

The Lusch List

UNIQUE WINE RECOMMENDATIONS & EXPERIENCES



“Texas is a blend of valor and swagger.” - Carl Sandburg

If you haven't yet, the time is now. What I am talking about is drinking Texas wine. Yes, I said it. And if you are rolling your eyes or making a snide comment then you are missing out, my friend. There is truly some delicious wine being made in The Lone Star State. It is time to pay attention to the fifth largest wine producing state where Mediterranean grapes from Spain, southern France, and Italy thrive. I am proud to say that The Grape Restaurant always had a least a few Texas wines on the wine list. I wish I had that list now because Texas is having a wine moment and it is kind of exciting! October is Texas wine month. What better way to celebrate than to give you both a white and a red recommendation along with a few mentions of other wineries to try next time you are out on the trail...the wine trail.

The 1st Wine: [Duchman Family Winery Trebbiano, 2018, Texas High Plains, Texas](#)

Where I Purchased: Total Wine

Cost: \$12

The 2nd Wine: [William Chris Vineyards Mourvedre, 2017, Texas High Plains, Texas](#)

Where I Purchased: [Veritas](#)

Cost \$18

There is a rich and interesting history surrounding Texas wine, and it is right in our backyard to experience and enjoy. I encourage each of you to read up on Texas wine history because it is really interesting. I will share some fun facts and quotes from a few pioneers and up-and-comers in the region:

Thomas Munson, an American horticulturist, is credited for basically saving the European wine industry from complete devastation in the 1880's. A pesky pest, aka Phylloxera, was destroying most of the vineyards in Europe. Munson's work with grapes and rootstock was found to be immune to the pest and he was able to graft different varieties for the French to use to save the vineyards.

The pre-Prohibition Texas wine industry was led by Clinton 'Doc' McPherson who is referred to as "The Father of Modern Texas Wine." He planted an experimental vineyard in the Texas High Plains in the late 1960s comprised of 140 different grape varieties to see which worked best in the local climate and soil.

Other leaders were Ed Ahler of Fall Creek Winery known for establishing vineyards in the Texas Hill Country; Richard Becker of Becker Vineyards who put Viognier on the map for Texas; and the proprietors of Messina Hof were the pioneers of East Texas winemaking.

State laws allow wines to be labeled as Texas wine if 75% of the fruit is from the state – meaning that 25% could come from anywhere. Today, some producers are pushing to change regulations to require Texas-labeled wines to be made from 100% Texas fruit. Bill Blackmon says, "Out of 400 bonded wineries, there are only a handful that actually grow their own grapes to make their wines. To sustain our growth in popularity, we need to get a handle on that." Bill is the proprietor of William Chris Vineyards, Texas's largest producer of 100% Texas-grown wines, and a leader in the modern Texas wine movement.

"We just need to change the mindset on Texas ... the wines need to be in restaurants and on dinner tables, not just poured through in tasting rooms for tourists," says Ken McPherson, Doc's son, current winemaker and proprietor of McPherson Cellars.

With over 400 wineries to choose from, here are just a few to get you started:

Duchman Family Winery, William Chris Vineyards, McPherson Cellars, Pedernales Cellars, Fall Creek, Bending Branch Winery, and Calais Winery.

The first wine recommendation is a lovely white wine from The Duchman Family Winery.

Quick bio: The Duchman Family Winery was founded in 2004 by Drs. Lisa and Stan Duchman in a quest to bring world-class winemaking to Central Texas and the Texas Hill Country. Their love of the unique Italian grape varieties, as well as the similar weather patterns to Texas, inspired them to work with viticultural consultants and growers in the Texas High Plains AVA to produce grapes that would allow their winemakers, Dave Reilly and Mark Penna, to experiment with making wines like Vermentino, Sangiovese, and Dolcetto. The winery continues to source the majority of its fruit from the Texas High Plains AVA (American Viticultural Area, a designated wine grape-growing region in the United States), where cooler temperatures and a more "continental" climate are ideal for the production of fine wine made from Italian grape varieties.

Tasting Notes:

100% Trebbiano (fresh and fruity Italian white grape varietal also called Ungi Blanc in France)

Style: crisp, acid-driven, food-friendly

Nose: tropical fruit, citrus

Palate: under-ripe stone fruit, chalky minerality

Finish: bright, refreshing acidity

Pairing:

This wine can handle some richness so try a creamy seafood pasta, a white pizza, or a pesto baked chicken. Roasted root vegetables or squashes as a side item or main vegetarian entrée should be a nice match as well.

Where to buy:

I try to buy from local shops as often as possible but the big box retailer has a place too. Total Wine is where I found this wine, and I hope they make it a little easier for our Texas producers to promote their wines and get in front of a larger audience.

The second wine is a rich and intense red wine from William Chris Vineyards.

According to their website: At William Chris Vineyards, we focus on low impact, 100% Texas-grown wine. Owners and winemakers, Bill Blackmon and Chris Brundrett, discovered they shared a similar philosophy for winemaking believing

the way to put Texas on the map as a respected wine region is to promote wines made exclusively from Texas grown fruit.

William Chris Vineyards creates old-world style Texas-grown wines. Since 2008, they have expanded the estate vineyards and partnered with family-owned farms to source only the highest quality Texas-grown grape. The wines are qualitatively a whole lot better than what you might expect from Texas if you have preconceived notions (yes, summers here are hotter than a stolen tamale). The wines are balanced and elegant, with vibrant fruit profiles and great structures. We believe that when it comes to wine, location matters. The unique characteristics of the Lone Star terroir give our Old-World style wines a Texas flair found nowhere else.

Tasting Notes:

100% Mourvedre

Style: rich and intense, refined

Nose: dark cherry, raspberry, earthy smoky notes

Palate: rich berries, spice, pepper, dried herbs

Finish: good acidity, full tannins, dry

Pairing:

When you have a rich and tannic wine, matching it with richer foods helps to absorb the tannins and balance the wine out. Some wines are just meant to be drunk with food and this Mourvedre is a good example. Since we are talking about a Texas wine, you must try it with Texas BBQ (duh), braised shorts ribs, or nicely grilled lamb chops with thyme and rosemary. We had it with brisket and ribs from local BBQ favorite [One90 Smoked Meats](#) in Lake Highlands. Perfection!

Where to buy:

The boys at [Veritas](#) are native Texans who grew up in Plano. They appreciate our backyard region and have made sure to help get the word out regarding the quality that is available these days. Thank you and keep it up!

Until next time!

Courtney

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