

TAKING INVENTORY YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR VOICES

What regions and/or varieties do you expect (or hope) to see trending in 2023?

Danielle Kuzinich

Owner, San Francisco Wine Society, San Francisco, CA

I have a love-hate relationship with this topic, to be completely honest. I personally don't follow trends at all, [and] I wish we could shift the narrative. We've gotten in this situation where people want to talk about trends all the time—what's coming? What's the new hot thing?—instead of putting in the time to focus on what is best for their list and their guests. I feel that what that's led to is a lot of homogenous wine lists around the U.S. and that we've pigeonholed certain regions [as] the best, when there's so much incredible wine being made all over the world. I just wish [that somms] would shift to talking more about flavor profiles versus specific varieties or regions; that's how we get people excited about wine.

Looking at what's happened over the last couple of years, where we've seen major supply-chain issues. . . . It's not [that I've] enjoyed this happening, but I think that it's forced people to look outside of the box and look for alternatives with a similar flavor profile. [For instance,] everyone's in a frenzy right now because no one can get Sancerre. I use Sancerre as an example because of its popularity over the years and [because] it is frankly hard to get at a reasonable price point anymore, if you can get it at all. If people want Sancerre, we love recommending things like Carricante from Sicily, Etna Bianco. We're trying to get people to drink more Assyrtiko. I was just in Italy over the summer, and we had this absolutely incredible Trebbiano di Lugana.



PHOTO: CARLY HUCKBARTH

All of these are crisp, minerality-driven wines that are a perfect substitution for . . . Sancerre.

If you look at our list, we've got a lot of really traditional things and then we've got a lot of things that are not typical—like Hungarian dry whites and reds. When people come in and ask to drink Pinot Noir, if they're feeling frisky and willing to try something different, we recommend they try Kadarka. For a while we were pouring two Kadarkas by the glass, one from Hungary and one from Slovakia. Depending on stylistically what people were looking for—if they were looking for something a little bit earthier, something a little bit riper or juicier—we could direct them to [either of] those wines.

What wines would I like to see

people drinking more of? I think a lot of stuff coming out of Uruguay is really interesting. [Bodega] Garzón has got a lot of varieties that they're producing outside of Tannat. We've got their Petit Verdot on by the glass right now, which is absolutely fantastic.

There's another producer called Viña Progreso [that's] making some incredible Sangiovese and, randomly, Viognier—which I know has got such a stigma against it with most sommeliers, but they're making a really cool dry-style Viognier. The wines coming out of Cour-Cheverny in France are fantastic. There are so many other varieties and regions out there that people should be drinking.

It's hard because I know that most people, when they talk about trends, they're like, [for instance,] "Oh, Sicily should be hot"—but it just creates [this situation where] everyone's like, "Oh, I have to have these wines." My husband and I were talking this morning about this because he knows it's a question that I generally hate. [Laughs]. Because

trends [impact] winemaking practices. We were talking about how Provence rosé became such a trend, but now, everywhere in the world . . . a lot of wineries have shifted [to making Provençal-style rosé], because it's kind of a give-the-people-what-they-want mentality. Sometimes it's nice to have a rosé that is not Provence in style!

It's an interesting topic. I understand that [not everybody is] able to pour wines from all over the world, but I do wish that even people who have a focus solely on Italy or solely on France would get outside of just having . . . the things that people know and really dive into these countries and represent some of the smaller regions or the lesser-known varieties. There's just so much good wine out there. **LE**