

10 great places where wine bars serve flights of fancy

Larry Bleiberg , Special to USA TODAY 4:14 p.m. EDT September 6, 2013



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The holiday season is an ideal time to get together with friends for a glass of wine. **Paul Cappiali**, who leads the Wine School at **VERO Restaurant & Wine Bar** (<http://www.veronyc.com/>) in New York, says you can find comfortable settings to drink fine wine nationwide. "You want a place where the food is amazing, so people are eating and the turnover is there." He shares some surprising wine bars with **Larry Bleiberg** for USA TODAY.

626 on Rood (Grand Junction, Colo.)

Cappiali was surprised to find such an upscale bar in this western Colorado city. He likes the availability of wine flights and the selection of grower-produced sparkling wines from small vineyards. Wine also is available by the *pichet*, which holds a glass and a half. 970-257-7663; 626onrood.com (<http://626onrood.com/>)

The Armitage Wine Lounge & Cafe (Tucson, Ariz.)

The extensive wine list is a draw, as are the varietal flights with miniature carafes. And Tuesday evenings, the bar features wine tastings. Cappiali also likes the outdoor patio at the upscale mall where the cafe is located. "It's in the foothills of a beautiful area of Tucson. It's great to watch the buzz," he says. 520-682-9740; armitagewine.com/tucson/index.html (<http://armitagewine.com/tucson/index.html>)

The Delachaise (New Orleans, La.)

Drinking in the Crescent City isn't just about beer and cocktails consumed on Bourbon Street. This bar on St. Charles Avenue in the Garden District serves wines by the glass and bottle, along with small plates with everything from matzo ball soup to Jamaican jerk-style pork chops. Cappiali enjoys sitting on the patio and watching the streetcars roll by. "They have some great eclectic selections. Everything is well thought out," he says. 504-895-0858; thedelachaise.com (<http://thedelachaise.com/>)

Bar Avignon (Portland, Ore.)

More than a dozen of Oregon's celebrated pinot noirs are offered at this neighborhood bar, but there's much more on the menu. "These guys have Italian wines, and Champagne and German (varietals)," he says. The staff also is skilled at wine and food pairings. 503-517-0808; baravignon.com (<http://baravignon.com/>)

Tannin Wine Bar & Kitchen (Kansas City, Mo.)

This bar is right at home in the city's hip and historic Crossroads Art District of modified warehouses and other industrial buildings. Along with the setting, Cappiali appreciates the variety: Customers can try wines in a 2-ounce taster or by the glass or bottle. The international selection also is noteworthy. "Here you might find a New Zealand pinot," he says. 816-842-2660; [tanninwinebar.com](http://www.tanninwinebar.com/) (<http://www.tanninwinebar.com/>)

The Iron Bridge Wine Company (Columbia, Md.)

This out-of-the-way location in the Baltimore-Washington suburbs is surprisingly lively, with enough of a crowd to keep wines selling. Customers can choose from more than 30 wines by the glass, or buy a bottle from its retail store and pay a \$10 corkage fee to drink it there (although it's waived on Thursdays). "It's vibrant and charming. There's a buzz to this place," Cappiali says. It also has a full calendar of wine events, from sales and tastings to classes. 410-997-3456; ironbridgewines.com (<http://www.ironbridgewines.com/>)

LUXE Modern Wine & Cocktails (Westport, Conn.)

The carefully crafted wine menu includes both familiar and eclectic offerings. Cappiali says he also loves the setting. Although the building looks nondescript from the outside, it has an ultra-modern, minimalist interior. "But somehow it still feels cozy," Cappiali says. 203-349-5039; drinkingatluxe.com (<http://drinkingatluxe.com/>)

10 great places where wine bars serve flights of fancy <http://www.usatoday.com/story/experience/food-and-wine/best-o...>
This Northwest Houston restaurant stocks a Texas-size selection of more than 2,500 bottles. Cappiali likes that it has both half-bottles, 1.5-liter magnums and even larger containers, which are better for wines that are aged. The setting's attractive, too, he says. "It has a great wraparound bar so you can see everything going on." 281-374-6100; [brixwinecellars.com](http://www.brixwinecellars.com/) (<http://www.brixwinecellars.com/>)

RESERVE Wine & Food (Grand Rapids, Mich.)

The owners combine their passions for local food and notable wine at this restaurant offering dozens of wines by the taste, glass and bottle. "I perked up when they told me what they wanted me to try. I immediately trusted them," Cappiali says. Offerings span the globe, from a sparkling Michigan wine to a Chenin Blanc from South Africa. 616-855-9463; reservegr.com (<http://reservegr.com/>)

Bin 152 (Charleston, S.C.)

With its communal tables, stools and folding chairs, there's nothing pretentious about this King Street bar. Cappiali compares the atmosphere to Paris' Left Bank. The owners know their wine and are happy to make recommendations to pair with meat and cheese selections, he says. 843-577-7359; [bin152.com](http://www.bin152.com/) (<http://www.bin152.com/>)

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