

FOOD & WINE

Sommeliers of the Year

EXTRAORDINARY WINE PROFESSIONALS AND THE BOTTLES THAT TELL THE STORIES OF THEIR LIVES.

BY MEGAN KRIGBAUM



David Keck
CAMERATA, HOUSTON

WHY HE WON: *This former opera singer has created an ingenious wine bar where Houstonians congregate for his daily-changing by-the-glass list, and other sommeliers drop by to take part in tastings and study groups. Keck's not-so-secret agenda: to turn them all into Syrah lovers.*

Viennese Heuriger wine

When I graduated from high school, I visited Vienna, where my brother was living. The hills outside the city are filled with heurigen, traditional taverns where families serve their own wine and food. I was 19 years old and totally charmed by the wine culture: sitting outside drinking superfresh wine all day with Wiener schnitzel.

Côte-Rôtie

In New York, I had an opera coach at Juilliard who'd been going to France since the '70s, back when you could knock on people's doors in Burgundy and in the northern

Rhône and just hang out. He invited me for dinner, and I brought a \$15 Syrah. His partner, being super-gracious, said, "That's lovely, but if we're gonna have this, we should open this"—and brought out a Côte Rôtie. He said, "This is Syrah from one of its most hallowed sites."

1985

Henri Jayer Richebourg

I'm not one to fetishize wine, but experiencing this was such an unbelievable moment for me. I was working an event and was pulling from a cellar that [star sommelier] Larry Stone had put together years before for The Wine

Forum [a nonprofit philanthropy]. We opened it in its magnum. And even though we'd been running around, everything stopped for a minute.

2008

Derey Frères Marsannay Rosé

I went to France to sing and study with a teacher in Nice and took a couple of weeks to travel to taste wine. In Burgundy, in Marsannay, I tried a bunch of rosé at a time when rosé was still kind of a new thing for me. I bought a bottle at Derey Frères and went back to my little hostel in Dijon with some cheese and bread—and I remember drinking that bottle and thinking, This is life right here.