



A Glass of Pinot with District Wine Director Caterina Mirabelli

By Brad Prescott

IntoWine recently caught up with Caterina Mirabelli, the Wine Director at San Francisco hot spot **District**. Mirabelli, a native of Italy, has spent nearly her entire career working in wine and brings to it all the passion one would expect of someone groomed on Italian wine. Thanks to Caterina for chatting with us.

Tell us about yourself. What led you to District?

Born in Rome, I developed my passion for food and wine from my dad, a pastry chef & wine maker (the wine was only for the family). I started to travel and worked in the hotel and restaurant industry around the world from the age of 17. Back in Italy I started to develop a passion for wine with a glass of LaTache 1942 at 4 AM on Piazza Campo de' Fiori in Italy (I was on a date). At that point, I decided to work towards my sommelier certification and am currently a 3rd level. I came to the USA 2 years ago and worked with www.Providencela.com. Today, my wine program is as exciting (for me) as when, at 13, I was riding my CBR600 motorcycle in Rome, during my professional racing career. Why District? I was tired of working in fine dining, and wanted an opportunity to really get to know my customers and their palates.

Wine bars are increasingly more common, particularly in San Francisco. What differentiates District?

District will never be common. I hope every one will feel special here! District will guide you around the world (where you) can taste wine without catching a flight! There's always something new here to learn and appreciate.

What are your goals for the wine program at District?

As I mentioned, I (always) try to include every corner of the world that make wine. I like domestic (US) but I believe we can reach (wine country) with a nice hours drive. Not every one can go to New Zealand or Chile. I like to have unusual wine that people have never drunk before.

As a San Francisco wine director, there are few people with better insight as to the latest trends in wine. That said, what are consumers asking for? What's hot?

As of today my (most common) wine by the glass is Carmenere from Chile. It is peppery (with) jalapeño, coffee, and dark cocoa. People love sexy wine with robust character so I try to fulfill that wish with a twist that no one has ever come in contact with before.

Conversely, what's not hot? What are consumers still avoiding?

In my wine bar (it might be strange) but my consumer don't really request "highly buttery chardonnay". Actually they specifically ask not be served one of those!!!

What are the more underrated wine regions of the world that you feature?

Pinot Noir from Germany, Austria, Slovenia...i love Pinot!!