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AUGUST 2014



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100 BEST WINE RESTAURANTS 2014

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WINE ENTHUSIAST AMERICA'S 100 BEST WINE RESTAURANTS 2014

We hope you're thirsty—2014 is the year of the oenophile, and *Wine Enthusiast's* list of America's 100 Best Wine Restaurants caters to those looking to drink up while dining out. The focus is firmly on wine (although delicious, creative cuisine is kind of a prerequisite), and our editors scoured the nation for unique wine programs. From an obsessive collection of Champagne in Chicago to an eatery in New York City where it's free to BYOB (as long as you're in a sharing mood), there's something to sate every wine lover.

—THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE
COMPILED BY ALEXIS KORMAN, NILS BERNSTEIN AND JOSEPH HERNANDEZ

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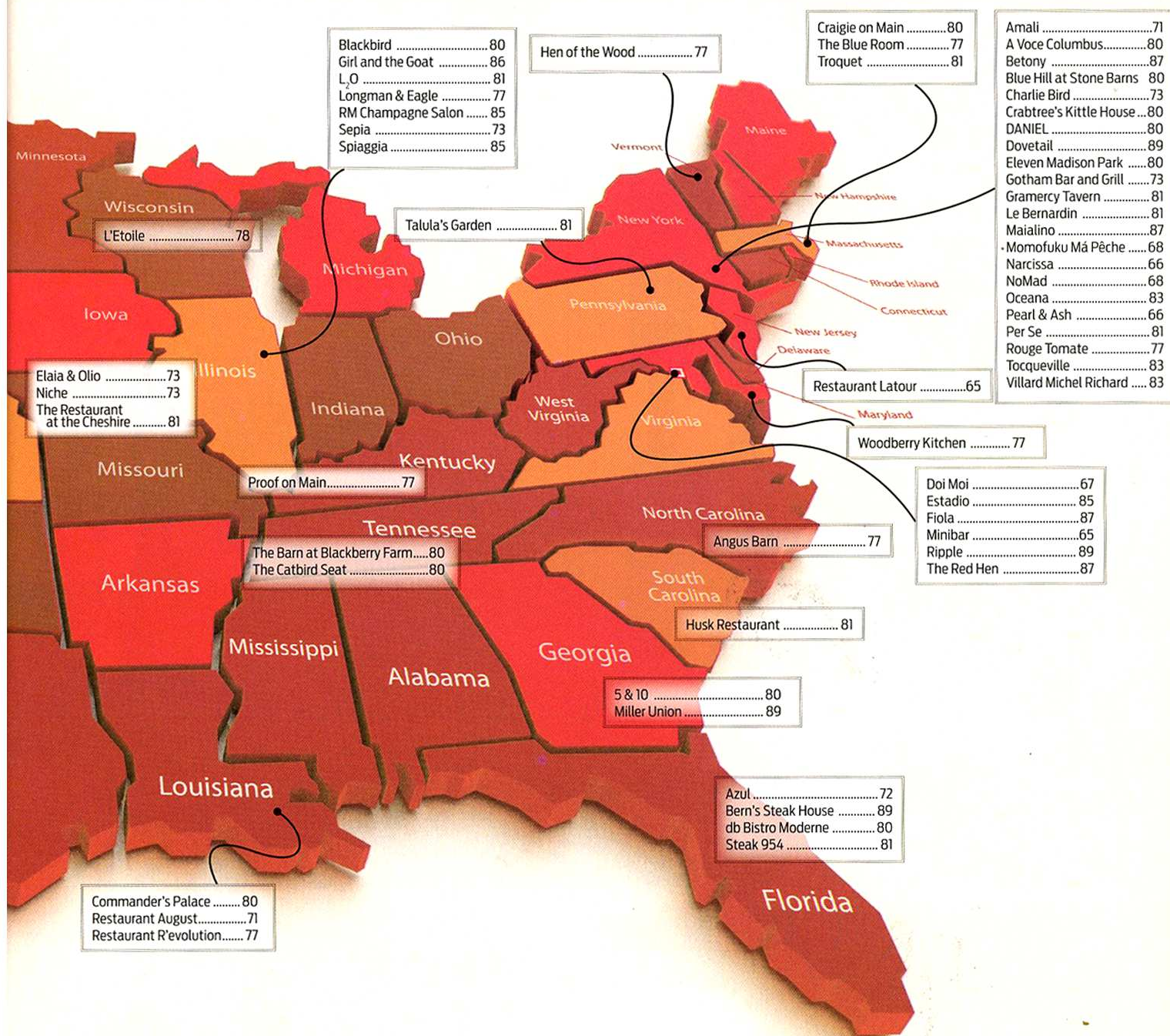
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100 BEST WINE RESTAURANTS 2014



Wine lovers, search no further: We've mapped out 100 wine-obsessed restaurants in every corner of the country, solving the age-old question, "Where should I drink (and eat) right now?" Interviews with star sommeliers and chefs, essential pairing picks and top trends straight from the mouths of wine industry experts are just the beginning.

For featured wine-and-food pairings, kitchen secrets and more, plus a searchable database of the list, visit winemag.com/100best2014.

Au Naturel

Organic, sustainable and biodynamic wines are making a splash.

BY ALEXIS KORMAN

Curious about natural wine? You're not alone.

While terms like "organic" and "biodynamic" differ by regulation and definition, restaurants are making room for wines either made with a gentle environmental impact, or are as unadulterated as possible, and sommeliers are excited to spread the word.

"I hope this is not a trend, and this is a soft revolution," says Pascaline Lepeltier, MS, beverage director at Rouge Tomate in New York City. "I grew up in a wine region with a lot of biodynamic, organic and natural producers, in Anjou [France]. It makes sense, if you want to have a wine that expresses a place, a vintage and a craft, these kinds of farming are the most appropriate to grow healthy vines."

These sommeliers spill on why diners should sip—and support—sustainable wines.



◀◀ The Blue Room

Cambridge, Massachusetts • theblueroom.net

Liz Vilardi (pictured), co-owner/wine director at The Blue Room, oversees a 120-label wine list that's 90% natural.

"I've found that winemakers with both agenda and conviction tend to create small-production, natural, biodynamic or organic wines," she says. "Why? Because these winemakers are involved in their raw material, the vines and grapes, and they care about the process."

The Italian- and French-leaning list makes seamless matches with the restaurant's Mediterranean-influenced, farm-to-table cuisine.



Hen of the Wood

Burlington, Vermont • henofthewood.com

Guests here will find an all-natural 100-bottle wine list with 18 selections by the glass, along with food showcasing premium ingredients sourced from the nearby Green Mountains and Champlain Valley.

"We focus on small, sustainable, farmer-driven wines that are left alone in the winemaking process to produce a true expression of the grape," says William McNeil, co-owner and wine specialist. "These pure, real and alive wines showcase the farmer, not the winemaker."



HALL of FAME Longman & Eagle

Chicago • longmanandeagle.com

"The trend seems to be getting away from mass-produced, ultrapopular wines, presenting some people haven't heard of," says Jeff Wilson, general manager.

"These wines are interesting not only because of the different varietals and regions they represent, but because the winemakers focus on getting back to a more natural style of the varietal itself through farming," Wilson says of the list that's 50% biodynamic and sustainable.

Organic wines like Clos Siguier's Malbec from Cahors make for delicious pairings, too: Longman & Eagle offers it by the glass alongside a Berkshire pork chop with Concord grape barbecue sauce, pickled grapes, cornbread purée and ramps.



Restaurant R'evolution

New Orleans • revolutionnola.com

Nearly a third of the 10,000-bottle inventory at this elegant Big Easy eatery is biodynamic or sustainable, complementing the bold flavors of the Creole-inspired menu.

"The wines produced by biodynamic practices show purity, authenticity, elegance and balance," says Molly Wismeier, the beverage director. "This is, of course, very subjective, and noticing these subtleties is something that builds over time."

Wismeier curated some of the more iconic natural wine producers by tasting vintages across a 10-year period, charting their evolution. She lauds biodynamic wineries like Domaine Zind-Humbrecht in Alsace, Maison Leroy in Burgundy, and Movia in Brda, straddling the Slovenian-Italian border.



Rouge Tomato

New York City • rougetomatenyc.com

Dedicated to haute, healthy cuisine, 80% of Rouge Tomato's 1,200-label wine list represents organic, biodynamic and natural wines.

"These wines are on the list, first and foremost, because they are good, tasty and have personality," says Pascaline Lepeltier, MS. "When we tell our guests about organic and natural practices, they are surprised at the fact that they drank wines with 150-plus additives they weren't aware of, since there's no mandatory ingredient labeling. That is the shock for them."



HALL of FAME Woodberry Kitchen

Baltimore • woodberrykitchen.com

"If they're not local, then every wine on our list has to be either organic or biodynamic," says Corey Polyoka, the director of operations.

The 250-label wine selection is "expressive and individual" and complements the restaurant's sustainably farmed and locally sourced cuisine (32 wines hail from nearby Virginia and Maryland).

"People are starting to ask questions and wanting to know where their food comes from and how it's grown," says Polyoka. "Wine has similar ties, so sourcing and cultivation needs to become part of the conversation, too."



What Wine Insiders Say Leo Robitschek, bar director, Eleven Madison Park and The NoMad, New York City

"Consumers are more informed and adventurous than ever. People no longer balk at the ideas of vermouths or unknown ingredients. Also, communal cocktails are making a comeback. You see more people ordering large-format wines, beers and bottled cocktails."