



Blended wine is like a bouquet made from many flowers instead of just one.

# Blending and Trending

BOSTON'S HOTTEST SOMMELIERS STIR UP THE VAT WITH BLENDED WINES. BY VICTORIA ABBOTT RICCARDI

Sommeliers are the new rock stars of the restaurant world, and Boston has a gifted crop who live and breathe wine as passionately as the stressed-out heroes in last year's acclaimed documentary *Somm*. Here are three young guns to watch, including what they're pouring. Beyond pure varietals, these somms are big on blends, which combine wines that either are made from different varietals, come from different regions of the world, have been held in different kinds of barrels (such as old and new barreled wines), or a combination of all three. They offer oenophiles the chance to taste a unique flavor combination made from more than one kind of grape. It's like a perfume composed of many flowers instead of just one.

## Theresa Paopao, Beverage Director, Ribelle

**Her story:** Paopao got bitten by the wine bug while waiting tables at Stephanie's on Newbury. Then she pursued restaurant wine jobs and advanced through the Court of Master Sommeliers before coming to Ribelle. **Blend she's loving:** "Edelzwicker! It is a loose term coined in Alsace in the 17th century referring to a blend of white grape varieties, namely Pinot Gris, Riesling, Muscat, and Gewürztraminer. These days there are no rules about which grapes can be included in an Edelzwicker blend, but what I love about these whites is that they are always fragrant with hints of residual sugar, yet generally countered with bright acidity and sneaky minerality." 1665 Beacon St., Brookline, 617-232-2322; [ribellebkline.com](http://ribellebkline.com)

## Lauren Collins, Beverage Director, L'Espalier

**Her start:** "I was at Christy's and had friends working in the wine department, and I realized that wine is such a vast world. It fascinates me." Collins moved north to work at Lower Falls Wine Company in Newton and began pursuing Master Sommelier status through the Court of Master Sommeliers, ultimately landing at L'Espalier. **Blend she champions:** "A perennial favorite of mine is the red wine of Château Musar from Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. It has Cabernet as a backbone, but also Cinsault and Carignan for spice and a bit of wild eccentricity. It's a wine that always intrigues, and I often describe it as Bordeaux meets the Rhône." 774 Boylston St., 617-262-3023; [lespalier.com](http://lespalier.com)

## Nicholas Daddona, Wine Director, Boston Harbor Hotel

**Aha moment:** "I was working at Legal Sea Foods Copley Square as a manager. One night I had dinner there and ordered a 1984 Brunello—it was absolutely fantastic." Daddona started pursuing Master Sommelier status through the Court of Master Sommeliers and working on the wine side of restaurants before coming to Boston Harbor Hotel. **Blend he's hot on:** "Some of the wines that have enthralled me are the Syrah-based reds of Saint-Joseph in the Northern Rhône Valley. It's one of the few regions that regularly adds white varieties (a maximum of 10 percent of Roussanne and Marsanne) to their red grapes during the vinification process. When done well it can provide an ethereal experience." 70 Rowes Wharf, 617-439-7000; [bhh.com](http://bhh.com) **BC**