SanFrancisco

Dine and wine

At San Francisco's new **menu-heavy wine bars**, grape aficionados can do some serious eating while they swirl.

Say goodbye to stale nuts and sub-zero cheese: the newest wine bars to open in the city are serving full dinner menus. The hottest by far is District in SoMa. The cavernous space with its U-shaped bar, fabric-covered couches, and industrial setting is so popular with the downtown after-work crowd, it's almost always full to the wooden rafters—even on a Tuesday at 8:30.

District's wine list is divided into 10 categories, and features 30 wines available by the glass, by the bottle, or in flights of three. Most of the grape varieties, like grüner veltiner and sangiovese, are more food-friendly than the standard overblown cab—and are just the poison to pair with adventurous menu items that include prawns al ajillo and ahi tartare with fried capers. District also offers more traditional wine nibbles, like an impeccable cured-meat plate and, of course, a handful of artisanal cheeses. Either way, it seems like a winning formula: ply the clientele with snacks, and they'll keep downing glass after glass of barbera d'alba without having to run off for a slice.

BY SCOTT HOCKER

PHOTOGRAPH BY CODY PICKENS

NIGHT WATCH

District
9:34 p.m.

THE SCENE
Marina south—peroxide blondes and blue button-downs.

THE WINDOW
If you like it quiet, come late on a weeknight. If you like a mob scene, come on Friday evening.

THE SECRET
Though there isn't technically a sparkling wine flight, fans of bubbly can construct one—if they ask nicely.

THE APPROACH
This is still a wine bar and not a restaurant, after all, so the kitchen's pacing tends to be rapid-fire. It's best to order piecemeal if you don't want a barrage of plates.