

Wine Spectator

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Dana Nigro

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WHAT TO DRINK

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, which devastated my home state of New Jersey, climate change—and preparing for its effects—has once again become a hot topic in the news. This seems an appropriate time to look for wines from producers confronting climate change head-on, those innovating how wineries can reduce their carbon footprint or adapt to evolving conditions in their vineyards.

Among those that stood out for me in the past year—and plenty more deserve recognition—is the PlumpJack Group in Napa Valley, which has already built one certified green winery, CADE, on Howell Mountain, and is working on a second. The voluntary Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program (LEED) focuses on reducing construction waste, energy and water use, greenhouse gas emissions and operating costs of buildings while providing a healthier environment for residents or employees. In 2010, CADE earned LEED Gold, the second-highest designation, joining Hall as the first wineries to hold that status in Napa Valley. Having purchased the historic Steltzner Vineyards in the Stags Leap District in 2012, the PlumpJack Group is converting it into Odette Estate, certifying its vineyards as organic and making sure all buildings on the property, including the new winery, meet LEED Gold standards, with features such as a living roof, solar panels, an electric vehicle charging station and an office created out of a recycled shipping container.

In Languedoc-Roussillon in southern France, Robert Eden of Château Maris has taken green winery construction to a new level, building an entire facility out of lightweight, organic hemp-straw bricks that continue to capture and sequester carbon dioxide over many years as they harden. The winery, which opened in the fall of 2012, is aiming for LEED Platinum, the highest level of certification. Maris farms biodynamically and produces very good to outstanding red varietals and blends from Syrah, Grenache and Carignan.

A group of prominent Oregon Pinot Noir producers continues to measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions with the Carbon Reduction Challenge, a voluntary effort launched in 2007 that has since evolved into a formal certification program. A list of the 19 current participants can be found at www.crchallenge.org. Many of its members' highest-rated recent releases are tiny-production, single-vineyard Pinots; Ponzi is notable for making a comparatively large 1,000 cases of its 2010 Willamette Valley Reserve (92, \$60). Stoller started this project as the first U.S. winery to earn LEED Gold status and is improving from there.



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Editors' Picks

James Laube

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MaryAnn Worobiec

Alison Napjus

Tim Fish

Nathan Wesley

CADE Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain 2009 (93, \$80)
Hall Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Kathryn Hall 2009 (93, \$110)
Château Maris Minervois Old School 2011 (88, \$12)
Stoller Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Cathy's 2008 (92, \$100)

WINERIES TO WATCH

No wine region in the world holds a place in my heart like the Finger Lakes. My wine education began there in college and extended to senior-year weekends touring the wineries around Cayuga and Seneca lakes. But it's not sentimentality that brings me back for a visit every few years. As my colleague James Molesworth has been reporting, the region has begun making world-class whites, and has shown good progress with reds (see "Finger Lakes Forges Ahead").

Outside of the Northeast, you may be hard-pressed to find these wines, but if you're visiting New York, keep an eye out for Finger Lakes bottlings at restaurants or wineshops. Easiest to find are the region's stalwarts, the vinifera pioneers Dr. Konstantin Frank and Hermann J. Wiemer; the latter has upped its game in recent vintages under Fred Merwarth.

Among my favorites from the newer wineries are Ravines' racy, minerally dry Rieslings, particularly those from the limestone soils of Argetsinger Vineyard; Anthony Road's lush, late-harvest Martini Reinhardt Selection Riesling and Vignoles; Red Newt's single-vineyard bottlings of Riesling and Gewürztraminer, showcasing the local *terroir*; Fox Run's floral-tinged dry Rieslings (for something different, try the fresh, berry-filled Lemberger red); and Red Tail Ridge earns very good marks and is notable for its LEED-certified winery, which uses geothermal energy.

PET PEEVE

At the top of my peeves list is that sad little "organic wine" shelf at too many retailers, stocked only with a familiar handful of inexpensive brands and a few wines aimed at people who want to avoid sulfites. With so many wines now organically, biodynamically or sustainably grown, such a display hardly represents the full spectrum or highest quality levels of what's happening in this segment of the market. In too many places, an interested consumer has to work at finding "green" wines, combing through the shelves or hoping that an available salesperson is well-versed in the subject. Where's the education?

Entire specialty stores are devoted to this area, not to mention aisles of wine at the average Whole Foods; New York City shops from small to large do a fine job of highlighting the green wines in their inventory. Odds are, any given fine-wine store carries brands that practice environmentally friendly farming; with a little effort, they could categorize them, with brief explanations of each method, to stoke interest.

WHERE TO EAT

New Jersey

Living in New Jersey, I have to mention some of my favorite spots in Hoboken, just across the Hudson River from Manhattan. Cucharamama, a lively, dimly lit, often tightly packed South American restaurant, turns out delicious flatbreads, empanadas, roasted chicken and more from the wood-burning oven that is the dining room's focal point. Chef-owner Maricel Presilla is a cookbook author who also runs Hoboken's pan-Latin, BYOB spot Zafra and the Ultramarinos market.

At Bin 14 on the north end of bustling Washington Street, the roughly 75 wines by the glass span the world and encourage exploration—Rkatsiteli from the Finger Lakes, Txakolina from Spain, Malagousia from Greece, a host of native Italian varieties—with guidance provided by informed servers. The list also provides enough familiar names for comfort, plus a few *Wine Spectator* Top 100 picks and big-ticket bottles. The menu by chef Anthony Pino, who also runs The Dining Room at Anthony David's, is mostly small plates: charcuterie, cheese, bruschetta, pizzas and more.

Bin 14, 1314 Washington St., Hoboken, N.J.; www.bin14.com
Cucharamama, 233 Clinton St., Hoboken, N.J.; www.cucharamama.com

New York

Most of my fine dining takes place in Manhattan, where I work. Near Union Square, ABC Kitchen, part of Jean-Georges Vongerichten's empire, stands out for the purity of executive chef Dan Kluger's cooking and its commitment to sustainability—

from the largely local and organic food, wines and cocktail ingredients to the salvaged, reclaimed and recycled building materials, decor and tableware. I admire Rouge Tomate sommelier Pascaline Lepeltier's near-fanatical devotion to researching, explaining and accurately labeling organic, biodynamic and natural wines on the extensive global list; it's an antidote to my pet peeve above.

ABC Kitchen, 35 E. 18th St., New York; www.abckitchennyc.com

Rouge Tomate, 10 E. 60th St., New York; www.rougetomatenyc.com