Staying on Top: What’s New with Key Wine Writers and Publications

Virginie Boone, Wine Enthusiast, California
THE FOOD LOVERS’ GUIDE TO NAPA

Dining in, taking out and going to market are but a few ways to eat your way through the city of Napa.

CLASSIC MARTINIS

Four iconic spots to drink them

CHICAGO: Gibson's Bar & Steakhouse
Since 1989, this cozy favorite is the place to sip on tails and old-school martinis, whether at a white-shirted table or the long, curved bar. From the eight-item "martini list," vodka lovers might try a classic Vesper (vodka, gin, Lillet). However, purists will opt for gin, served in an enormous V-shaped glass emblazoned with Gibson's name and garnished with two speared olives.

LONDON: Duke's Bar
Reportedly, this is where James Bond author Ian Fleming created 007's famous catchphrase, "shaken, not stirred." (The martinis at this upscale, clubby hotel bar are actually stirred.) Order from the bar cart, stocked with multiple gins that are chilled in the freezer to a viscous, almost syrupy consistency. These are mixed with dry vermouth and bitters, and adorned with an elegant lemon-peel twist.

LOS ANGELES: Musso & Frank Grill
This Old Hollywood haunt has mixed martinis since 1919, and has been famed as a literary hangout since the '30s. Back then, contract negotiators would pore over scripts, and contracts would be signed at the leather booths. Adorned in signature red jackets, the veteran barkeeps here have served Hollywood greats and hopefuls for decades. They serve up stiff martinis—gin, dry vermouth, and fat, green olives—and present the extra liquid in a small carafe set in ice.

NEW YORK CITY: Charlie Palmer at the Knick
The historic Knickerbocker Hotel reopened in Times Square in 2015, which brought back to glory the birthplace of the martini. According to one of the cocktail's many origin stories, Knickerbocker bartender Martini di Arma di Taggia mixed dry vermouth and gin for magnate John D. Rockefeller in 1912. Today, restaurateur Charlie Palmer's slick new space on the fourth floor offers an excellent house martini. It's made with Tanqueray 10 gin, dry and sweet vermouth, and a mix of orange and citrus bitters, served in a slender Nick and Nora glass.
No longer austere, the Greek capital is rich in eats and drinks.

For many visitors to Greece, Athens is a pit stop on the way to the islands. Check out the Acropolis, the Agora, and you’re done. But if you linger a little longer, you’ll discover a modern side to this ancient capital. There are hip craft-cocktail bars, a lively contemporary art scene and stylish cafés that dish up cutting-edge cuisine. Here’s where to find them.

**Eat**

**Nice-n-Easy**

Front of Book: Our Crush

**Drink**

Lined from floor to ceiling with bottles of brightly colored liquors, **Brettos** looks ultramodern, but the Plaka distillery/bar is the oldest in Athens, dating to 1909. Sample a distinct mastika liqueur, made from tree resin, or brave a boozy glass of ouzo, served straight from big wood barrels.

**Shop**

Yael’s new seven-story flagship store, set in the Kolonaki shopping district, stocks more than 3,500 regional products. Among its treasures are a dizzying array of olive oils and honey, along with cured meats, fresh cheeses and handmade pasta, so you can assemble the perfect picnic lunch. It also houses the country’s first clue-bar, where you can try extra-large offerings paired with wine, beer and even chocolate.

**See**

The modern, glassy Acropolis Museum houses treasures from 2,500 years of Greek history. Some 2,400 artifacts are displayed on its three levels, but the crowning glory is the massive full-scale reproduction of the Parthenon’s inner temple, replicas with original sculptural elements.

The city’s **National Museum of Contemporary Art** opened in Fall 2015 in a former brewery in the Koukaki neighborhood. Its permanent collection features more than 1,000 Greek and international artists from the 1930s onward. A series of rotating exhibitions include collaborations with cutting-edge art institutions like the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp.

The season for “cinema under the stars” runs from May to October, with more than 90 pop-up outdoor screens all over the city. One of the most famous is the 1920s-era **Cine Paris** in Plaka, where you can cook up great times of the Parthenon from its enormous roof garden and watch new releases or classic Hollywood flicks (subtitled in Greek).
OUT OF THE BOX
These chocolate and spirits pairings will set the heart aflutter.

According to Megan Giller, author of a forthcoming book about American chocolate, barrel-aged spirits like whiskey or aged rum echo the natural vanilla and caramel richness found in many chocolates. Lighter spirits like gin can help bright fruit flavors really pop, she says. There are, however, limits to chocolate pairings.

"Cocktails do not work with chocolate, unfortunately," says Giller. "There are just too many contrasting flavors, and a lot of cocktails are served cold, which mutes the flavor of the chocolate and doesn't melt the chocolate in your mouth."

Pour those high-quality spirits straight, she advises, and skip the ice.

—Kara Newman

HEART’S DESIRE
Pair milk chocolate with:
RUM
Whether in bars or bonbons, rich milk chocolate is a natural companion to aged rum. If your chocolate is a rung or two above a Hershey bar, you'll find plenty of butterscotch and caramel that echo the same flavors in good aged rum. Runner-up: a dry Curaçao (orange liqueur). "Orange and chocolate is a classic combination," says Giller. "This is just a different form of it."

Recommended rum:
Caña Brava Reserva Añeja, $45 (92 points)

Pair nutty chocolate with:
BOURBON, RYE OR SCOTCH
For chocolate that has naturally nutty flavors, like single-origin bars from Central America or Venezuela or nut-studded confections, whiskey is your best bet. Look for bottlings with hints of walnut or almond. "The chocolate picks up the notes from the nutty spirits and just takes it to the next level," Giller says.

Recommended whiskey:
Four Roses Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, $19 (93 points)

Pair fruity chocolate with:
MEZCAL
Dark chocolate often has fruity notes that range from raisin to dried cherry, blueberry or rhino. Mezcal plays up that brightness, which lets the fruitiness shine through. This surprising combination works best with a lightly smoky mezcal.

Recommended mezcal:
Los Amantes Mezcal Joven, $50 (94 points)

Pair white chocolate with:
GIN OR TEQUILA
Without the cocoa solids used in dark or milk chocolate, "it's all cocoa butter and sugar," says Giller. "There are just too many contrasting flavors, and a lot of cocktails are served cold, which mutes the flavor of the chocolate and doesn't melt the chocolate in your mouth."

Poor these high-quality spirits straight, she advises, and skip the ice.

—Kara Newman

BOOZY BONBONS
No pairing required here, as these confections are infused with or influenced by spirits.

Batch PDX
Look for edgy flavors like Yuzu Gimlet and Bullet Run Bourbon alongside nanobrewery brands: flavors change frequently.
(batchpdx.com, $28/box of 12)

Hudson Valley Bourbon Dark Milk
For those who prefer bars to bonbons, this limited-edition bar is made from roasted cocoa nibs aged with barrels from Tuthilltown Spirits' Bourbon barrel.
(tastefruition.com, $12/bar)

Neuhaus Liqueur Chocolates
These dark chocolate bars are filled with name-brand spirits, including Gentilly's Absinthe, Cointreau, Captain's Muddled and Wapsi Irish Cream.
(neuhauschocolate.com, $26/box of 20)

Roni-Sue Cocktail Collection
A former bartender, Rhonda "Roni-Sue" Kave offers cocktails-inspired chocolate confections like Grey Goose and Grand Marnier. Rose liqueur-infused "Roni's Roses" also make a special appearance for Valentine's Day.
(roni-sue.com, $26/box of 12)
With high-quality sparkling wine available at every price point, there's no need to limit consumption to special events. We've assembled our tasters’ favorite bubbles from $25 or less—bottles that are ideal for casual gatherings and meals—up to the ultra-splurges destined for milestone celebrations. No matter the reason for indulging your fizzy bliss, with this many great choices, you can't go wrong. Cheers!

STYLING BY AMY ELISE WILSON

BY THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST
PHOTOS BY MARCUS NILSSON
This Italian island offers some of the country’s most diverse cuisine, with wine to match.

BY NILS BERNSTEIN
PHOTOS BY AARON GRAUBART

“Anyone who wanted to control the Mediterranean needed to control Sicily,” says Gary Portuesi, president of the travel company Authentic Sicily. “Conquerors came and went for thousands of years, including the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Spanish, Austrians, French, Germans and others, all bringing with them their ingredients: wheat, almonds, figs, eggplant, tomatoes, chocolate [and] peppers.” The following recipes are a taste of these varied flavors.

“I think Sicily is probably the most interesting place in Europe,” says Celestino Drago, the LA restaurateur behind Drago and il Pastaio. Drago hails from Messina, in northern Sicily. “Look how it’s situated geographically: Everyone stopped there, and everyone brought something. Even today, you see the Arab influence on the west coast and the Greek influence in the east.”

Sicily also offers some of Italy’s most diverse cuisine. Even its most traditional dishes will vary from chef to chef and home to home. It provides an incredible range of options for an island that’s a mere four-hour drive from end to end.
Wine never goes out of fashion, and now fashion influencers are getting into wine. From top designers and globe-trotting models to photographers bringing beauty to life, the world’s most stylish have a serious taste for the vine and are, in many cases, doing double-duty in both worlds. And why not? Equal parts science and art, both wine and fashion transport us to another time, place and culture, with texture, ageability, color and structure describing the best of cloth and bottle. So raise a glass to the marriage of style and stems—a beautiful pairing indeed.

**The Designer:**
Michael Kors

**The Essence:**
Bold and sexy, accessible, casual comfort

**The Wine:**
Lodi Zinfandel

**The Essence:**
A true American success story. Zinfandel seemingly came out of nowhere to liven up our lives and wine glasses. Although some versions can come on a little strong—think Michael Kors on Project Runway—most bottles from Lodi are as easy and approachable as a Michael Kors handbag or summer dress. The bold fruit and strong acidity are ideal for smoky, smoky cookout fare, while some Zinfandels from Lodi would not be out of place at a refined dinner.