

Wine Spectator

Turning Tables: All-French Wine List Coming Soon to Le Coucou's New Café in New York

Plus, star openings with Giada De Laurentiis' Pronto in Las Vegas and David Chang's Majordomo in Los Angeles; Ruth's Chris Steak House hosts wine-dinner series



Photo by: Adrian Gaut for Roman and Williams

La Mercerie takes its name from the French word for "haberdashery."

Wine Coming to Le Coucou Spin-Off

La Mercerie, a project by restaurateur Stephen Starr's group, is now open in New York City. Since its debut in December, the café has been serving a selection of coffee, pastries and cocktails, but *Wine Spectator* got a glimpse of La Mercerie's full food-and-beverage program, which will kick off at the end of this month.

Daniel Rose, chef-partner at Starr's *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence winner **Le Coucou**, is overseeing the wine program with Starr group wine director Erik Segelbaum. With around 60 bottlings and 11 options by the glass, the all-French wine list will feature selections from Bordeaux, Burgundy, Alsace, Champagne, the Loire and more.

"We built a list suitable for a café: wines [that] are approachable and interesting, great with food and easy to drink on their own," Rose and Segelbaum said in a joint statement to *Wine Spectator*. "The fully French wine list mixes less-traditional regions and varietals with the best of classic French *terroir* and producers."

The food menu, created by chef Marie-Aude Rose (Daniel's wife), showcases French comfort foods, including freshly baked brioche, turnovers and tarts, sandwiches, egg-focused dishes, and an assortment of soups.

But La Mercerie offers more than just food and beverages. Located inside SoHo furniture store Roman and Williams Guild—the upscale interior-design firm that outfitted Le Coucou—the restaurant is a "try before you buy" concept when it comes to the furnishings. Guests can purchase the plates on which their orders are served, the tables at which they dine, the aprons worn by the staff, and pretty much anything else on display.—L.W.

Now Open in Las Vegas: Pronto by Giada De Laurentiis



After telling *Wine Spectator* about her plans to open a second restaurant in Las Vegas last fall, celebrity chef **Giada De Laurentiis** officially opened Pronto by Giada, a fast-casual restaurant and wine bar in Caesars Palace, last week.

Taking a page from her Best of Award of Excellence winner **Giada**, Pronto offers Italian fare with a California twist. Guests can walk up to the counter for breakfast dishes, paninis, salads, Italian desserts and coffee.

The centerpiece of the eatery is the wine bar, which offers selections from Italy, California and France, and a separate food menu with bar snacks such as goat cheese–stuffed peppers, grilled artichokes and Italian meats and cheeses.

The wine list, overseen by Caesars Palace wine director Phil Park, offers a helpful tool for newcomers to Italian wines: tasting notes to accompany each listing and an explanation of the Italian grape varieties—including Garganega, Arneis, Vermentino and Sangiovese—printed along the bottom. In addition to the 40 selections available both by the glass and by the bottle, the beverage program also includes six different wine flights, beer and cocktails.—L.W.

A Fun Wine List at David Chang's New Los Angeles Venture, Majordomo



Chef and restaurateur David Chang opened his first Los Angeles restaurant, Majordomo, Jan. 23. Chang's global Momofuku Group owns 19 restaurants, including Restaurant Award winners **Momofuku Ko**, **Momofuku Má Pêche** and **Momofuku Ssäm Bar** in New York City.

Executive chef Jude Parra-Sickels serves California-inspired Korean dishes. Overseen by Richard Hargreave, the wine program offers 150 selections that will rotate regularly, with 16 available by the glass and several magnums.

"We need wines that are light on the palate to work with the flavors rather than compete with them," Hargreave told *Wine Spectator* via email. He's drawn to "next-generation" winemakers, like **Liquid Farm** and Tyler Winery from California, because they make wines with less extraction, and use less new oak and preservatives.

The list also features a handful of classic producers from around the world to give guests a range of style and price options. "Momofuku has always been about 'high and low,' and I love the idea of one table drinking old [**Jean-Louis**] **Chave Hermitage** out of a Zalto glass, and the table next to them having a pitcher of Hite beer," Hargreave said.—*J.H.*

Morimoto Asia Waikiki Opens in Hawaii

Internationally renowned Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto opens his new restaurant, Morimoto Asia Waikiki, today at the new Alohilani Resort Waikiki Beach in Honolulu. Located on the hotel's second floor, the 10,800-square-foot restaurant has a main dining room, outdoor patios, a private dining room with views of the ocean, and a glass-enclosed exhibition kitchen. The chef currently has **three Restaurant Award winners**, and the Oahu restaurant marks Morimoto's second Morimoto Asia location.

The Pan-Asian menu is complemented by the beverage program, which offers 30 wines by the bottle and nine by the glass, cocktails, and a selection of 28 sakes featuring Morimoto's own brand, made in partnership with Japan's Fukumitsuya Brewery.

"Morimoto Asia Waikiki's beverage menu was designed with balance in mind," Morimoto told *Wine Spectator* via a translator. "The wine-list selections were driven by pairing great wines from around the world from a modest-sized wine list with my broad menu, a real challenge!"—*V.S.*

Ruth's Chris Steak House Wine-Dinner Series Returns

Next month, Ruth's Chris Steak House will kick off its second annual **TasteMaker Dinner series**, celebrating leaders in the wine industry. The steak-house chain, which has **105 Restaurant Award-winning locations**, will host six wine-pairing dinners with five-course menus to accompany the wines of each "TasteMaker" featured for the evening.

"We developed the dinners by partnering with some of our guests' most loved wineries, winemakers, and types of wine," said Ruth's Chris senior manager of brand development Kelly Hendriksen.

The series will start March 1 with the popular **The Prisoner Wine Company**. The pairings will include falafel and roasted pumpkin with the Blindfold white (a blend of Chardonnay, Rhône varieties and other grapes) and French onion soup with the Thorn Merlot, among others.

Future dinners will feature **Belle Glos** (April 5), **Freemark Abbey** (May 3), **Caymus** (June 21), **Veuve Clicquot** (Aug. 23) and **Stag's Leap Wine Cellars** (Oct. 18). Reservations are recommended.—*L.W.*