vinetur

San Francisco's Dining Scene Shines with Award-Winning Wine Programs

Bay Area restaurants excel in diverse cuisines and extensive wine selections, featuring both local and international producers.

Friday, February 21, 2025



San Francisco's dining scene is renowned for its diversity and quality, offering everything from regional Californian dishes to classic French cuisine. The city's proximity to world-class wineries enhances its restaurants' wine programs, allowing

them to feature both established and emerging producers from California and beyond. This is evident in the 16 Wine Spectator Restaurant Award-winning establishments in the Bay Area, each offering extensive wine lists and exquisite dishes.

Acquerello, located in Nob Hill, has been a top dining destination for over 30 years. Founders Suzette Gresham and Giancarlo Paterlini continue to lead the restaurant, which is housed in a former chapel. The dining room features vaulted wood-beam ceilings and colorful paintings, complementing the modern Italian cuisine. The wine list, managed by Gianpaolo Paterlini, includes over 2,300 selections, with a strong focus on Italian wines from regions like Piedmont and Tuscany.

Lazy Bear, in the Mission District, offers a unique dining experience with its open kitchen and dinner party atmosphere. Chef David Barzelay's menu highlights seasonal ingredients from the Bay Area, while wine director Jacob Brown's list features older vintages of Californian wines. The restaurant's wine program includes selections from Beaulieu Vineyard and Ridge, dating back to the 1960s.

The Plumed Horse in Saratoga boasts an impressive wine program with approximately 3,000 labels. Wine director Jeffrey Perisho curates a list that highlights California wines, alongside selections from France, Germany, and Italy. Chef Peter Armellino's menu includes dishes like black pepper–Parmesan soufflé with Dungeness crab.

Restaurant Gary Danko combines French cuisine with locally sourced ingredients and Asian influences. The wine list, managed by Aaron Babcock, features 2,600 selections, including rare bottles from Burgundy and Napa Valley. Popular dishes include lobster risotto and glazed oysters with caviar.

Saison, located in the SOMA district, is known for its Californian wine selection. Co-founder Mark Bright and wine director Molly Greene oversee a list of 2,505 labels, focusing on Bordeaux, Burgundy, and the Rhône Valley. Chef Richard Lee's menu includes dishes like sea urchin with grilled sourdough.

Spruce, in Presidio Heights, sources much of its produce from a five-acre organic farm. The wine list, curated by Jaime Pinedo, features 2,600 labels, with a focus on Californian and French wines. Chef Mark Sullivan's menu includes dishes like Périgord black truffle

risotto.

The Village Pub in Woodside offers fine dining with a focus on local ingredients. Chef Mark Sullivan's menu features dishes like seared Hokkaido scallops. The wine program, managed by Jaime Pinedo, includes 3,000 labels, with strengths in Austria, California, and France.

A16 in the Marina District specializes in Southern Italian wines and cuisine. Shelly Lindgren's wine program features selections from Campania and Sicily. The menu includes wood-fired pizzas and fresh pastas.

Absinthe Brasserie & Bar in Hayes Valley offers a traditional French dining experience. Chef Ian Begg's menu includes classic dishes like onion soup and beef Bourguignon. The wine list, managed by Jack Hyland, features 2,500 selections from California, France, and Italy.

Californios in the Mission District offers a unique take on Mexican cuisine, with influences from California and beyond. Chef Val Cantu's menu includes dishes like kombu-cured halibut ceviche. The wine list, managed by Ameena Elmore, highlights producers from California and Mexico.

Kitchen Istanbul in the Richmond District serves Mediterranean cuisine with a focus on Turkish dishes. The wine program, managed by Joseph DiGrigoli, features 370 selections, with strengths in France and Italy.

Madera in Menlo Park offers contemporary Californian cuisine in a luxurious setting. The wine list, managed by Vidzu Ramirez, includes 1,500 selections, with a focus on France, Italy, and the United States.

Quince in Jackson Square offers a menu driven by seasonal ingredients from Northern California. The wine list, managed by Adam Chhibbane, features 1,700 labels, including classic Rhônes and Champagnes.

Sons & Daughters in Nob Hill offers a tasting menu inspired by Nordic cooking. The wine list, curated by David Kolvek, features selections from Burgundy, California, and Italy.

Ssal in Russian Hill combines Korean fine dining with Californian influences. Chef Junsoo Bae's menu includes dishes like Maine lobster with carrot vinaigrette. The wine list features 550 labels, with strengths in Burgundy and Champagne.

Che Fico in the Divisadero District offers an Italian culinary approach to locally sourced ingredients. The wine list, managed by Jason Alexander, features 160 selections, with a focus on Italian wines. The menu includes distinctive pizzas and fresh pastas.