

The Spill: A league of her Rhone

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Grab a seat and stay a while at the Rhône Room

Over a month ago, Sondra Bernstein, owner and master chef of the Girl and the Fig, opened her passion project, the Rhone Room with friends and wine producers in mind. Located on Broadway, she offers a special place, a mini-getaway, for visitors and locals alike to sample over 85 distinct wines, plus a portfolio of her own. Here, a wide variety of wines can be enjoyed in the seated patio area, overlooking an organic farm in the back.

For more than 20 years, Sondra has embraced Rhone wines from France. She features over 16 of her house wines including the ever-popular viognier, rosé, grenache, syrah, white and red blends, under such labels as the Girl and the Fig, Mes Amis Français, Melange Blanc, Sonoma Roadside, County Roadside, Say What and Tres Bonnes Années.

Bernstein plans to grow traffic for the new tasting room, like she does everything else — organically, one glass at a time. “It’s going to be what it is, and I’m OK with that,” says Bernstein.

The Rhone Room is open Friday to Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. or by appointment.

After the fires, tourists buy Sonoma Valley wines

Bartenders on the Plaza say tourists have intentionally come back to the wine country to drink Sonoma wines and support the local economy. Swiss Hotel staff say visitors came in and spoke of their memorable visit to Gundlach Bundschu. Another couple wanted to see if the rumor was true that the Buena Vista Winery was no longer standing after the fires – and were thrilled to find the historic site alive and well, busy pouring wines. Tourists at the Swiss specifically asked for the popular 2015 St. Francis Chardonnay and 2014 Sebastiani Merlot. For Sonoma County wines — 2015 Rodney Strong Cabernet Sauvignon is a hit.

Burger & Vine said they didn’t hear comments one way or the other from tourists, but the 2015 Buena Vista Chardonnay, 2013 Benziger 3 Blocks, and 2015 Little Vineyard Band Blend are popular Sonoma Valley favorites. At the Girl and the Fig, the bartender has seen a rise in 2013 Zaca Mesa white blend and local Matthes 2012 Grenache orders and believes there is a direct correlation. EDK hasn’t heard anyone specifically comment about wanting Sonoma Valley wines after the fires, but 2015 Walt Chardonnay and Gloria Ferrer Blanc de Noir remain top choices.

Sonoma resident Steve Burns named president of Wine Market Council.

On Nov. 8, the Wine Market Council announced industry veteran Steve Burns as president of the nonprofit trade association. Burns takes over from outgoing Wine Market Council president John Gillespie, who will retire this month.

Burns holds extensive experience in board development and management for associations. Currently, he is the owner of O'donnell Lane L.L.C., a marketing, public relations and strategic planning firm for associations.

Wine Market Council describes itself as a nonprofit trade association committed to expanding the wine market in the U.S. for all segments of the industry by providing ongoing U.S. wine market research.

For more info: WineMarketCouncil.com.