegance and finesse.

QUINTESSENTIAL WINES

91 Tom Gore Vineyards 2016 Sauvignon Blanc, California

(\$13) Fresh, clean nose; smooth, juicy and crisp with depth and tangy fruit; bright and balanced; a wine of substance at a terrific price.

CONSTELLATION BRANDS

89 Chateau Souverain NV Cabernet Sauvignon, Chateau Blue, California (\$13)

Juicy plum notes with hints of spice; charming, clean, and balanced (with a great name to boot) from winemaker Ed Killian, who's been with the winery since 1992.

90 Or Haganuz Winery 2016 Amuka Series Single Vineyard Gewürztraminer, Galilee, Israel (\$21)

Silky, spicy, and graceful; long, rich, and mellow. Kosher from a boutique winery located at the foot of Mount Meron.

ROYAL WINE CORP.

88 Steele Wines 2017 Cabernet Franc Rosé, Lake County, California (\$17)

Pure pink color with a warm, spicy nose; tangy, racy, and dry with a hint of herbaceousness; a solid effort in harnessing a temperamental variety. ☺



91 True Myth 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles (\$24) Rich and spicy nose; polished, lush, and juicy; a beautiful wine from the Niven family with an equally beautiful label at an amazing price.

91 Viña Casablanca 2017 Nimbus Single Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc, Casablanca Valley, Chile (\$12) Bright citrus nose; silky, crisp, and tangy; balanced and long; a classic from this environmentally-conscious winery. ☺

CAROLINA WINE BRANDS USA

89 Waterbrook Winery 2016 Chardonnay, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$12) This 34-year-old winery was one of the first in Walla Walla; smooth and lush with rich texture and ripe pear fruit; deep and graceful. ☺

PRECEPT WINE

88 E2 Family Winery Zagans Fire NV Mango, Lodi, California (\$8) Bright mango nose; smooth and luscious with balanced, fresh, and bright flavors; not overly sweet and quite nice for a fruit-flavored wine.



SPIRITS

90 Ancho Reyes Ancho Chile Liqueur, Mexico (\$33) Smooth, sweet capsicum nose; silky and lush with ancho chile that adds a good measure of heat; a dense and rich liqueur based on a 1927 recipe.

WILLIAM GRANT & SONS



90 Fluid Dynamics Russell Henry London Dry Gin, USA (\$20) Smooth and aromatic with a hint of Vya Extra Dry Vermouth; infused with botanicals like juniper, coriander, orris root, and lemon peel.

91 Marble Distilling Co. Moonlight EXpresso Rocky Mountain Roast, USA (\$33) Deep caramel color with a roasted coffee nose; lush, creamy, and sweet; toasted, rich, and long; made from a signature "family recipe."

92 Nosotros Tequila Reposado, Mexico (\$46) Soft agave nose with notes of earth, spice, vanilla, and roasted agave on the palate; honeyed, balanced, and spicy with a long finish. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels.

PARK STREET IMPORTS

88 Ron Barceló Añejo Dominican Rum, Dominican Republic (\$16) Medium amber color; woody nose with notes of sugar and silky texture; toasty with balance and considerable flavor at a very good price; destined for cocktails.

SHAW-ROSS

92 Sierra Norte Single Barrel White Corn Whiskey, Mexico (\$50) Clean and smooth with a hint of corn and spice; balanced, rich, and fresh. Whiskey from Mexico—who knew?

PARK STREET IMPORTS

92 Stillhouse Spirits Co. Black Bourbon, USA (\$30) Rich amber color with a warm, sweet nose; lovely notes of roasted coffee, spice, and nuts from time spent mellowing in coffee beans; creamy and dense with a long, complex finish; the innovative packaging is an added bonus. ■■



In each issue, The Tasting Panel's Publisher and Editorial Director Meridith May selects her favorite wines and spirits of the month. Check here for the latest arrivals in our offices, the hottest new brands on the market, and an occasional revisited classic.

Publisher's PICKS



WINES



Talbott 2016 Kali Hart Chardonnay, Monterey County (\$23) Finished with a screwcap, this pedigreed white hails from the winery's estate vineyards in the Santa Lucia Highlands. It's clean and pure with rich and buttered baked apple and caramel on the nose. The wine is also surprisingly lean on the palate, and while sur lies stirring gives it richness, the toasty oak adds depth; the texture itself, meanwhile, weaves a mineral edge with green apple tartness and MacIntosh roundness. Broad and generous, it's aged nine months in 70% stainless steel tanks and 30% French oak barrels. **92**



E. & J. GALLO



Valle 2016 Pinot Grigio, Colli Orientali del Friuli DOC, Italy (\$17) Aromas of apricot nectar on wet stone are what we expect from the terroir-driven beauty of Pinot Grigio from this specific region. Pear blossom and ripe Asian pear are fresh, perfumed, and crisp on the palate. The finish gets richer with a caramel pudding profile. **90**



The White Knight 2016 Pinot Grigio, Delle Venezie IGT, Italy (\$12) Honeysuckle and white peach emerge from the glass with an echo of minerality. Searing acidity gilds the stone fruit with a backdrop of lemon and honey. Clay soils and proximity to the sea impart salinity on the sweet apricot notes. **90**






3 BADGE BEVERAGE CORP.



Early Mountain 2017 Rosé, Virginia (\$24) From its pretty salmon-pink hue to its scents of spring flowers and persimmon, this blend of 73% Merlot, 18% Syrah, 7% Malbec, and 2% Cabernet Franc hails from the foot of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. Super linear with fine acidity and a thread of minerality, the wine shows peach and floral notes uplifted by a touch of sweet basil. **90**



Franco Francesco 2016 Barbera d'Asti DOCG, Piedmont, Italy (\$14) This is a simple, easy-drinking red with lean acidity and bright red fruit. Cherry and tart blackberry lead the way with delicate, feminine strides. There's an underlying structure that makes this one of the best wines of its kind under \$20. **90**


Worthy of a smooch.

French-style double bizou.

Wildly infatuated.

Seriously smitten.

Head over heels in love.

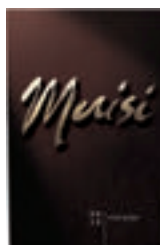


Moobuzz 2016 Pinot Grigio, Paso Robles (\$17) Rich and fragrant, chamomile and pear are perfumed with a hint of basil. The palate speaks to a lean acidity with just-squeezed white grapefruit and an unctuous mouthfeel, where sweet apricot meets tart lemongrass. This shows depth of character with mineral charm. **91**

3 BADGE BEVERAGE CORP.



Merisi 2015 Red Wine Blend, Mendocino County (\$28) The dry-farmed, organically-grown Petite Sirah (93%) from an 80-year-old vine shows its best side here, with a less intense alcohol level of 14% ABV. This wine ages for 20 months in 40% new oak barrels; a smidgen of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah were added in. The nose is bright and tart, and the red fruit is persuasive: Cranberry and rhubarb emanate freshness. **91**



Hunt & Ryde Winery 2014 Trophy, Rockpile AVA, Sonoma County (\$75) This Bordeaux blend from Sonoma County's prestigious Rockpile Ridge vineyard is edgy, bold, and structured. While the acidity is vibrant, the deeply-earthly tones and mid-palate density of soil, anise, cedar, and black fruit keeps it savory and juicy. Black tea tannins linger through the finish. The blend from this winery named for brothers Hunter and Ryder Fieri (the sons of Hunt & Ryde Founder/celebrity chef Guy Fieri) consists of 38% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, 17% Petite Verdot, 11% Cab Franc, and 8% Malbec. **92**



Cusumano 2014 Noa, Sicily, Italy (\$60) Unexpectedly sweet, dark, and spicy blackberry on the nose with rich, peppery fruit on the palate make this Sicilian red sizzle. A blend of 40% Nero d'Avola, 30% Merlot, and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, it brings some New World sunshine with dense black fruit to its silky mouthfeel. Extroverted and high in alcohol at 15% ABV, the expressive nature of this big boy makes it a good pairing with grilled meat and red sauce dishes. **92**

TERLATO WINES INTERNATIONAL



Exitus 2016 Red Wine, California (\$26) Kentucky bourbon barrels are the "influencers" of this Zinfandel-based wine, which is fermented in American stainless steel and aged for three months. A blend of Petite Verdot, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon, this 15.9% ABV release immediately proves why the label refers to it as "Bold & Fearless—Wine Without Rules." Blackberry jam opens like an orchestra overture, playing all the right notes and offering a preview of the toasty oak, nutmeg, toffee-laden dark plum, and sweet tobacco flavors that carry you from Act One through the finale. **91**



Thorn 2015 Merlot, Napa Valley (\$45) From the Prisoner Wine Company, this Merlot blended with Syrah, Petite Verdot, and Malbec is less of a thorny creature and more of a caressing satin robe. With aromas of tilled soil, licorice root, and café au lait, the palate becomes a sturdy, emboldened olive branch with savory cedar and chocolate-covered cherry. **92**



Tercero 2017 Rosé, Santa Barbara County (\$30) Made from 100% Mourvèdre, winemaker Larry Schaffer stomps on his grapes to make this stunner. He keeps the skins on for just an hour and cold ferments for five weeks in stainless steel before transferring to some oak and keeping some fruit in stainless. The mouthfeel is brilliant: instantly crisp and refreshing. The melon, pear, and gardenia notes are fragrant and linger through the finish. **92**



Simple Life 2015 Pinot Noir, California (\$13) For a "simple life," this Pinot has a complex personality. With tilled soil and black cherry arousing the olfactory senses and a blooming of rhubarb and white pepper unfolding on the taste buds, the wine has a fine acidity that keeps it fresh and sippable. A smidgen of Petite Sirah adds pleasing violet notes and a touch of velvet tannins. **90**



DON SEBASTIANI & SONS



J. Lohr Cuvée PAU Red Blend, Paso Robles (\$50) Inspired by the Grand Cru wines of Bordeaux's Pauillac district, the aromas emerge gently from this blend of 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Malbec, 11% Petit Verdot, and 7% Merlot. Violets, creamy espresso, and blackberry are expressively scented. The palate picks up firm tannins and an acidity that speaks to a statuesque structure, a dark intensity, and an animale quality inspired by dark chocolate, earth, and black plums. **94**



Maddalena 2016 Zinfandel, Paso Robles (\$22) This inky-black carmine powerhouse exudes plum, boysenberry, and graphite on the nose and palate. Dense "sweet" berries and dusty espresso tannins play well with fine acidity. It's not jammy, but structured and upright. **92**



Publisher's PICKS



Kelly Fleming Wines 2014 Big Pour, Napa Valley (\$90)

This proprietary red from Kelly Fleming features 81% Cabernet Sauvignon from her Calistoga estate; also blended in are 11% Malbec and 8% Syrah from Napa Valley. Inky, deep, and brooding with concentrated black fruit seasoned with pepper, this is an ageworthy wine boasting sweet tobacco, bitter-sweet dark chocolate, and black tea. **92**



Hangar 1 Rosé Vodka, USA (\$30) Using a blend of Petit Verdot and White Meritage wines, Hangar 1 continues its grapes-and-grain distillation program from its distillery in Alameda, California. While the brand's straight vodka is made from a grape distillate, the rosé expression ratchets up the creativity. Aromas include peach blossom, sweet cherry, and wet stone while the palate brings out flavors of rhubarb, white tea tannins, and spiced cedar. The mouthfeel is lean and has a mineral finish. **90**



Papa's Pilar 24 Dark Rum, USA (\$47)

This limited-release, 86-proof rum is named after Ernest "Papa" Hemingway's yacht, the Pilar. The "24" represents the spirit's 24th solera taste profile in its artisanal blend, with seven hand-selected rums up to 25 years old incorporated in this blend. After solera aging in bourbon barrels, Port wine casks, and Spanish Sherry casks, the pot and column-distilled rum was further aged in Spanish Oloroso Sherry casks for approximately 30 days. With its deep auburn hue, the inviting nose speaks of fine English toffee and candied orange peel. Beyond that confident nose, the palate brims with refinement. Notes of date nut bread, pekoe tea, walnuts, dark chocolate, and grilled peaches swim in luxurious liquid satin. **94**



HEMINGWAY RUM CO.



Eighty Four 2014 Malbec, Napa Valley (\$48)

One of the best Malbecs from California, this wine is inspirational for its ripeness, freshness, fine acidity, and balanced fruit richness. The aromas begin with more of a moodiness: dark cedar and earth as well as tobacco and forest floor. The palate is lifted and the fruit cascades in a bright, juicy flow. The wine was created by Doug Shafer and Winemaker Elias Fernandez, who began collaborating in 1984—hence the name. **95**



PHOTO: BRIAN GRAY



VOGA Vodka, Italy (\$40)

Red and black berry fruit greet the nose—a pleasant whiff of freshness. On the palate, finely-grained peppery spiciness unfolds in tandem with a satiny mouthfeel. This is a sipper's vodka crafted from southern Italian semolina wheat, with water sourced from the Alps. The spirit is filtered through Nebbiolo grapes and distilled five times. **92**



ENOVATION BRANDS, INC.



Springfield Manor Lavender Gin, USA (\$45)

Pungent notes of—you guessed it—lavender exude from this gin handcrafted in Thurmont, Maryland, not far from the presidential Camp David retreat. Awarded "Best Flavored Gin" at last year's San Francisco World Spirits Competition, this 90-proof spirit could be likened to a picnic in the fields of southern France. A hint of blue fruit and vanilla complete the palate. **93** ■■



SPIRITS



New Amsterdam Apple

Vodka, USA (\$15) A nose reminiscent of a caramel green apple is the initial appeal of this new flavor from this premium brand. The cocktail-inspired taste profile of a crisp, juicy, just-bit-into-it fruit stays with you for a long time without any cloying aftertaste—in fact, it's the aftertaste that's extremely pleasant and less sweet on the tongue than apple juice itself. Distilled five times, this 70-proof vodka speaks the truth. **92**



E. & J. GALLO



Glen Grant 15 Year Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Scotland (\$77)

Joining the 12- and 18-year-old expressions, this is the newest release from this Speyside single malt distiller. This batch-strength beauty is 100 proof, but you wouldn't know from the delicate aromas of honeyed orange and peach tart. The full mouthfeel (thanks to non-chill filtering) starts with a roar of white pepper and nutmeg but soon purrs along with dried apricot, toffee, and spiced pear. The finish of lime-tobacco and walnut is decisive and clean. **94**



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the clever root

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The Clever Root is inspired by everything that grows: from farm to fruit, leaf to herb, and the working tastemakers who buy, forage, prepare, and grow these ingredients for the dishes served at the country's top restaurants. We'll introduce wine and spirits to unique dishes and let sommeliers and mixologists chime in on tasting notes and suggested pairings.

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YOUR BODY YOUR HOPE


Your immune system may be the key to beating cancer.

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Jimmy Smits, SU2C Ambassador
Photo By: Timothy White



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BARTENDERS BATTLE IN
THE FIRST U.S. FINAL OF
THE TIO PEPE GLOBAL
COCKTAIL COMPETITION

Sherry Superstars

by Cliff Rames / photos by Doug Young



The American Tío Pepe Challenge finalists from left to right: Jared Sadoian, Bar Manager at The Hawthorne in Boston, MA; John Aquino, Bartender at Coast Bar and Grill in Charleston, SC; Matthew Korzelius, Bartender at The Roosevelt Room in Austin, TX; Benjamin Wood, Beverage Manager at Beatnik in Chicago, IL; Jeremy Lake, Co-Proprietor of Lost Property Bar in Los Angeles, CA; and winner Valentino Longo, Head Bartender at the Surf Club at the Four Seasons Miami.



Nicolas Bertino, CEO and Country Manager for González Byass USA; Claire Henderson, Senior Brand Manager for González Byass USA; U.S. winner Valentino Longo, Head Bartender at The Surf Club at the Four Seasons in Miami, FL; and Tío Pepe Brand Ambassador Álvaro Plata at Leyenda in Brooklyn.

With a *venencia* poised overhead, the first of six American bartender finalists deftly dispensed a near-perfect pour as a long stream of Sherry struck its mark in the glass below. This gallant flair heralded the beginning of the U.S. final of the Tío Pepe Challenge, a global educational initiative and cocktail competition created five years ago by family-owned Sherry producer González Byass. Its mission is twofold: to inspire mixologists and promote the merits of Sherry as a base for innovative cocktails.

Held March 20 at Leyenda, a pan-Latin cocktail bar in Brooklyn, New York, the first-ever stateside finale tested the bartenders' knowledge and skills in three categories: demonstrating their technique with the *venencia*, a traditional implement for extracting Sherry from a barrel and transferring it to a glass; participating in a blind tasting of four Sherry wines; and performing successful execution of their cocktail. In addition to myself, the judges included Tío Pepe Brand Ambassador Álvaro Plata, Julie Reiner and Ivy Mix of Leyenda, and mixologist Zane Harris.

winner **VALENTINO LONGO**

The Surf Club at the Four Seasons in Miami, FL



Born and raised in Italy, Valentino Longo launched his career at Rome's Hotel de Russie and later moved to London. Longo's cocktail creativity soon drew the attention of The Ritz Hotel, which recruited him as a head bartender. Longo moved to Bam Bou Speakeasy and Restaurant the following year before joining La Moderna, an Italian restaurant chain with outlets in Rome and Miami.

Longo, who currently serves as the Head Bartender for the Surf Club at the Four Seasons Miami, says the story of Christopher Columbus inspired his cocktail. "Columbus was an Italian guy—like me—who never abandoned his dreams," Longo said. To emulate Columbus' famous voyage, Longo built his cocktail with layers of flavor and aromatics ("because memories are preserved in aromas!" he explained) which pay homage to both the Old and New Worlds.

Call Me Cristoforo

- ▮ 2 oz. Tío Pepe Fino
- ▮ ¾ oz. González Byass Néctar PX
- ▮ 1 oz. tomato-strawberry shrub
- ▮ ½ oz. Yellow Chartreuse
- ▮ 1 oz. Cedrata Tassoni

Garnish with dry yellow tomatoes, corn shoots, and essence of rosemary.





The six American Tío Pepe Challenge finalists blind-tasted four Sherries from the González Byass portfolio.

While each concoction succeeded in showcasing the versatility and flavor-enhancing prowess of various Sherry styles, Valentino Longo's Call Me Cristoforo cocktail secured him a winning spot among finalists from 14 countries. In May, they'll vie for the title of international champion in Jerez, Spain.

Like the colorful handkerchief in his breast pocket, Longo could not contain his exuberance. "I am so excited! It is so amazing that González Byass created this competition and made so many products available to mixologists and bartenders," he said. "Sherry-based cocktails are the next big thing!"

Impressed by the finalists' creations, Plata said the cocktails "exemplified the versatility of Sherry, which is one of the oldest, most complex styles of wine." And while he made sure to remind us that Sherry-based cocktails are not a trend—some of the most iconic cocktails of the category, including the Sherry Cobbler, Bamboo, and Adonis, date back to 19th century—Plata emphasized that through the Tío Pepe Challenge, "a new era of Sherry in mixology begins!"

Read on for profiles of this accomplished group of finalists and their cocktails: We hope they will inspire your own Sherry-based creations!

MATTHEW KORZELIUS

The Roosevelt Room in Austin, TX

After working at Vera cocktail bar in Buffalo, New York, Matthew Korzelius moved to Wilmington, North Carolina to pursue his craft as barman at the posh Manna restaurant. In 2017, he completed the BAR Ready certification and relocated to Austin, where he tends bar at the prestigious Roosevelt Room.

Designed to be a refreshing, low-alcohol tiki cocktail, Paradise Omnipresent is inspired by the myriad of locales represented by its ingredients. "González Byass Alfonso Oloroso provides nuttiness and richness, while Jamaican pot still rum gives it a funky, authentic tiki kick," Korzelius said. "It tastes like paradise, no matter where you're imbibing!"

• • • • •

PARADISE OMNIPRESENT

- 1¼ oz. González Byass Alfonso Oloroso
- 1¼ oz. housemade strawberry orgeat
- ½ oz. Smith and Cross Rum
- ¼ oz. lemon juice
- Herb medley (tarragon, Italian basil, and Thai basil)

Muddle herbs in a footed pilsner glass with juice and orgeat; add rum and Sherry. Fill the glass three-quarters full with crushed ice. With a swizzle stick, push the herbs to the bottom and stir to frost the glass. Top high and dry with ice. Insert a metal straw and attach a lavender and herb bouquet.



JARED SADOIAN

The Hawthorne in Boston, MA

After leaving a career in investment banking, Jared Sadoian returned to his true love: bartending. In 2011, he moved from New York to Boston to join Craigie on Main, where he took the position of Beverage Director. In 2014, Sadoian was recognized by Zagat for its "30 Under 30 Class of 2014." Soon afterward, he joined The Hawthorne, Jackson Cannon's revered Kenmore Square cocktail bar, where he serves as Bar Manager.

Sadoian named his Sherry serve after a maxim by author William Arthur Ward: "The optimist lives on the peninsula of infinite possibilities." "This quote really inspired me, especially as we look for new ingredients from across the globe to create compelling cocktails and introduce our guests to exciting Sherry-based serves," he said.

• • • • •

THE OPTIMIST

- 2 oz. González Byass Leonor Palo Cortado
 - ½ oz. Amaro Nonino
 - ¼ oz. Grade B maple syrup
 - 1 barspoon E.H. Taylor Barrel Strength Bourbon
 - 1 dash Bittermens Xocolatl Mole Bitters
- Stir all ingredients with ice until well-chilled and diluted. Strain into a Nick and Nora glass and garnish with an orange twist.

JEREMY LAKE

Lost Property Bar in Los Angeles, CA

Jeremy Lake is an award-winning mixologist whose work has been featured in several media outlets, including *The Tasting Panel*, *Imbibe*, *Liquor.com*, *Forbes*, and ABC's *The Glass House*. Lake currently serves as an instructor with The Mixology Master Method bartending school and is also the National Brand Ambassador for Ascendant Spirits distillery, the Beverage Director at Rosalíné, and the Co-Proprietor of Lost Property Bar.

Lake's Sherry cocktail is based on a famous Peruvian serve, Chilcano, but with a contemporary twist: "Instead of traditional ginger ale, I elevate the recipe by using ginger kombucha and replacing Pisco with two types of Sherry," he explained. "The notes of figs, raisins, and nuts pair perfectly with the ginger and yeasty notes of the kombucha."

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NECTAR DE CADIZ

- ▮ 1½ oz. González Byass Leonor Palo Cortado
- ▮ ½ oz. González Byass Néctar PX
- ▮ 1 oz. lime sour
- ▮ 1 dash Angostura Bitters
- ▮ 2½ oz. ginger kombucha

Shake first four ingredients with ice for five seconds; add kombucha and pour into an ice-filled Collins glass. Garnish with candied ginger, raisins, and a lime twist.



JOHN AQUINO

Coast Bar and Grill in Charleston, SC

John Aquino began bartending to earn money while attending medical school. "Turns out, I loved the creativity and madness of a busy bar instead," he said with a laugh. Trading his stethoscope for cocktail shaker, Aquino barhopped all over the country before returning home to Charleston, where he can be found behind the bar at Coast Bar and Grill.

Aquino's Tío Pepe cocktail was inspired by an apple- and citrus-infused white sangria he enjoyed at seaside café in Ibiza, Spain for his birthday. "Refreshing and balanced, it was the best sangria I ever tasted!" he said.

• • • • •

MANZANA DE JEREZ

- ▮ 1½ oz. Tío Pepe Fino
- ▮ ½ oz. González Byass Solera 1847 Cream
- ▮ 1 large barspoon Tippleman's Falernum Syrup
- ▮ 3 dashes Barkeep Apple Bitters
- ▮ 3 oz. honeycrisp apple cider blend
- ▮ Juice of ¼ Meyer lemon

Mix all liquid ingredients in mixing glass. Dry-stir well and pour over crushed ice. Garnish with cinnamon stick, apple peel ribbon, and sprig of rosemary.

BENJAMIN WOOD

Beatnik in Chicago, IL

Benjamin Wood began his career in New York, where he was a Founding Partner at Distilled, Beverage Director at Union Fare, and Head Bartender for Le Bilboquet. Wood currently manages the beverage program at BonHomme Group's Beatnik, and along with mixology icons Dale Degroff and Steve Olson, Wood sits on the advisory board for the beverage-tech startup DrinkSpottr.

Wood's cocktail was inspired by a Rebutito, a popular drink from Andalusia, Spain that mixes Sherry and soft drinks. "I wanted to keep it simple and focus on the purity of ingredients," he said. "Rebutito means 'safe place.' I wanted to be a little tongue in cheek and have fun with it."

• • • • •

TIO SAFE WORD

- ▮ 2 oz. Tío Pepe Fino
- ▮ ½ oz. clear lime juice*
- ▮ ½ oz. Cava syrup
- ▮ 2 drops saline solution**
- ▮ 2 drops orange flower water
- ▮ 2 oz. soda water

Add ingredients to a wine glass over fresh ice; stir in a sesame or perilla leaf. Serve with a straw.

**Clear Lime Juice (batched)*

9 grams citric acid powder
6 grams malic acid powder
1½ grams tartaric acid powder
50 grams phosphoric acid (1.25% solution)
260 grams water
1 gram salt

Add acids to water; stir to dissolve and refrigerate.

***Saline Solution*

7.5 grams salt
240mL water
Boil to dissolve and let cool. ■■



4TH ANNUAL
Stars
of PINOT
at the MONTAGE BEVERLY HILLS



BOUCHARD PÈRE & FILS
CHAMPAGNE HENRIOT
BEAUX FRÈRES
ALMA ROSA WINERY & VINEYARDS
ARTESA WINERY
BERNARDUS WINERY
BREATHLESS WINES
CARMEL ROAD WINERY
CLOS PEPE ESTATE
CROIX ESTATE
DRAGONETTE CELLARS
HARTFORD FAMILY WINES
HYDE WINES
IRIS VINEYARDS
J VINEYARDS & WINERY
KANZLER FAMILY VINEYARDS
KARAH ESTATE VINEYARD
KING ESTATE
MAIL ROAD WINES
MCINTYRE VINEYARDS
METZKER FAMILY ESTATES
OLD BRIDGE CELLARS
PALI WINE CO.
PARKER STATION INC
ROADHOUSE WINERY
TALBOTT VINEYARDS
THE 50 BY 50 WINES
TOLOSA WINERY
WEATHERBORNE WINE CORP.
WILLAMETTE VALLEY VINEYARDS
WRATH WINES
NEW ZEALAND WINE
RIDEAU VINEYARD

MONTAGE BEVERLY HILLS
JULY 11, 2018

Pinot Noir has been a very important grape since the Roman era! To honor this majestic grape, WineLA is thrilled to present our 4th annual STARS of Pinot event on Wednesday, July 11, 2018, at The Montage Beverly Hills. With over 40 top Pinot Producers set to participate, WineLA invites you to join us and taste over 150 different wines at this annual gathering.

1:00 - 4:00 PM
TRADE TASTING

6:00 PM
"VIP" PINOT PANEL DINNER

Hosted by Master of Wine, Jennifer Simonetti Bryan (the most famous MW in the world)! This VIP panel dinner gives you a chance to enjoy a great MONTAGE dinner and drink a special set of VIP wines served with the panel discussion.

7:00 PM
STARS OF PINOT TASTING
GENERAL ADMISSION

This is an unlimited tasting ticket with tray passed appetizers and cheese station only. Every guest will be allowed to take home the beautiful Pinot Noir wine glass (limit 1 per guest). All guests will be able to participate during our silent auction, and bid on wines and collectables benefiting the T.J Martell FOUNDATION for Children's Hospital Los Angeles.



9:00 PM
AFTER PARTY WITH
DJ RICHARD BLADE!

FOR TICKETS & INFORMATION
VISIT STARSOPPINOT.COM OR CALL 310.451.7600



ON THE VINE

PHOTO: WILDLY SIMPLE

DON SEBASTIANI & SONS' B SIDE
PORTFOLIO EXPANDS TO INCLUDE
PINOT NOIR AND CHARDONNAY

A SOULFUL Hit Parade

by Deborah Parker Wong / photos by Alexander Rubin



Fourth-generation family vintner
Donny Sebastiani and Don
Sebastiani & Sons Director of
Winemaking Greg Kitchens.

With Cabernet Sauvignon on its way to becoming the nation's best-selling wine variety, Don Sebastiani & Sons is well positioned for continued success with its popular B Side Cabernet Sauvignon. To capitalize on that reputation, fourth-generation family vintner

Donny Sebastiani and Director of Winemaking Greg Kitchens have extended the B Side portfolio with the release of a Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in what amounts to a hit parade.

Introduced in 2005, B Side Cabernet Sauvignon was sourced from the eastern, or "B side," of Napa Valley. The label has performed admirably: Currently at 20,000 cases, it aims to reach a goal of 100,000 as the company expands distribution.

As for the dual meaning of B Side's name, Sebastiani says that "like wine, music connects people." "Even if you've never seen a 45 record or a raveled-up cassette tape—which, by the way, was the inspiration for our label image—nostalgia cuts across demographics with an almost universal appeal," he continues. Now that retro turntables and vinyl records are popular once again, it's easy to see his point.

Kitchens, who is marking his 20th anniversary with Sebastiani & Sons, began making B Side Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in 2016. He sources 70 percent of the Chardonnay grapes from the winery's Watmaugh Ranch Vineyard, which is planted to Hyde-Wente clones. According to Kitchens, these grapes hold on to their acidity as they spend some extra hang time reaching optimal ripeness. "As this vineyard matured, we realized it has the ability to produce a wine that absolutely overdelivers in quality," says Sebastiani.

Unlike the sleeper B side of a record that made its way to the top of the charts, B Side Chardonnay has all the makings of a hit the moment consumers taste it. The 2016 shows lush golden apple, ripe citrus, and pineapple notes (the latter are markers for the clonal material) and plenty of balanced, bright acidity to lengthen the finish. Creamy secondary notes of vanilla and nutmeg can be attributed to the 20 percent of the blend that's aged in new Damy and Dargaud & Jaegle barrels.

While both wines are labeled North Coast, the Petaluma Gap (California's newly-minted AVA) and Napa Carneros are Kitchen's go-tos for sourcing B Side Pinot Noir. Almost 70 percent of the fruit is sourced from Carneros and a prestigious vineyard in Petaluma Gap that's planted to the 115 Dijon clone. "We're always the first in to pick the Napa Carneros vineyard, which is known for having a tight picking window," said Kitchens. "This ensures there's plenty of natural acidity in the wine." Fruit from sites in Lake County and Anderson Valley make up the remainder of the blend.

A judicious 30 percent of the wine is barreled in a combination of new François Frères, Damy, and Dargaud & Jaegle barrels, which are considered to be among those best suited to Pinot Noir. The wine's rose, black raspberry, and pomegranate nose gives way to flavors of red and black cherries with secondary notes of camphor and earth that point to its all-star combination of terroir.

Both Greg and Donny are committed to working with local growers and carefully managing each step of B Side's production. "White wines have always been a strong suit for us and we've excelled with high-scoring Pinot Noirs too," said Sebastiani. "With the addition of these two wines, B Side reflects what I like to call 'the soul of the North Coast.'" ■



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ROSÉ

Riding the Pink Tide

TO MEET GROWING
DEMAND, LES GRANDS
CHAI DE FRANCE
IS BRINGING ALTERNATIVE
FRENCH ROSÉ WINES TO
THE AMERICAN MARKET

BY DAVID GADD

You don't need to study the statistics to know that rosé is on fire—though, if you're the type to seek validation, rest assured that Nielsen has named the category one of its "wine trends to watch for in 2018."

The global marketing research firm reported last summer—prime season for pink wine—that "rosé buyers are expanding total wine sales as wine shoppers are adding rosé to their carts," which indicates that rosé is a "popular middle ground" for consumers deciding between sweet or dry wine. Up a whopping 53 percent by volume, rosé sales reached \$258 million in the year leading up to Independence Day weekend—the peak rosé-drinking occasion—in 2017.

The south of France is widely associated with rosé, but not all rosés are from Côtes de Provence.

PHOTO: KOTAKA/ISTOCK

The French organization CIVP (Conseil Interprofessionnel des Vins de Provence) reports that the United States is second only to France itself in its thirst for pink wines. While the French account for around 35 percent of worldwide consumption of rosé, U.S. rosé drinkers quaff a healthy 14 percent of global production—and growing. That’s a lot of pink.

A more immediate way of taking account of the rising rosé tide is to simply visit your nearest restaurant or wine bar, where you’re almost guaranteed to see Millennials—male *and* female—ordering glasses of their favorite pink wines. It’s guaranteed that a lot of those labels will be from France, the world’s largest producer by far of rosé, and the lion’s share of *that* will be from Côtes de Provence.

And therein lies the dilemma.

Côtes de Provence is the world’s best-known appellation for rosé wine, with a staggering 89 percent of its vines dedicated to the category. Demand is high and getting higher—so high, in fact, that France must import entry-level rosé to meet its own domestic needs.

High-quality Côtes de Provence rosé, meanwhile, winds up easing the warm-weather thirst of American wine drinkers. The CIVP reports that American drinkers purchase 43 percent of the total quantity of Provence rosé exported. Where can buyers turn when supplies run low?

Fortunately, many alternative pink wines—both still and sparkling—are made in other regions of France as well. Côtes du Rhône, Costières de Nîmes, Languedoc, the Loire (Saumur, Anjou, and Chinon), Alsace, Jura, Bourgogne, and even Bordeaux all have their own ways of “drinking pink.” And luckily for American buyers, one global French wine powerhouse produces rosé in all of these regions: Les Grands Chais de France.

Force Majeure of French Wine

While not a household name, Les Grands Chais de France (GCF) is one of the world’s largest wine companies and is a force to be reckoned with on the global stage. Based in a geographically-strategic location in Petersbach, Alsace, Grands Chais produces 44 million cases of wine yearly that are exported to 173 countries on five continents: accounting for nearly 19 percent of total French wine exports and generating more than a billion euros in revenue each year.

Its sheer size means that GCF has the resources to master the entire winemaking and distribution process from start to finish, from grape growing (with 3,000 hectares, or 7,400 acres, under vine) to vinification, barrel-aging, bottling, and supply-chain management. Its multiple winemaking facilities across France—including vast state-of-the-art production sites in Alsace and Bordeaux—demonstrate a commitment to the latest viticultural technology.

From a worm’s eye view, GCF has French terroir covered: It owns estates in ten French wine-producing regions, including Bordeaux, where the company has 16 properties. (Grands Chais also has estates in Spain, Germany, and Hungary.) This diversity of access results in wines of great typicity and character from each region.

Despite its size, GCF is highly adaptable to the latest trends in the wine world—including the growing demand for rosé—while remaining committed to environmental responsibility and hands-on customer service.



Grands Chais de France Winemaker Vincent Euzet:

“In the consumer’s mind, Méditerranée is associated with the south of France: sea, sun, and sand, same as Côtes de Provence. These alternative IGP and AOP wines have a great potential for growth in the next few years due to the demand.”

ROSÉ

Coming Your Way: Alternative French Rosé

Among its many areas of expertise, Les Grands Chais de France is a rosé specialist offering buyers a wide range of choices in both the still and sparkling pink wine categories. Winemaker Vincent Euzet works with partner-growers across France to source grapes he crafts with a special eye toward quality of color, aroma, and flavor. His regional wines, carrying broad IGP (Indication Géographique Protégée) designations from their respective areas, represent extraordinary value—an important selling point for off-premise buyers and end consumers alike.

“Thirty percent of the global consumption of rosé wines is concentrated in France—in some regions, we consume rosé all year long,” says Euzet. “This is why the sourcing needs to be diversified and why we note the emergence of appellations like AOP Costières de Nîmes, IGP Aude, and IGP Méditerranée, which, more and more, look like Côtes de Provence and taste like Côtes de Provence, but are not as expensive as Côtes de Provence.”

The **Chemin des Sables IGP Méditerranée (SRP \$10)** is excellent proof that covetable French rosé need not always carry a Côtes de Provence label. A blend of Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, and Cinsault, this pale-pink IGP wine is direct-pressed and vinified at low temperatures in order to preserve maximum fruit character. Its fresh, round mouthfeel is ideal as an apéritif, while the striking bottle has a seductive shape that practically invites consumers to reach for it on the shelf.

In the Aude basin of Languedoc-Roussillon, situated between Toulouse and Perpignan, GCF produces the **Orée des Roses IGP Aude (SRP \$8)**. The name, French for “edge of the rose garden,” captures the delicate, aromatic nature of this summery rosé. Grapes grown in light, sandy alluvial soils are harvested, destemmed,



The Costières de Nîmes AOP surrounds the historic city of Nîmes, which is known for its ancient Roman ruins.

and crushed; after a short maceration and pressing, the wine is stored in tanks until it is racked, filtered, and bottled a few days later.

To enjoy its refreshing character, this wine is best served chilled to 50–54 degrees Fahrenheit during its first year. Pale blush with strawberry-hued reflections, it offers intense red berry and exotic fruit aromas and flavors that make it a welcome tablemate for grilled meats, salads, or Asian dishes.

Another GCF property, Château de Fabrègues, is found in the oldest geological area of the Costières de Nîmes AOP. The appellation surrounds the historic city of Nîmes, the site of many important ancient Roman ruins (the Romans planted vines in this area in ancient times, giving it a long head start in viticulture). Located on one of seven hills in the appellation swept by the Mistral wind, the vineyards at Château de Fabrègues benefit from a northern exposure favorable to maintaining acidity; the clay subsoil, meanwhile, generates small berries that lend themselves to concentrated, beautifully-colored, and aromatic wines.

Freshness, delicacy, and elegance are the hallmarks of the **Château de Fabrègues AOP Costières de Nîmes (SRP \$15)**, a classic



Syrah-Grenache blend from the south of France. With a powder-pink robe and a peony-tinged nose that delivers refined flavors of strawberry and grapefruit, the wine is a worthy accompaniment to healthy Mediterranean cuisine. Of special interest to shoppers is the stylish bottle with a reusable glass closure, a modernized feature that preserves freshness and neutrality while providing an attractive novelty for many consumers. An informative leaflet is also attached to the neck of each bottle.

The Season for Pink Wine

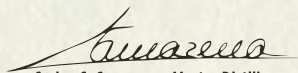
While the company offers many attractive alternatives to Côtes du Provence rosé, Les Grands Chais de France would certainly be remiss if it ignored the world’s largest-selling pink wine appellation. From a fifth-generation family based in Beaujolais, the **J. L. Quinson Côtes de Provence AOP (SRP \$8)** is sourced from coastal vineyards around the Provençal resort of Saint-Tropez—known for its glamorous ambiance as well as for its excellent rosé wines. The blend of Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault, Mourvèdre, and the indigenous grape Tibouren is produced by a combination of the saignée method and direct pressing. Lively and spicy with salmon-pink color, it calls for charcuterie, fowl, or grilled meats.

With summer fast approaching, it’s time to stock up on these affordable and intriguing French rosés. As more and more American wine drinkers board the pink wine bandwagon, the diverse GCF portfolio is looking very rosy indeed. ■■



THE ART OF FLAVOR

I believe the finest works of art require true dedication and attention to detail. This is why we honor the same traditional methods that have been honed and crafted for five generations. Each step of the process requires mastery of a skill and a commitment to quality. It is hard work, but the resulting flavor captures the essence of our spirit at La Altea.


Carlos C. Camarena, Master Distiller



Phil Wente, Fourth-Generation Winegrower and Co-Founder of Murrieta's Well; Jordan Wente, Fifth-Generation Winegrower; Eric Wente, Fourth-Generation Winegrower and Chairman of the Board at Wente Family Estates; Niki Wente, Fifth-Generation Winegrower and Viticulturalist; Christine Wente, Fifth-Generation Winegrower and President of the Wente Foundation for Arts Education; Carolyn Wente, Fourth-Generation Winegrower and CEO of Wente Family Estates; and Karl Wente, Fifth-Generation Winemaker and COO of Wente Family Estates, celebrate their partners and 135 years of Wente winemaking at the 2018 Legacy Awards.



GENERATION X

"All good men and women must take responsibility to create legacies that will take the next generation to a level we could only imagine," Carolyn Wente, Wente Family Estates CEO and Fourth-Generation Winegrower, told attendees of the Wente Legacy Awards. Originally a quote by motivational speaker Jim Rohn, it was a befitting opener for the tenth annual event at Wente Vineyards in Livermore, California.

Before the ceremony, Carolyn stood among a group of high-performing international and U.S.-based distributors at a reception in Wente's historic sandstone caves. After hors d'oeuvres and introductions, the lot would make the short trek to The Restaurant at Wente Vineyards, where they would be recognized within three different tiers for their excellence in sales across the Wente Family Estates portfolio.

WENTE FAMILY ESTATES HONORS A DECADE OF SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS AT THE TENTH ANNUAL WENTE LEGACY AWARDS

by Jessie Birschbach / photos by Alexander Rubin

A three-course Wente wine-paired dinner awaited them, just as it has annually for the past decade.

This year, however, was a tad different. Immediately apparent was the passing of the moderator baton from Carolyn to President Amy Hoopes and Executive Vice President of Global Sales Tyson Overton, as well as to

members of Wente's fifth generation, Jordan and Niki Wente. But the Wentes weren't the only family showing up to the party with multiple generations represented: A less apparent but equally impressive distinction was the attendance of Michael Miller, Vice President of Sales & Marketing for Heidelberg Distributing Company in Ohio, representing the next generation of the Miller family; and Joey Cekola, Portfolio Director at Michigan-based Imperial Beverage. Cekola was not the first of his family to attend the Legacy Awards and likely won't be the last.

In her final hurrah as moderator, Carolyn offered one last quote from author O.A. Battista: "The best inheritance parents can give their children is a few minutes of their time each day." So let's give each other some time to enjoy some special friends, great wine, and wonderful food!"

TIER 1

HEIDELBERG DISTRIBUTING, OHIO

A family-owned and -operated company for more than 75 years, Heidelberg is a four-time Legacy Award winner. “Just like their company motto—‘When you celebrate, we’re there’—we appreciate the Millers and the Millers and the Millers,” Hoopes joked as she raised her glass. “We’re celebrating you tonight and our long and valued partnership. This year included 58 percent growth for Heidelberg, and we look forward to working with the next generation.”



Chris Giudice, Vice President of Sales, Eastern Division, Wentz Family Estates; Vail Miller Sr., Co-Chairman/Secretary, Heidelberg Distributing, Kentucky; Michael Miller, Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Heidelberg Distributing, Ohio; Marissa Miller; Pat O’Sullivan, Chief Sales Officer, Heidelberg Distributing, Ohio; Leslie Miller; Vail Miller Jr., Chief Executive Officer, Heidelberg Distributing, Ohio; Karl Wentz; Brooke Hice; Sean Hice, President, Heidelberg Distributing, Ohio; Carol Miller; Carolyn Wentz; and Niki Wentz.

IMPERIAL BEVERAGE, MICHIGAN

Established in 1933, Imperial Beverage is one of the top ten distributors of wine, beer, and spirits in Michigan. “We’ve been working with Imperial for many years,” Overton told attendees. “This year was a great year: up 77 percent on single vineyards and really balanced growth for a repeat winner.”

Carolyn Wentz; Jordan Wentz; Chris Giudice; Karl Wentz; Lindsay Cekola; Joey Cekola, Portfolio Director, Imperial Beverage, Michigan; and Niki Wentz.



TIER 2

HEIDELBERG DISTRIBUTING, KENTUCKY

Like its counterpart in Ohio, Heidelberg Distributing of Kentucky experienced a large jump in growth last year. One has to wonder whether Albert W. Vontz, the company’s German immigrant founder, could have imagined this success 85 years prior. During dinner, the vivacious Carol Miller felt compelled to stand and graciously thank the Wentz family: “This is just so cool. I’ve been here several times and I’m so grateful you would do this for all of us. Awesome bottles, awesome wine, awesome dinner. Thank you!”



Vail Miller Jr.; Leslie Miller; Jordan Wentz; Carolyn Wentz; Carol Miller; Chris Giudice; Vail Miller Sr.; Marissa Miller; Pat O’Sullivan; Michael Miller; Alicia Angel; Joshua Mulberry, General Sales Manager, Heidelberg Distributing, Kentucky; Leslee Mulberry; Karl Wentz; James Carpenter, Vice President/General Manager, Heidelberg Distributing, Kentucky; and Niki Wentz.

TIER 2

CAPITOL-HUSTING COMPANY

A powerhouse distributor in Wisconsin, Capitol-Husting started out in 1877 as a soda water factory. It's managed to stay family-owned and -operated ever since. "They've been here three consecutive years and they're doing a great job," Hoopes said.

Christine Wentz; Chris Giudice; Jordan Wentz; Kyle Leubke, General Manager of Vintage Division, Capitol-Husting; Karl Wentz; Gerald Zavorka, Vice President of Sales, Capitol-Husting; Jamie Alevizos, Senior Vice President and Owner, Capitol-Husting; and Niki Wentz.



TIER 3

REPUBLIC NATIONAL DISTRIBUTING COMPANY, NORTH DAKOTA

Although RNDC distributes nationally, the North Dakota branch has caught the attention of the Wentz family for growth in not just one but *all* of their brands. "It's their first time here for the Legacy Awards. Another great success story where everything in the portfolio was grown—every single brand," Overton said.

Jordan Wentz; Karl Wentz; Pam Schmidt, RNDC Area Manager, North Dakota; Samuel Spencer; Consulting Winemaker; and Niki Wentz.



BRJ DISTRIBUTING COMPANY, IDAHO

BRJ Distributing carries more than 1,300 wines, 200 imported craft beers, and 84 Riedel glass varieties, making this company one of the best resources for fine beer and wine in Idaho. "If you don't know Sharon Bantrup's story, she's kind of a female idol, with 15 years in sales and marketing in various Fortune 500 companies. In 2005, she moves to Idaho and *buys* BRJ!" Hoopes said. "This is her first Legacy Award, and there's been growth across our entire portfolio with BRJ, so I have a feeling it won't be her last."

Crystal McIntyre, Vice President of Sales, Western Division, Wentz Family Estates; Jordan Wentz; Karl Wentz; Sharon Bantrup, President and Owner, BRJ; and Niki Wentz.



Carol Miller of Heidelberg
Distributing tips her
glass in appreciation to
Carolyn Wenté.



**“ALL GOOD MEN
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MUST TAKE
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TO A LEVEL WE
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EXPORTS

INTERNATIONAL CELLARS, CANADA



Jordan Wenté; Karl Wenté; Michael Parr, Vice President of International Sales, Wenté Family Estates; Susan Chaworth-Musters, Senior Brand Manager, International Cellars, Canada; Eric Wenté; and Niki Wenté.

Overton couldn't help but gush while presenting this Legacy Award: "Susan [Chaworth-Musters] wins the decathlon of Legacy Awards. This is her eighth time here, and eight out of ten Legacies is amazing. This is a great success story! We always talk about being the number-one California Chardonnay at any price point on the market. Susan has helped manage British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, et cetera, with consistent year-to-year growth and performance every single year. Susan, you've been a driving force behind all of it. For you to be here for this tenth year is really special for all of us."

DFS GROUP, HONG KONG



Carolyn Wenté; Michael Parr; Michelle Latson; Brad Latson, Regional Merchandising Manager for North America, DFS Group; Amy Hoopes; Karl Wenté; Taiba Sutcliffe; Karl Sutcliffe, General Manager for San Francisco International Airport, DFS Group; and Tyson Overton.

Based in Hong Kong, DFS Group was established in 1960 and oversees airport duty-free shops. "We're excited to have you here. We've been partners with you for 25 years," Overton said. "This group has 250 million customers coming through their stores. We've had a lot of growth—over 27 percent—with this group. It's their first award—congratulations!" ■■

The following companies were recognized in their respective categories but were unable to attend: RNDC New England won a Tier 3 Legacy Award, while Australia Coles won in Exports.



A Recipe for SUCCESS

WENTE FAMILY ESTATES CELEBRATES ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTHERN GLAZER'S WINE & SPIRITS AT THE SECOND ANNUAL RISE AWARDS **by Izzy Watson**

Wente Family Estates recently celebrated its second annual RISE Awards, which recognize its regional distribution teams from Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits as they aid in the ongoing growth of the Wente portfolio. "Wente Family Estates and SGWS have been partners for decades, working together market by market to grow our portfolio responsibly and sustainably—and that shared focus is what the RISE Awards are all about," says Tyson Overton, Executive Vice President and Chief Sales Officer for Wente Family Estates. "R.I.S.E. is the acronym we use in relation to our core values at Wente Family Estates: respect, integrity, sustainability, and excellence. The RISE Award is in recognition of those markets and leadership teams that have highlighted those values in the development of our shared business in the past year."

Jody Turnbow, Vice President of Supplier Management for Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, adds, "It's an honor to be partners with the Wente family for the 135th anniversary [of Wente Vineyards]. Rarely do you get the opportunity to represent brands from real families that thrive because of their relentless commitment to excellence. The SGWS family congratulates the Wente family on a trailblazing 135 years and is excited about our partnership for the next 135 years!"

Gregory Ledwon, Vice President of Portfolio Management, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits; Scott Dankel, Vice President of Sales Off Premise, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits; Emily Dickson, Portfolio Manager, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits; Scott Westerman, Regional President, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits; Burt Kemp, Vice President of Sales On Premise, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits; Randy Myers, Senior Vice President and General Sales Manager, Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits; and Kenyon Schmanske, Regional Manager Great Plains, Wente Family Estates.

RISE AWARDS 2018 REGIONAL WINNERS

Central Region RISE
Award Winner:

MISSOURI

"Another great year for Missouri. The SGWS team delivered double-digit growth in both priority depletions and points of distribution. Best of the Midwest by far!"

—Kenyon Schmanske,
Wente Family Estates, Regional
Manager Great Plains

East Region RISE Award Winner:

DELAWARE

“Congratulations to the Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits Delaware sales team for winning the 2017 RISE Award! Through sustained increased distribution, they were able to attain double-digit growth for Murrieta’s Well and Wente Vineyards Single Vineyards priority brands.”

—Joanne Wigod, Wente Family Estates, Mid Atlantic Regional Sales Manager



Joanne Wigod, Mid Atlantic Regional Sales Manager, Wente Family Estates; Jim Miller, Vice President/General Manager, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits of Delaware; JeanAnn Sukeena, Division Director–Total Portfolio, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits; and Michelle Souza, Division Director–Hospitality Division On Premise, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits. Not pictured is John Aiello, Division Director–Blue Rock Division Off Premise, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits.

West Region RISE Award Winner:

ARIZONA

“Michael Jahn and the SGWS team in Arizona have delivered another great year in 2017. As a repeat winner from 2016, the Arizona team expanded growth in both on- and off-premise divisions by increasing points of distribution and adding new distribution to a competitive market. Arizona was up double digits on our Wente Vineyards Estate Grown tier and expanded our off-premise footprint by more than 17 percent. The team remains focused in striving for excellence and is looking forward to another stellar year.”

—Michael Provencio, Wente Family Estates, Mountain Regional Manager ■■



Chris Costa, Vice President–Commercial Operations, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits; Adam Eckert, Brand Manager, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits, Tom Boyle, Vice President and General Manager of Sales, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits; Michael Provencio, Wente Family Estates, Mountain Regional Manager; and Brain Lathrop, Vice President/General Manager–Icon Division, Southern Glazer’s Wine and Spirits.

SPEED TASTING

Big & Bold IN TEXAS

**AUSTIN SOMMS TEST THEIR SKILLS IN THE TASTING
PANEL'S RED WINE BLIND SPEED TASTING**

by Lori Moffatt / by Dennis Burnett



Paul Ozbrin, Sommelier, *Vino Vino*; Scott Ota, Beverage Director, High Street Wine Co.; Dave Lund, Wine Director, III Forks Steakhouse; Mark Rashap, Director of Wine Education, Wine & Food Foundation of Texas; Chris Costas, Director of Food and Beverage, Westin Austin Downtown; Rania Zayyat, Wine Director, Bufalina; Jacob Brown, Wine Director, COUNTER 3. FIVE. VII; Lindsay Drew, Sommelier, Guild Restaurant; Charles Riley, Regional Director of Food and Beverage, Omni Mandalay Hotel at Las Colinas; Mandi Nelson, Beverage Director, New Waterloo; Edward Morgan, Food and Wine Director, Travaasa.



Paul Ozbrin of *Vino Vino* emerged victorious at the Game of Wines speed tasting.



When *The Tasting Panel* invited an all-star panel of Texas sommeliers, wine buyers, and wine personalities to gather at Austin's III Forks Steakhouse to test their mettle in a formidable blind speed tasting of ten bold wines from across the globe, the wines—big, inky reds with abundant tannins and structure—presented a challenge that cast the room in virtual silence, save for the sounds of slurping, swishing, and the occasional appreciative “mmm.”

With a cash prize of \$500 on the line for the most accurate somm in terms of identifying region and variety, the

stakes were high, and Paul Ozbrin of *Vino Vino* in Austin eventually took home the bragging rights. “It was a very challenging tasting,” noted New Waterloo Beverage Director Mandi Nelson, who curates the wine program at Austin’s Central Standard and received an honorable mention at the tasting. “The wines were very similar in structure and appearance, and you can tell a lot about a wine by its color.”

Honorable mentions also went to Edward Morgan of Travaasa, and Bufalina Wine Director Rania Zayyat, but no one received a perfect score—after all, the winemakers had some tricks up their sleeves . . .

WINE #1

BANFI 2012 BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO, TUSCANY



Lars Leicht is the Trade Development Manager for Banfi Vintners.

"If 2013 is 'cool and classic,' then you'd probably call the 2012 Brunello di Montalcino 'hot and bothered,'" quipped Banfi Vintner's Trade Development Director Lars Leicht as he unveiled this cru from the Castello Banfi estate. "We had some crazy weather and some heat waves that put the wines into dormancy in August, but then September got nice and things were able to rebalance."

Sangiovese, which grows in Italy from Sicily to the Alps, boldly expresses the specific terroir it hails from, and Castello Banfi spent 30 years researching which Sangiovese clones would be best suited for the hills of Montalcino.

"Sangiovese is also

quintessentially Italian in that it doesn't like to be alone; it likes company," said Leicht. The team ultimately planted a polyclone vineyard and developed a cru from a series of joined vineyards surrounding Banfi's namesake castle.

With medium acidity and body as well as Old World restraint, the wine "shows a power with elegance that Brunello is known for," said Leicht. "The Castello Banfi estate is a beacon for local hospitality, with daily winery tours, an enoteca and wine bar, a fine-dining restaurant, a glass museum, and balsamic cellars"—as if Montalcino's distinctive expression of Sangiovese wasn't enough.

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### THE PANEL SAYS:

Beautiful, dusty, underripe red fruit in the form of currants and cranberries. The palate backs up these aromas of the crunchy red fruits and adds roses, tar, and dried rosemary. Super high acid and tannin wine. —Mandi Nelson

Brick rim variation, dried rose, aged Balsamic, dark cherry skin, and tomato leaf. Long finish driven by acidity and soft tannin." —Dave Lund



# WINE #2

## ANCIENT PEAKS 2014 OYSTER RIDGE, PASO ROBLES



Doug Fillipponi is the Co-Owner and Viticulturalist at Ancient Peaks.



A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Petite Sirah, and Malbec, Ancient Peak's 2014 Oyster Ridge limited-edition cuvée benefits from the five soil types and complex geology of one of Paso Robles' coolest and most unusual AVAs: Santa Margarita Ranch. "The majority of the grapes that go into this wine are grown on an ancient oyster bed," said Ancient Peak Co-Owner Doug Filipponi. These fossils foster a calcium-rich soil that lends complex notes of leather, graphite, dried plum, and espresso bean, with a plush mouthfeel and long tannins.

"Every vintage is a little different," said Filipponi, "and 2014 was a wonderful year. Each of these wines is put into premium French oak for two years, and then the winemakers go through and taste every barrel. They make three different blends, and we all work together to choose the final blend. The goal is to offer the best of the best of Ancient Peaks—essentially the crown jewel of the vineyard and the vintage."



#### THE PANEL SAYS:

Aroma bursts from the glass with full, ripe and dark fruit. Must be very concentrated grapes.

—Charles Riley

Ruby-purple and ripe with strawberry, plum, cassis, and blueberry. Youthful and fruit-forward with fresh purple flowers and slight green herbs. Vanilla, cinnamon, and clove. —Lindsey Drew

## WINE #3

### NEYERS VINEYARD 2016 SAGE CANYON RED, CALIFORNIA

Neyers Vineyard Founders Bruce and Barbara Neyers' love of Rhône-style wines rings true with this deep garnet, sustainably-farmed cuvée of Carignan, Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre.

"The tale behind this wine dates to my first California trip with Daniel Brunier, Owner and Winemaker of Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe—the Châteauneuf-du-Pape that many refer to as the most legendary wine of the southern Rhône," said Bruce. "He told me, 'You should find some old vineyards planted to southern Rhône varieties, and I'll help you make a traditional Rhône-style wine with them.'"

Produced using the traditional Rhone process of *pigéage*—where the grapes are crushed by foot, fermented separately, then aged on the lees in used French oak barrels—the finished wine features a complex combination of Old World earth and minerality with exotic fruit and an attractive, soft finish. "We've regularly heard it referred to as the best example of an Old World blend made today in California," Bruce added.



Joel Dicharry, Director of Fine Wine for Trinchero Family Estates, presented the Neyers Vineyard 2016 Sage Canyon Red.



#### THE PANEL SAYS:

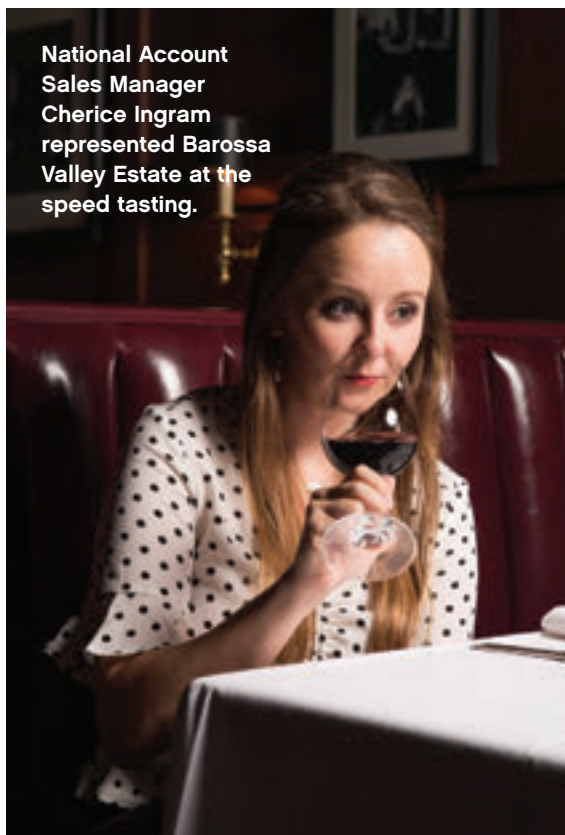
A bright candied strawberry hits your nose to begin, while the enjoyably tart palate with flavors of raspberries and cherry make for a delightful wine. —Jacob Brown

Clean, sweet, lifted nose; intense, underripe dark fruit. Medium body and tannin, medium acid, and balanced alcohol. Sweet, stemmy core with minerality and bubblegum. —Paul Ozbrin

## WINE #4

### **BAROSSA VALLEY ESTATE 2016 CABERNET, BAROSSA, AUSTRALIA**

National Account  
Sales Manager  
Cherice Ingram  
represented Barossa  
Valley Estate at the  
speed tasting.



The somms were surprised to learn this inky tannin-bomb, replete with flavors of green pepper and currants, comes from the dark red clay of the Barossa Valley in southern Australia. Within a viticultural area half the size of Napa Valley—with hot days and cool nights, friable clay soils, and grapevines dating to the 1840s—Barossa Valley Estates' wines feature concentrated vegetal flavors and deep color that threw the tasters off track.

"We do a split canopy system where we are going in by hand and split-canopying the vines, which allows the vines to ripen in the shade of the canopy and slowly develop flavor," said presenter Cherice

Ingram. Barossa Valley Estate grows only Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre, as these bold reds are especially well-suited to the terroir and climate of Southern Australia. "California Cabernet can be really pricey, but this wine delivers a big bang for the buck, so it's a great value for an entry-level Cabernet on any wine list," Ingram added.

#### **THE PANEL SAYS:**

Dark purple color with viscosity and high intensity; charred dark fruits, rhubarb, and cabbage. Modest levels of new oak. Full-bodied, tart fruit finish with bright acidity. —*Scott Ota*

Dark ruby core to watery red; red fruit, lilacs, and ripe herbs de Provence. Stemmy with medium-plus tannin, medium acid, medium-plus alcohol, and green herbs. —*Edward Morgan*



## WINE #5

### **MULLAN ROAD CELLARS 2015 RED BLEND, COLUMBIA VALLEY**



Mike Zinni, Kobrand Wine & Spirits Regional Chain Manager, presented for Mullan Road Cellars.



This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc hails from vineyards in Washington State's soon-to-be-recognized Royal Slope appellation, as well as the Seven Hills vineyard in the Walla Walla AVA. With initial aromas of fresh black cherry, cassis, vanilla bean, and juniper berry making way for deeper scents of blackberry pie and dried strawberry, the palate offers concentrated flavors of blackberry, black currant, and dark cherry with a touch of spice. With firm but silky tannins, it pairs well with pork tenderloin, cheese, and fire-grilled vegetables.

Named for the 1859 wagon road that first connected eastern Washington to present-day Montana via the Rocky Mountains, Mullan Road is a venture of Dennis Cakebread, Chairman of the famed Cakebread Cellars in Napa Valley. "Seven Hills, located along the southern edge of the Walla Walla AVA, has an elevation of 850–1,050 feet, excellent soil and air drainage, and is one of the most technologically advanced in the industry," said presenter Mike Zinni. "Yields are strictly controlled to assure ultra-premium quality."



#### THE PANEL SAYS:

Plum and velvety black cherry. On the palate, the rich ripe fruit is super forward and followed by spearmint. —Mandi Nelson

Cherries, slight menthol, great texture. Slightly stemmy and vegetal. —Mark Rashap

## WINE #6

### FERRARI-CARANO 2013 TRÉSOR, SONOMA COUNTY

This deeply saturated, classically styled cuvée from Sonoma County features a blend of all five Bordeaux varietals—a backbone of 71% Cabernet Sauvignon with Malbec, Merlot, Petit Verdot, and Cabernet Franc from three separate vineyards, adding complex notes of clove, black currant, and a hint of tobacco and dried red earth. "A lot of people know Ferrari-Carano for our white wines, but we are looking at Cabernet as something special for us," said presenter Kimberly Pettit.

**Kimberly Pettit, South Central Regional Manager, Ferrari-Carano Vineyards and Winery, presented the Ferrari-Carano classic Trésor.**



She described Trésor's label—which depicts the sunset in Laguna, California where the Carano family keeps their boat docked part of the year—as being "as interesting as the wine." "It's a painting that was commissioned from artist Marco Sassone for the winery when it opened in 1981," Hendrickson Pettit continued. "It wasn't intended to be part of the label, but it received so much attention from visitors to the winery that it became part of the Carano lore."



#### THE PANEL SAYS:

Tart red fruit, cranberry, raspberry, cassis. Fresh lillacs, dried oregano, tomato leaf, tobacco. Dried red earth. —Lindsay Drew

Big tannin, big acid; oak markers; sawdust, lumberyard. Dark fruit with cassis, berry, and plum. —Chris Costas



Ryan Stotz, Director of Sales for JP Bourgeois, presented the Château Lamothe-Castéra 2016 Bordeaux.

## WINE #7

### CHÂTEAU LAMOTHE-CASTÉRA 2016 CUVÉE MARGAUX BORDEAUX

Château Lamothe Castéra's elegant Bordeaux blend of 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Merlot suggested to some sommeliers that its provenance was Saint-Émilion.

"Nothing could make me happier, as we have always been Right Bank fans," said Director of Sales Ryan Stotz. "Here's your big, strapping, inky Bordeaux with a voluminous nose and just enough grip. We like flowers, we like elegance, we like soul—but we realized that Cab is king. We told grower Renaud Jean, who works in the heart of Entre-Deux-Mers, that we were looking for great Cab at a certain price point for the States, and we went to him because of his iconoclastic insistence on growing and using Cabernet Sauvignon in Entre-Deux-Mers. We went with the highest altitude he had, the best he had. We were lucky to have our first vintage in 2015 and are even luckier in 2016."

#### THE PANEL SAYS:

Ripe dark fruit, butter popcorn/toasty oak. Minty green, wet rocks, and black licorice. — Paul Ozbrin

Fresh spring greens immediately pop out of the glass of fresh grass and bell pepper. Followed by black cherry and crunchy gravel and pencil lead shavings. —Mandi Nelson



## WINE #8

### CHARLES SMITH WINES 2015 BOOM BOOM! SYRAH, COLUMBIA VALLEY



James Korrodi, Sales Manager—On Premise at Constellation Brands, presented Charles Smith's Wines' Boom Boom! Syrah.



With a big bouquet of ripe fruit and notes of leather and smoked meat on the palate, this blend of Syrah, Viognier, and Grenache comes from Charles Smith Wines, the Washington State winery founded in 2006 by Walla Walla winemaker and former music manager Charles Smith. Firm tannins, soft floral notes from the Viognier, and hints of crushed granite on the nose inspired several tasters to guess this wine originated in France's Côtes du Rhône.

Presenter James Korrodi said the 2015 "was the first wine in what Charles Smith called 'the Modernist Project,' which studied how people are drinking their wines today." "Most people aren't aging their wines, so he came up with wines that could be approachable right out the bottle at a reasonable price point," Korrodi continued.



#### THE PANEL SAYS:

Moderate-plus concentration and purple core with high aromatic intensity. Black fruits, blackberry/boysenberry, black pepper, black licorice, and dark olives with dark earth. Moderate-plus tannins, high alcohol, and diminished acidity.

—Scott Ota

Red and dark fruit, red and purple flowers, soapy perfume, lavender, and herbs de Provence. Medium acidity, medium-plus alcohol, and medium-plus tannins. —Edward Morgan

## WINE #9

### MICHAEL DAVID 2015 INKBLOT CABERNET FRANC, LODI

Grapes for this nearly-black, well-structured Cab Franc grow in a sustainably-farmed, nine-acre vineyard on the west side of Lodi, a California wine region known primarily for its Zinfandel production. Inky and laced with a dark purple edge and flavors of dark berry, chocolate, and tobacco leaf, this is the first Lodi Cabernet Franc produced by Michael David Winery and one of just a few produced in Lodi. Named in reference to the wine's deep color, the Inkblot series also includes a Tannat and a Petit Verdot.

"The Phillips family has a 150-year-old history of family farming in Lodi," said presenter Michael Epstein. "Michael and David are fifth-generation winegrowers, with the sixth generation [Michael's children Kevin and Melissa] joining the team recently. All Michael David Wines are grown following the Lodi rules: a set of more than 100 standards that account for all aspects of making quality wine in a sustainable manner."

Southern Glazer's Austin Fine Wine Manager Michael Epstein presented the 2015 Inkblot Cabernet Franc on behalf of Michael David Winery.



#### THE PANEL SAYS:

Big dark fruits, peppered meats, jerky, granite, new oak, black pepper, and grill char. Body is all tannin, medium acidity, and high alcohol with sweet blueberry and pepper. —Paul Ozbrin

Jammy ripe strawberry, raspberry, and red plum. Purple flowers and leaves, dried herbs, vanilla, clove, and cinnamon. —Lindsay Drew

# WINE #10

## ROMBAUER 2014 MERLOT, NAPA VALLEY



Rombauer Central U.S.  
Sales Manager Dave Zinni.

Aromas of ripe blueberries and blackberries intertwine with notes of cedar and vanilla in this medium-bodied Merlot, which has been produced at Rombauer since 1983. For the 2014 vintage, winemakers selected grapes from estate-owned and grower-partner vineyards on the Napa side of Carneros, where the clay-based soils are similar to those of Bordeaux's Right Bank. Handpicked and optically sorted, the grapes benefit from a cool climate that allows them to gradually develop tannin while retaining acidity.

"About one-third of our Merlot is barrel-fermented in new French oak, a process we began with our Bordeaux varieties in 2012," said Central U.S. Sales Manager Dave Zinni. "Rombauer has one of the largest red-wine barrel fermentation programs in Napa Valley, and many winemakers come to see it firsthand. I think the 2014 Merlot is superb with grilled lamb chops. If you put it with a Trois Petits Cochons liver mousse and Livarot cheese from Normandy, you could do no better in life." ■■



### THE PANEL SAYS:

Plum and brown sugar flood the nose with blueberry and blackberry jam filling out the mid-palate. Fine structure.

—Dave Lund

Bold dark fruit with a nose of dried rose petal. A big fruit front with a dry finish; rather chewy, yet tasty. —Charles Riley



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# Exploring an ENDLESS FRONTIER

AMERICAN BEVERAGE COMPANIES CONTINUE TO PUSH  
SPIRITS FORWARD ACROSS ALL CATEGORIES

*By Emily Coleman*

One of America's greatest assets has been its ability to serve as a blank slate for creatives throughout its history. The colonists didn't just rebel against the British—they rebelled against the traditions of where they came from. As a country, we were never tied to the notion of “that's the way it has always been done” as we sought liberation from traditions, rituals, and rules that had been handed down for generations.

As a melting pot of immigrants from around the world, the United States also became a place where cultures melded freely in everything from food to music as uniquely-American twists were added to old customs. This passion for innovation hasn't wavered over the past few centuries, especially in regards to the evolution of the modern spirits industry.

U.S.-based spirits producers push boundaries across categories not only because they can, but because their audience requires they continuously venture into uncharted territory. By channeling sources of inspiration from all over the globe, distillers look to the future to foresee how they can elevate their products beyond consumers' wildest expectations.



## *Crystal Clear:* TAHOE BLUE VODKA

The beauty of the Sierra Nevada mountain range has stirred the adventurous spirit of nearly everyone who's visited it, and many of the country's most scenic places rest along its peaks. As the second-deepest lake and the largest alpine lake in the country, Lake Tahoe is no exception.

The lake's expansive and crystal-clear blue waters serve as the base of Tahoe Blue Vodka, produced by Tahoe Spirits, Inc. Founder/CEO Matt Levitt. Distilled using 50 percent sugarcane, 25 percent corn, and 25 percent grapes, this gluten-free vodka exhibits a smoothness on the palate that speaks to the water's covetable purity. Like the lake itself, the award-winning brand calls both Nevada and California home, as it is expertly distilled in Mountain View, California and bottled in Sparks, Nevada. While Tahoe Blue started out with humble beginnings, it has gained a reputation as an outstanding vodka among its industry peers.

Using the lake as a resource means Levitt has a direct stake in its future. Due to this connection and the delicate balance of Lake Tahoe's ecosystem, he decided to help protect the lake and its surroundings by donating a portion of the proceeds from every bottle of Tahoe Blue to several nonprofit organizations working tirelessly to preserve this natural treasure.

**Tahoe Blue Vodka (\$20)** Tahoe Blue Vodka's delicate, sweet nose offers up vanilla bean and white flowers. The blend of sugarcane, grape, and corn in this distilled spirit allows for a layered effect of aromas and flavors. Marshmallow is dotted with white pepper while fennel root is softened by a roundness in texture; the berry finish is punctuated by a gentle heat.

**90**—*Meridith May*

TAHOE SPIRITS, INC.





## Following the American Dream: SOUTHERN CHAMPION

Many an American entrepreneur can tell you that inspiration often strikes at the most unlikely moments. This certainly rings true for Merrilee Kick, a former teacher who once found herself grading papers poolside with a Margarita.

Realizing how easily her glass could break with a careless flick of the hand while she worked, Kick began dreaming up a solution that eventually led to a small business loan and the creation of BuzzBallz. The ready-to-drink cocktail brand comes in recyclable packaging and has brought in more than \$20 million in revenue.

Never one to cease innovating, Kick continues to expand her Southern Champion portfolio with outstanding spirits. Inspired by the wild Rocky Mountain juniper of Montana, **Andrew John's Premium Gin** features layers of juniper, pine, lemon, orange peel, lime, coriander, anise, and black currant. The spirit undergoes eight distillations before being filtered five times, allowing for a smooth, crisp spirit

against which the botanical flavors shine brightly.

Both kosher and gluten-free, **XIII Kings Vodka** starts with 100-percent American corn before being distilled eight times and filtered five times—just like its gin kin—for a smooth, balanced vodka worthy of any royal family's collection. Meanwhile, **Pelican Harbor Rum**, a light spirit made from Caribbean sugarcane, blends rum from the U.S. Virgin Islands, Martinique, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad, and Jamaica.

When asked about the most surprising aspect of her career in the spirits industry, Kick says, "Looking back on it now, I realize what an accomplishment it was. Back when I started, I had to do everything by myself: create the packaging, buy machinery, get permits, create formulas, handle compliance in every state, do production, and do all the billing, as well as shipping, marketing, advertising, and sales to distributors. So here we are today, making booze not only for ourselves but others, too!"

### Andrew John's Premium Gin (\$20)

This gin is blessed with juniper from the Rocky Mountains. On the nose, lemongrass and heather linger; juniper is sweetly scented with clean, feminine lanolin and spiced honey. With a round, buoyant texture, the flavors gain pizzazz as piquant key lime, vanilla, and soft lilac sail to the finish. **93** —M.M.



### XIII Kings Vodka (\$20)

Eight times distilled and five times filtered, this vodka has a smoothness on the palate and a sensational mildness on the nose. Produced from corn, this 80-proofer has aromas of blueberry and spearmint with flavor characteristics that include vanilla, white pepper, and grapefruit. **92** —M.M.



### Pelican Harbor Rum (\$20)

Pelican Harbor Rum has you at first sniff. Caramel-apple butter lures your senses as you're transported to the Caribbean. Melted brown sugar and orange peel turn sweet at the back of the throat as the textural glide of liquid carries further notes of cocoa, wheat toast, figs, and ripe plums. **93** —M.M.

SOUTHERN CHAMPION





## Garden to Glass: UNCLE VAL'S

Inspiration for spirits can come in all forms, so when your family has been in the wine business for four generations, it makes sense that the driving force of your business can be found in the people closest to you. For his line of gins, 3 Badge Beverage President August Sebastiani and his team decided to use botanicals that his uncle Dr. Valerio Cecchetti used in his home garden in Lucca, Italy. Uncle Val, as he was affectionately known, had an undeniable zeal for life that permeated his beloved hobbies of cooking and gardening.

Beyond its juniper base, **Uncle Val's Botanical Gin** contains ingredients that could often be found in Uncle Val's homemade dishes. Cucumber adds a touch of freshness and lemon bestows a hint of zest as sage offers a calming aroma; lavender also imparts lovely floral notes.

The label's bright **Restorative Gin** introduces coriander and rose petals on top of the cucumber and juniper, while the **Peppered Gin** utilizes red bell peppers for smokiness, black pepper for a pop of flavor, and pimento for a savory quality (the latter can be enjoyed both neat or as a distinctive base to a cocktail). Every ingredient in the gin trio is all-natural and organic: a standard Uncle Val would have proudly supported.

Through June, 3 Badge Beverage encourages consumers to enter their own Uncle Val's cocktail in its Shake Up the Classics Contest. The entry that creates the best twist on a classic gin cocktail using Uncle Val's Botanical Gin will win a bar cart stocked with essential bar tools.

For details, visit [3badge.com/unclevals/contest](http://3badge.com/unclevals/contest).



### Uncle Val's Botanical Gin (\$39)

Tangerine, lemon blossoms, and blue flowers sing the praises of gin in this wonderful product from 3 Badge Beverage. Named for August Sebastiani's uncle, the botanicals chosen are the same that Uncle Val used in his cooking: lemon, juniper, cucumber, sage, and lavender. We also picked up a lovely weight and a syrup of white-peppered marshmallow that made this all the more appealing. **96**—*M.M.*



### Uncle Val's Restorative Gin (\$39)

Juniper and coriander may take the initial lead for the wake-me-up character of this American-made gin, but the nose of this handcrafted new expression soon takes flight to melting violets and dried mandarin orange peel. Exquisitely positioned, the violets take the front line on the palate with the first sip and are then surrounded by cucumbers and a garden of roses. Pinched by a parade of black pepper and tea tannins, this is indeed a restorative for the senses! **94**—*M.M.*



### Uncle Val's Peppered Gin (\$39)

Combine green olives, pimento, and a dash of white pepper; add in some spicy red and yellow peppers; then just add gin. Without it being a "flavored" expression, this spirit's components—inspired by homegrown peppers in Uncle Val's Tuscan garden—are so naturally infused that they should be regarded as some of the most unique botanicals used for this category. As it sits in the glass, the perfume on the nose transforms, offering up licorice, apricot, lavender, and vanilla spice. **96**—*M.M.*

3 BADGE BEVERAGE CORPORATION



## Monarch Migration: COPPER & KINGS

Copper & Kings always seems to take the road less traveled. After throwing the rulebook for the European tradition of brandy out the window, the company developed its own American-made line within the category. Pure pot-distilled, non-chill filtered, and unadulterated by added sugar, boisé (oak flavor infusion) or caramel color, its spirits are aged in Kentucky bourbon barrels for a unique fruit-forward, intense, modern interpretation of the country's original spirit.

Copper & Kings' **Butchertown Brandy** is produced in four-barrel batches, with three bourbon barrels marrying with one new American oak barrel. **The American Craft Brandy**, meanwhile, features a blend of roughly 85 percent Kentucky bourbon barrels and 15 percent new American oak. And to honor the iconic barrier that protects Copper & Kings hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, from the Ohio River, **Floodwall American Craft Apple Brandy (SRP \$40)** is aged in Kentucky bourbon barrels and 250-liter Spanish Oloroso Sherry casks for a minimum of four years.

But why stop after reinventing American brandy? Copper & Kings has now set its sights on redefining American gin. By avoiding the presence of any neutral spirits, its products represent the first truly new differentiated gin expressions in some time and instead use a double-distilled brandy base with no post-distillation addition of gin flavors.

With a brandy made from fresh-pressed apples as its base, the **American Dry Gin (SRP \$35)** also includes classic botanicals like whole juniper berries, coriander, angelica, and orris. The second expression, the 100-proof **American Old Tom Gin (SRP \$40)**, draws inspiration from "Old Tom" Chamberlain—a well-known name in gin lore. With grape brandy as its base, the spirit is also polished in Kentucky bourbon barrels.

The newest addition to the line, **The Moons of Juniper Dry Gin (SRP \$40)**, is an amplified juniper gin with a grape brandy base that's distilled with honey, sweet orange peel, coriander, cardamom, angelica, and grains of paradise. "Our ambition is to be America's most imaginative brandy producer, and also to perhaps aspire to be its most inventive gin distiller," says Copper & Kings Founder Joe Heron. "We're looking at exploring across the universe."



### Copper & Kings American Craft Brandy (\$35)

Aromatic grape varieties are copper pot-distilled and non-chill-filtered. This 90-proof spirit is matured in Kentucky bourbon and medium-char American oak barrels. The nose is elegant with caramel and summer peach and a hint of vanilla; the palate, meanwhile, becomes more outspoken with a range of flavors from tobacco leaf to orange peel to tongue-trotting black pepper. The brandy makes a grand statement for the domestic-produced category. **94** —*M.M.*

### Copper & Kings Butchertown Brandy (\$60)

Butchertown in Louisville, according to the label of this 124-proof spirit, is said to be home of "butchers, brawlers, bakers and brewers, artists and artisans, orphans and everything in between since 1796." The full-throttle nose offers scents of a flower garden with dripping, honeyed apricot nectar drizzled on the petals. Power-punching the palate is a lineup of saddle leather, orange peel, roasted nuts, and spiced vanilla wafers with an off-dry finish. **93** —*M.M.*

COPPER & KINGS







## *Down to the Last Detail:* **LOCH & UNION DISTILLING**

Loch & Union Distilling's American Dry Gin exemplifies the notion that exceptional works of art take time to create and even longer to perfect. The team at the Napa-based distiller spent three years developing a product to fit their vision of a new caliber of American spirits, testing more than 150 botanicals and distilling 100-plus ingredients to ensure the final product had the exact flavor profile they sought.

After this extensive process, they finally landed on the perfect balance of 12 botanicals sourced from outstanding farms in ten countries. These flavor profiles produce a clean spirit with layers of complexity, beginning with the traditional backbone of juniper and leading into warming spice, floral, and citrus notes. The stills used to create this gin were custom-made by world-renowned CARL Distilleries, the oldest still fabricator in Germany. Together with meticulous attention to detail during distillation and the fine-tuned blend of botanicals, Loch & Union creates a high-quality gin built for the connoisseur that's also approachable for the casual spirits drinker.

Having just launched in March of this year, Loch & Union is currently focused on distributing to restaurants and bars in Napa County with plans to ramp up its presence across the Bay Area and in retail locations nationwide. Once consumers are introduced to this new expression, there's little doubt that it will become a go-to for gin lovers across the country in no time—proving good spirits come to those who work hard for them.

For more information on the company and Loch & Union products, visit [lochandunion.com](http://lochandunion.com).

**Loch & Union Distilling American Dry Gin (\$45)** This elegant gin graces the olfactory senses with a subdued yet seductive nose that features an echo of lanolin, lavender, and vanilla bean. On the palate, it's razor edge-focused with lemon-lime, crisp pear, and a salted caramel thread. Wonderfully tasty, it's rounder on the back end and unravels a quiet path to the mildly-herbal finish. **94** —*M.M.*

SOUTHERN GLAZER'S WINE & SPIRITS





*A Cut Above:*

# TITO'S HANDMADE VODKA

by Matt Jackson  
photos by Timothy Murray



In vodka production, the “heart” is the purest and most prized part of the distillation process, with master distillers diligently overseeing how much goes into the final product. In the case of Texas-based Tito's Handmade Vodka, there's plenty of heart in every copper-capped bottle, but there also exists an abundance of authentic character that this brand has steadfastly built throughout its history.

What began as a one-man operation in a tiny Austin shack in 1995 has evolved into nothing short of a cultural phenomenon. Tito's helped lead the way in sparking the craft spirit revolution, inspiring the multitude of small-batch spirits consumers enjoy today.

Frank Polley, Tito's VP of Trade Marketing, describes the company's vodka as “our medium to make the world a better place,” so philanthropy is fittingly at the forefront of the Tito's culture. According to Polley, the company's Love, Tito's program “empowers [employees] to give back to local, national, and global charities supporting disaster relief, the environment, military and veterans, healthcare and medical research, food and beverage industry workers, arts and culture organizations, and the LGBTQ community.” Meanwhile, Tito's Vodka for Dog People program donates a portion of proceeds from Tito's-branded pet products to Emancipet, a nonprofit focused on affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter services.

## Tito's Takes New York

The production process behind Tito's Handmade Vodka adheres to an old-school approach rooted in practices and techniques that were groundbreaking at the time of their debut. “There are many reasons why Tito's continues to grow—first and foremost being taste, which is born from the pot-still distillation process,” says Polley. “Another is authenticity, with Tito's entrepreneurialism and pioneer-

ing craft approach dating back to a time when there was no such thing as a micro-distillery.” What started micro has since gone macro, with Tito's boasting a massive fanbase of casual drinkers and hardcore mixologists alike.

One such bartender is Phil Casaceli, the Owner/Operator of Daddy-O in New York City's West Village. He's forthcoming about his own personal connection to Tito's, which he uses in his Angry Mule and Lemon Thyme Lemonade. “I met [Tito's Founder Bert ‘Tito’ Beveridge] about 12 years ago one night at Daddy-O,” Casaceli recalls. “We got into some deep conversation



**Phil Casaceli, Owner/Operator of Daddy-O in New York City, exclusively uses Tito's in his Lemon Thyme Lemonade and Angry Mule cocktails.**



and hence my relationship with Tito's began. I love the story behind the brand and Tito's vision to seize on an opportunity to break into an extremely difficult spirit market—and I absolutely love how much Tito's gives back."

Tito's is also a mainstay at The Rusty Knot, a quirky, nautical-inspired tiki bar also located in New York City. With décor that can only be described as "your uncle's basement in the '70s" and a beautiful view of the Hudson River, The Rusty Knot is wildly-popular within the local LGBTQ community. "We have a Tito's happy hour every Sunday here," says Ryan Fitzgerald, The Rusty Knot's General Manager. "We use Tito's for our twist on the Moscow Mule with fresh citrus, ginger puree, and a splash of soda water. Instead of a copper mug, we use a tiki mug and garnish it with a plastic mermaid. It's a very popular cocktail."

### The Tito's Family

Regarding Tito's ongoing relationship with the bartending community, Polley says the brand "often taps into a number of mixologists we've worked with over the years when creating new cocktails." "This is a trade that continues to expand with so many talented people creating so many interesting drinks," he adds.

In the end, it's Tito's consistently high quality and taste that make it the clear choice when bartenders find themselves reaching for a clear spirit. "Since our vodka is distilled from corn, it's naturally gluten-free and has a smooth, slightly-sweet mouthfeel," Polley says. "We've found that this flavor profile complements both cocktails and neat drinks just the same, with many bartenders viewing Tito's as the perfect white canvas to create their art."

Once an underdog, Tito's has eradicated any doubt that the brand is now a true leader in the spirits world. "Thinking about the future, Tito's Handmade Vodka will continue to do more of the same: make the best vodka we can make and trying to make it available in every state, market, and account," Polley says. "We know that people stick with brands they trust and treat them right. Hopefully we can continue to bring more consumers into our family while helping grow the vodka category!"

### Tito's Lemon Thyme Lemonade

- ▀ 2 oz. Tito's Handmade Vodka
  - ▀ 1 oz. fresh lemon juice
  - ▀ 2 dashes Regan's orange bitters
  - ▀ ¾ oz. lemon thyme simple syrup
- Shake and strain over fresh ice. Top with seltzer water.



### Angry Mule

- ▀ 2 oz. Tito's Handmade Vodka
  - ▀ ½ oz. fresh lime juice
  - ▀ ½ oz. roasted jalapeno simple syrup
  - ▀ ½ oz. Pickett's #1 Medium Spicy Ginger Syrup
- Shake and strain over fresh ice. Top with seltzer water.



**Tito's Handmade Vodka (\$20)** For those who dream in vanilla, marshmallow, and red licorice, the aromas from Tito's Handmade Vodka will surely lure you in. The palate, however, will wake up the senses with black pepper underlying the sweeter notes. Texturally round and silky, this 80-proof pot-still spirit is elegant and refined.


93—M.M. ■■

# Summertime

## and the Drinking is Freeze-y

**KELVIN SLUSH** STAKES ITS CLAIM ON COCKTAIL MENUS AS WARM WEATHER APPROACHES

by Mara Marski



The Dangerous  
Summer cocktail  
at Blue Smoke in  
New York City.

PHOTO: TIMOTHY MURRAY

Before Kelvin Slush Co. made a name for itself with its premium frozen cocktail mix, Co-Founders Alex Rein and Zack Silverman started out serving non-alcoholic slushies behind the wheel of a repurposed 1975 Ford mail truck in New York City.

According to Silverman, the two former attorneys—not necessarily loving their legal careers—had initially bonded over their unquenchable love of slushie drinks while lamenting the stigma around “lawyers showing up to work with giant neon cups and purple tongues.”

The duo wanted to make slushies socially acceptable for adults while creating drinks free of the myriad chemicals and additives so prevalent in the category, so they followed Ghandi’s advice to be the change they wished to see in the frozen drinks market. In its first year of operation, the Kelvin Slush truck earned enough buzz to win a Vendy Award for best food truck as it gained a following at events like Smorgasburg and the Brooklyn Flea.

Rein and Silverman noticed their patrons often brought flasks to the truck, spiking their slush like they were at a high school dance. The observation highlighted an unmet demand in the beverage industry, and their team quickly learned that although the craft cocktail scene had been undergoing a renaissance, frozen cocktails had been left in the cold.

To help fill this void, Kelvin Slush began collaborating with bars and restaurants in its home neighborhood of Brooklyn to create versatile and balanced mix flavors that could meld with a wide range of cocktails—finally giving frozen drinks the same attention to detail and purity of ingredients being displayed in traditional mixology.

Kelvin Slush now offers six organic flavors with a consistent focus on making high-quality frozen cocktails rather than icy afterthoughts. Today, instead of watching patrons spike their own slush by the side of a 1975 Ford, the Kelvin team can walk into hundreds of bars and restaurants across the United States and Canada to order a signature frozen cocktail carefully prepared with their recipes.

As we gear up for summer and ideal slushie-sipping weather, read on for how a trio of beverage directors are using Kelvin Slush in their cocktails to cool their patrons down while turning up their creativity behind the bar.



# CHRISTOPHER HUDNALL

Bar Manager for the North American Soho House Locations

For many, the Soho House is shrouded in an alluring sense of mystery. The members' club-turned-empire grew out of an urge English restaurateur Nick Jones saw to move away from the sedate gathering places of years' past and instead cater to a younger crowd of like-minded creatives.

While the Soho House originated as a private London club, demand soon outstripped the availability of memberships. To ease the pangs of longing for those left on lengthy waitlists, the brand has opened several public-facing hotels and restaurants which channel the club's seemingly-effortless cool factor—including the Soho Beach House in Miami Beach, Florida.

With its knack for spotting and elevating trends, the Miami Soho House understood the impending proliferation of rosé early. Christopher Hudnall, Bar Manager for the North American Soho House locations, was fortuitously introduced to Kelvin Slush before the brand hit the market. He says he was instantly interested in its rosé mix given his difficulty finding a balanced frozen cocktail batch that wasn't laden with chemicals and artificial flavors. "Kelvin products are great compared to the other slush mixes on the market as they're all organic, not packed with sugar, easy to work with, and always consistent," he says of the mix he uses for a wildly-popular Prosecco and prickly pear slush cocktail.

Due to growing demand at Soho House, Hudnall recently added a second rosé-based drink to the menu. Made with New Zealand's 42Below vodka infused with camu camu (an antioxidant-packed fruit most commonly found in the Amazon rainforest), rosé, and fresh berry puree, Hudnall's Camu Camu Rosé Cup is "a healthy, fresh twist on a trending slush cocktail."

The Soho House Miami currently has three Kelvin-based cocktails on its menu, rounding out the rosé options with a Piña Colada. With guests frequently describing his slush cocktails as "delicious, fun, and consistently good," Hudnall says he's happy to make frozen drinks with an accessible ingredient that simultaneously elevates the finished product.

## Camu-Camu Rosé Cup

- ▶ 64 oz. Kelvin Slush Rosé Mix
  - ▶ 30 oz. camu camu-infused 42Below Vodka
  - ▶ 8 750mL bottles of rosé
  - ▶ 60 oz. housemade mixed berry puree
  - ▶ 1½ gallons filtered water
- Batch and add to a slush machine. Let freeze for 30 minutes. Pour to order in a rocks glass before garnishing with crumbled freeze-dried strawberries and bananas, coconut shavings, and black chia seeds.



**Bar Manager Christopher Hudnall gets beach-ready with the Camu Camu Rosé Cup at the Miami Soho Beach House.**





**Beverage Director Alan Lam gets the Eataly NYC Flatiron pop-up restaurant prepped for summer with his Kelvin Slush Sgroppino.**

## ALAN LAM

Beverage Director at Eataly NYC Flatiron

Situated directly across the street from New York's iconic Flatiron Building, Eataly is a bustling Italian marketplace that also houses upscale restaurants, dining counters, and a cooking school. Perched on the roof of this sprawling and vibrant space is one of Eataly's busiest restaurants: SERRA by Birreria.

Last year, SERRA served a batched frosé cocktail that resounded with patrons far more than anticipated. "Frosé was our top-selling signature cocktail last spring and summer," says Alan Lam, Beverage Director for Eataly NYC Flatiron. In fact, SERRA received so much positive feedback that it will offer yet another Kelvin Slush signature drink this season.

The cocktail, dubbed the Kelvin Slush Sgroppino, is an homage to Eataly's Italian roots; made with vodka, prosecco, and lemon sorbet, it's a modern take on a classic Venetian drink that has historically played double duty as a palate cleanser and a dessert cocktail. When asked about the inspiration for his newest menu addition, Lam explained that he wanted "a refreshing cocktail that would quench your thirst in the spring and summertime" while "taking the original Italian Sgroppino to another level by making the whole drink frozen."

While the cocktail has yet to officially debut, the team is excited about its presence in the upcoming warm months. "In terms of service, Kelvin helps us create large batches of any cocktail we have in mind," says Lam. "Being a high-volume establishment, this allows us to serve a guest a great-tasting cocktail without a long wait time"—a benefit that's of paramount importance in a dining environment as heavily trafficked as Eataly.



### Frozen Sgroppino

- ▶ 64 oz. Kelvin Slush Citrus Mix
  - ▶ 34 oz. vodka
  - ▶ 50 oz. Prosecco
  - ▶ 2 gallons water
- Pour all ingredients in a large container. Mix well and fill in a slush machine. Serve in a pilsner glass and garnish with charred rosemary.



# JULIE DEROSE

Beverage Director at Blue Smoke in New York, NY

Blue Smoke delivers what you would imagine from a Danny Meyer barbeque spot: the hospitality and comfort of Southern food accompanied by the elegance and attention to detail New Yorkers expect from Union Square Hospitality Group. As Beverage Director Julie DeRose says, “The guests who come into Blue Smoke are looking for delicious urban barbeque and approachable yet unique beverage options in a casual, fun environment.”

The Blue Smoke team added frozen flavors to their cocktail menu two years ago when they began using Kelvin Slush at both of their locations. DeRose says they were initially looking to simply change up their offerings, but “the feedback was so successful we continued with the slushies and solidified them as part of our summer cocktail menu.”

DeRose’s crowd-pleasing cocktail The Dangerous Summer returned to the bar top at Blue Smoke this spring. The frozen treat, made with Kelvin Slush Citrus mix, white rum, maraschino liqueur, and lime, is a play on the Hemingway Daiquiri: a drink created at Cuba’s Floridita

bar for famed author and notorious boozehound Ernest Hemingway. “I love creating cocktails that are riffs off vintage cocktails, which are often forgotten or associated with having a high ABV and not being very approachable,” DeRose explains.

Hemingway allegedly loved his namesake cocktail so devotedly that he always ordered a double, “lending the cocktail its nickname, Papa Doble,” explains DeRose. She says her slushy take on the boozy classic aims to give the cocktail new life as “a summer-centric, seasonal, ‘crushable’ beverage.” “On a hot summer day in New York City, a cold boozy alcoholic drink is extremely satisfying,” she adds.

It goes without saying DeRose shares Hemingway’s love of a strong, frozen cocktail, and judging from the glowing reviews Blue Smoke has received for its Kelvin Slush drinks, she’s far from alone in that sentiment. “Our guests love the drinks because they’re fun, delicious, and approachable, and our bartenders love the slushies because they are batched out, consistent, and ready to go during a busy shift!” she says. ■■

PHOTO: TIMOTHY MURRAY

**Julie DeRose, Beverage Director for Blue Smoke, is the mastermind behind the Hemingway-inspired cocktail The Dangerous Summer.**

## The Dangerous Summer\*

- ▶ 64 oz. Kelvin Slush Citrus Mix
- ▶ 50 oz. white rum
- ▶ 17 oz. Lazzaroni Maraschino liqueur
- ▶ 17 oz. grapefruit juice
- ▶ 8.5 oz. lime juice
- ▶ 2 gallons water

Serve in a skinny Collins glass and garnish with a mint spring.

*\*The Dangerous Summer is the title of an Ernest Hemingway work published posthumously in 1985. Finished in 1960, it's cited as the writer's last book.*

# Rosé

## COLORED GLASSES

As the leading cider brand in the United Kingdom, Strongbow represents a category that accounts for a staggering 20 percent of the beer market in its home nation. Now the British cider titan is focusing on the growth opportunity presented by the American market—where cider makes up just 1 percent of beer sales.

Brand Director Eric Markus recognizes that tastes in the U.S. are a bit different than those in the U.K., which is why Strongbow's newest flavor, Rosé Apple, has been tailored specifically to stateside consumers' preferences with its semi-dry flavor, crisp carbonation, and refreshing taste. "People are consistently telling us they are looking for refreshing beverages that are easy to drink, regardless of the season," says Markus of the flavor, which has 50 percent less sugar than other leading hard ciders and up to 35 percent fewer carbs per bottle than other leading rosé ciders.

Strongbow's third-generation master cidemaker spent several years experi-

**STRONGBOW'S  
NEWEST CIDER  
IS THE FLAVOR  
CROSSOVER  
WINE LOVERS  
HAVE WAITED  
FOR**

**BY MARA MARSKI  
PHOTOS BY LAURA RAE**

A cold, crisp, and refreshing Strongbow Rosé Apple is designed to help alleviate the fast-approaching heat.



menting with rosé ciders in Europe before finalizing the recipe, of which the key ingredient is red-fleshed apples. “When pressed, they produce a red juice which contributes to Rosé Apple’s coral-pink color and semi-dry taste without any artificial colors or flavors,” Markus says.

The new flavor is also notably a direct appeal to wine drinkers, who research has shown are more likely to become cider fans than those who identify as beer drinkers. The newest Strongbow flavor capitalizes on rosé’s continued and meteoric rise in the wine market, especially among Millennial men and women in the 21–39 age range. “Strongbow Rosé Apple is inspired by the natural affinity between cider and wine and the impressive sustained growth of rosé,” says Markus, adding that early sales of the new flavor have been strong. “At the moment, we’re having a really tough time keeping up with demand.”

Despite being a much more beer-centric nation than the U.K., Strongbow aims to recognize that “not everyone likes beer, at least not for every occasion,” says Markus. “Whether you are primarily a beer account or a beer distributor, we can help you extend your reach to more consumers and occasions with cider.” ■■



**Strongbow’s newest flavor, Rosé Apple, has been tailored specifically to U.S. consumers’ preferences for a crisper flavor and less sugar than other leading cider brands.**

## PUTTING ROSÉ TO THE TEST IN THE MIDWEST



**CÔV bartender Catherine Lappen experiments with Strongbow Rosé Apple cocktails at the lakeside eatery in Wayzata, MN.**

### MINNESOTA’S CÔV EATERY TO SERVE STRONGBOW ROSÉ APPLE BY THE LAKE

Situated on the edge of Minnesota’s Lake Minnetonka in downtown Wayzata, CÔV is an upscale, Nantucket-inspired eatery with a seafood-dominated menu and extensive beer, wine, and spirits selection. The East Coast vibe also carries over to the clientele, who, according to CÔV’s Beverage Director Tom Anderson, have no-nonsense sensibilities. “Out in this location, people know what they like, and that’s what they drink,” he says.

CÔV currently has just two ciders on the menu, and Anderson is thinning things down further still: The restaurant will solely serve Strongbow Gold Apple before bringing on the new Rosé Apple in the coming months. “We don’t have many ciders, but people have never been disappointed in our selection,” says Anderson. “Cider people like Strongbow.”

Because the category typically flies under the radar at CÔV, Anderson says he’s excited to introduce Rosé Apple so patrons can have a new favorite beverage to cool down with over the summer. With its lakeside views, CÔV has a large patio that Anderson says has an hour-long waiting list at all times of the day in the warmer months—even during the late-night hours. “We blow through rosé on the lake and I think this is going to be a perfect patio sipper,” he says of Strongbow Rosé Apple. “This isn’t just for people looking for rosé wine. It has a unique twist and I expect it to be a hit.”

Anderson says he’s long been personally opposed to flavored beers or ciders and admits that the Rosé Apple “is our first flavored-style beverage” on the menu. “But it’s good enough for me to take off a beer to bring it on,” he says, “and that speaks volumes around here.”

# IVAN VASQUEZ

OWNER, **EL NOPAL**  
**OAXACAN RESTAURANT AND**  
**MEZCALERIA**, LOS ANGELES

by Jesse Hom-Dawson

PHOTO: CAL BINGHAM



Ivan Vasquez, Owner of El Nopal Oaxacan Restaurant and Mezcaleria in the Palms neighborhood of Los Angeles, is a living embodiment of the American dream. After immigrating to the U.S. from Oaxaca, Mexico, at the age of 15, Vasquez landed his first job in America washing dishes at a Carl's Jr. while he attended high school and learned to speak English.

He spent the next 15 years working for Baja Fresh's corporate offices, opening and managing 22 locations around Southern California while supporting his family back in Oaxaca. After Vasquez purchased El Nopal—then an old-fashioned Mexican restaurant serving traditional dishes—in 2012, he began the daunting task of remodeling the establishment from scratch, adding ventilation, and purchasing a liquor license.

Using his mother's recipes, Vasquez reopened the restaurant with offerings that authentically represent his hometown of Oaxaca City, a more varied and multicultural region than the other small villages in Oaxaca. "I used to go to the market in Oaxaca City for my mother when I was little, and I wanted to recreate the high standards of ingredients and cooking that I experienced in Mexico," Vasquez explains. With the help of Chef Eric Nolasco, a fellow Oaxaca native, Vasquez has filled the menu with dishes like mole, tlayuda, pozole, and a weekend special (and El Nopal specialty) of goat barbacoa.

Vasquez's dedication to Oaxaca doesn't end with its cuisine: El Nopal also specializes in mezcal and tequila. Inspired by time spent in his grandfather's mezcal cantina during childhood, Vasquez was determined to make the smoky spirit a focal point at El Nopal. Vasquez says he still returns to Mexico at least twice a year to visit distilleries and make sure their products are up to his high standards. "I look for what methods they use to make the mezcal, how well-educated the companies are, what their environmental standards are, and so on," Vasquez explains.

With the recent opening of his second restaurant Madre in Torrance, Vasquez now has a 7,000-square-foot space to explore his hobby with more than 270 brands of mezcal and tequila on hand. "I didn't really appreciate mezcal in Mexico because it was everywhere, but in the U.S. it didn't have a lot of exposure, so we could carry a wide variety of styles at the restaurant without having to worry if people were going to like it," he says. "Mezcal is a huge part of history in my country—it's the literal 'spirit' of Oaxaca." ■■

## THE "5" LIST

### IVAN VASQUEZ'S TOP FIVE FAVES:

Being able to pay my team well, even though we are still a small company.

Debuting a new dish or revamping a traditional dish I grew up with.

Socializing with humble and hardworking people.

Seeing my restaurants busy with people enjoying our food and cocktails.

Hearing people talk about my restaurants without knowing I'm the owner.

### IVAN VASQUEZ'S TOP FIVE PET PEEVES:

Irresponsible people.

When people take credit for the work of others.

Latinos not supporting Latinos.

Guests who are rude to my staff.

People who are only in search of the cheapest food.





*The Man Behind the Brands*



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