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CHEF BLAINE WETZEL

ISSUE 01 / City Chef, Country Chef

A look into the lives of two contrasting chefs:
Blaine Wetzel & Jimmy Bannos Jr.

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“Consumers are beginning to take a serious interest in the source of their food.”

DAVID WHITE

cheap wines are grown in California’s vast Central Valley, where farmers rely on regular use of chemicals to keep output high. It’s better wine through chemistry.

Logic dictates that if consumers are going to care about free-range chicken, cage-free eggs and local produce, they’ll eventually care about authentic wine. And all signs suggest that consumers are starting to move in that direction, thanks largely to the rising influence of sommeliers and the natural wine movement.

At top restaurants across the world, a new generation of sommeliers have taken over, rejecting the exclusivity and stuffiness of yesteryear in favor of an approach that values inclusivity and education. They’re acting as educators, providing opportunities for guests to learn about different varieties and taste wines that aren’t available at the local supermarket. And since they’re more comfortable promoting wines with good stories than wines with high point scores, they’re removing mass-produced options from their lists.

Over the past decade, many sommeliers have become passionate ambassadors for natural wine. Together with many wine enthusiasts and retailers across the world, they’re seeking producers who eschew fertilizers,

herbicides, insecticides and fungicides in their vineyards and refuse to add sugar, acid, tannins or other additives like oak chips, sawdust or grape concentrates in their wineries. As natural wine proponent Alice Feiring once explained, “[These are] wines made with the goal of nothing added and nothing taken away.”

Natural wine enthusiasts are best known for promoting unusual grapes from unusual regions, like Ribolla Gialla from Friuli in Italy and Trousseau from the Jura in France. But they’ve found plenty of more traditional wines to love. In the United States, for example, many natural wine producers are part of an effort dubbed “In Pursuit of Balance.” Launched by Jasmine Hirsch, whose family owns one of America’s top Pinot Noir vineyards, and Rajat Parr, a celebrity sommelier and winemaker, this annual series of events applauds Pinot Noir and Chardonnay producers who eschew ripeness and power in favor of restraint and elegance. The effort has brought attention to producers who are more comfortable in the vineyard than the winery.

These two movements have played a big role in pushing consumers everywhere to demand wine that’s produced virtuously. That’s worth celebrating. ★

On Holy Ground



In 2014, Pope Francis decided to make one of the oldest and most prestigious pieces of land – the Castel Gandolfo farm – accessible to the public. Prior to this, the private grounds served as the papal summer residence for centuries.

Located approximately 15 miles south of Rome, the land boasts everything from cows, free-range chickens and turkeys, to fruits, vegetables and olive trees – all which are farmed using traditional agricultural methods that date back to the 17th century. For more information, visit the official Vatican tours site: www.museivaticani.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html.

Did you know?

- Some of the olive oil trees are over 800 years old and produce more than 300 gallons of olive oil annually.
- The farm employs eight people, some of whom have worked there for decades.
- Every day fresh meat and produce is delivered directly to the Vatican.
- Also occupying the land are ostriches, donkeys and rabbits.

DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE WORKS OF ART

Over the past year, we’ve scoured the globe on a search for the best-designed restaurants. The final selection, however, isn’t solely based on aesthetics. In each case, the designers considered the heritage of the location, the building and the chef, before enlisting local craftspeople or importing authentic pieces to be incorporated into the design. In the end, four were chosen: a San Diego seafood joint, a wood-clad Brooklyn bar, a minimalist Mexican eatery and a French brasserie.

TEXT BY DIANE CHAN



PHOTOGRAPHY: BKLNYC

Tørst by hOmE
Brooklyn, New York
An antique streetlamp imported from Copenhagen is perhaps the most definitive fixture in this north Brooklyn bar. Located in Greenpoint, Tørst (meaning “thirst” in Danish) is the work of

hOmE brothers Evan and Oliver Haslegrave, a local firm responsible for numerous hospitality projects, plus the hip headquarters of Mast Brothers Chocolate. For Tørst, the Haslegraves enlisted Dane Børge Mogensen to craft graphic chevron tables and

benches from contrasting oak and reclaimed woods, a recurring theme running through this 26-seat eatery. The aesthetic that feeds both Americana and Scandi sensibilities also channels mid-century modern with brass lighting, while a sleek Carrera

marble bar top lends luxe. To complement hOmE's design, chef Daniel Burns devised a menu incorporating such New-York-meets-Nordic dishes as a confited duck sandwich accompanied by spicy cabbage and pickled cucumber. The Scandinavian inspiration is not completely unfounded: Burns's friend Jeppe Jarnit-Bjergso of Denmark's Evil Twin Brewing curated the list comprising over 20 beers; ones that appear in top establishments like Momofuku and Noma, a subtle indication of Tørst's quality, refinement and cool factor.

Ironside by Basile Studio

San Diego, California

To sum up the design of this San Diego restaurant, patrons need look only to the vintage marquee, which displays fishy puns such as "The world is your oyster: it's up to you to find the pearls." Thanks to the handiwork of Detroit-native-turned-SoCal-fabricator Paul Basile and Jason McLeod, the Michelin-star chef who utilizes French techniques on New American cuisine, every corner of the 1920s warehouse offers rustic accents that play up its seafood driven concept. Basile custom-designed nearly every piece in his East Village studio, from the deep shelves that evoke the cargo hold of vintage ships that loom over the dining room, to the giant iron arms affixed with oversized bulbs which sprawl across the ceiling to mimic octopus tentacles. The definite show-stopper is the spectacular installation of 2,000 piranha skeletons ferociously baring teeth, by artist Brandon Kihl. Though the fish heads are faux, authenticity is clearly central to Basile's design



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMIE NAVARRO

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PHOTOGRAPHY: ZACKENSO.COM

03



PHOTOGRAPHY: HELENE HILAIRE

04



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMIE NAVARRO

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philosophy through his endeavors to maintain the nautical history of Ironside's location at the city's Little Italy seaport.

Hueso by Ignacio Cadena

Guadalajara, Mexico

In Guadalajara, Mexico's Lafayette design district, a lone, black bone ominously hangs above the doorway of a 1940s Luis Barragán building, foreshadowing Ignacio Cadena's creation inside. Alongside Canada-trained chef Alfonso Cadena (Ignacio's brother) and architect Javier Monteón, the Mexican designer imagined an avant-garde, Darwin-inspired concept centered around hueso, (the Spanish word for "bone"). Covering almost every inch of the 240-square-foot ghostly white interior are approximately 10,000 huesos that were collected over six months from plants and animals – plus a handful cast in aluminum by Mauricio and Sebastián Lara – intermixed with metal cooking tools, ceramics by José Noé Suro (who also handcrafted the glossy ceramic tiles that clad the building)

and artistic interventions from Los-Originales-Contratistas Tomás Guereña and Miguel Ángel Fuentes. Steam-bent chairs and communal tables in reclaimed wood further the rustic appeal. Though Hueso may make vegetarians run for the hills, designophiles will make no bones about the allure of Cadena's morbid masterpiece.

01 Reclaimed wood tables and benches, a recurring theme throughout Torst

02 Entrance to Hueso

03 Ironside's custom-built interior

04 Brasserie Les Haras oak-wrapped staircase

05 Hueso's bone-covered dining room

06 Brasserie Les Haras was converted from a royal equestrian stud farm



PHOTOGRAPHY: HELENE HILAIRE

06

Brasserie Les Haras by Jouin Manku

Strasbourg, France

If there was ever an award for "Best Centrepiece," Patrick Jouin and Sanjit Manku would be in the running. The Parisian duo, who recently completed Bayerischer Hof Hotel in Munich, incorporated the four-star Hôtel Les Haras and adjoining brasserie (which was previously home to France's royal equestrian stud farm), into an 18th-century Strasbourg building. In true Jouin Manku fashion, the space is pared-back and contemporary, maintaining the site's heritage by incorporating such rural materials as solid wood, blackened metal and natural leather. Its stand-out feature is without a doubt the oak-wrapped staircase that connects the restaurant's two levels. A dramatic yet airy piece, it takes cues from the fence that once contained the country's top stallions. Paired with chef Marc Haebler's decidedly French menu, Les Haras is a feast for both the eyes and belly. ★