

# Drinking

Edited by **Richard Morgan**  
timeout.com/newyork/bars

## Vinum



In Staten Island,  
a pinot for your  
thoughts By *Richard  
Morgan* Photographs  
by *Gabi Porter*



**WE ALMOST DIDN'T** run this review in favor of keeping Vinum our little secret. But the truth wins out. If Leonardo da Vinci had painted Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, the rustic, Italianate result would be Staten Island's most charming offering since *Working Girl* or Colin Jost. The duck prosciutto and truffled veal meatballs are mere bonuses.

An older couple who sat next to us, holding hands under the table, introduced themselves: "She lived four blocks away. I fell in love with her when I was 10 but didn't have the guts to ask her out until high school." When we commented that they were living the plot of *The Wonder Years*, they lit up: "Oh, there's more! I'm Tony. She's Marie"—he pivoted to her and clasped her hand—"like *West Side Story*." I like this island of Staten!

There is a time and a place for this oft-forgotten borough; it's here, in this elbows-on-the-table wine bar that seems, amid the bustle of Bay Street, more like a cozy Italian tavern nestled in

Calabria or Sicily. When you walk in, you get the sense that you have entered someone else's home, then later find yourself surprised that the home is yours.

Wine bars rarely accomplish this feat. They are mostly marked-up mousetraps ensnaring bougie wastrels with thoughtless cheese and throwaway olives, all while being run by reverse Jesuses who turn wine into water. Vinum elegantly sidesteps such woes by pairing glasses and bottles with authentic Italian fare designed

to elevate an ordinary wine list rather than debase it. Vinum is the Oprah of wine bars, helping everyday vino become its best self.

Fruity primitivo from Puglia finds a dreamy partner in a pillow of fresh, creamy burrata. Sharp blue cheese is softened by pears poached in a blend of house reds, spiced with cinnamon and cloves. Off-menu tomato flan playfully wrestles with buttery chardonnay. The Hunter's Wild Game Board is a must, from the



### WHY GO?

For glasses that aren't half anything

**GOOD FOR:**  
Catching lightning in a bottle

**ORDER THIS:**  
Primitivo

→ 704 Bay St, S.I. (718-448-8466, vinumnyc.com).  
Drinks for two: \$102.

way its boar sausage unlocks a wine's chewy earthiness to the pâté's caress of a wine's rounder notes. "The only time I've had anything like this," said our well-traveled drinking companion, "was at a place in Florence that had no menu. They just sat and talked you through."

The intimacy is no-frills, no-pressure. As if to emphasize that breeziness, every time a waiter walks away from your table, you'll catch the text across the back of his fitted muscle T-shirt: TONIGHT'S FORECAST...99% CHANCE OF WINE! Say it soft and it's almost like praying.

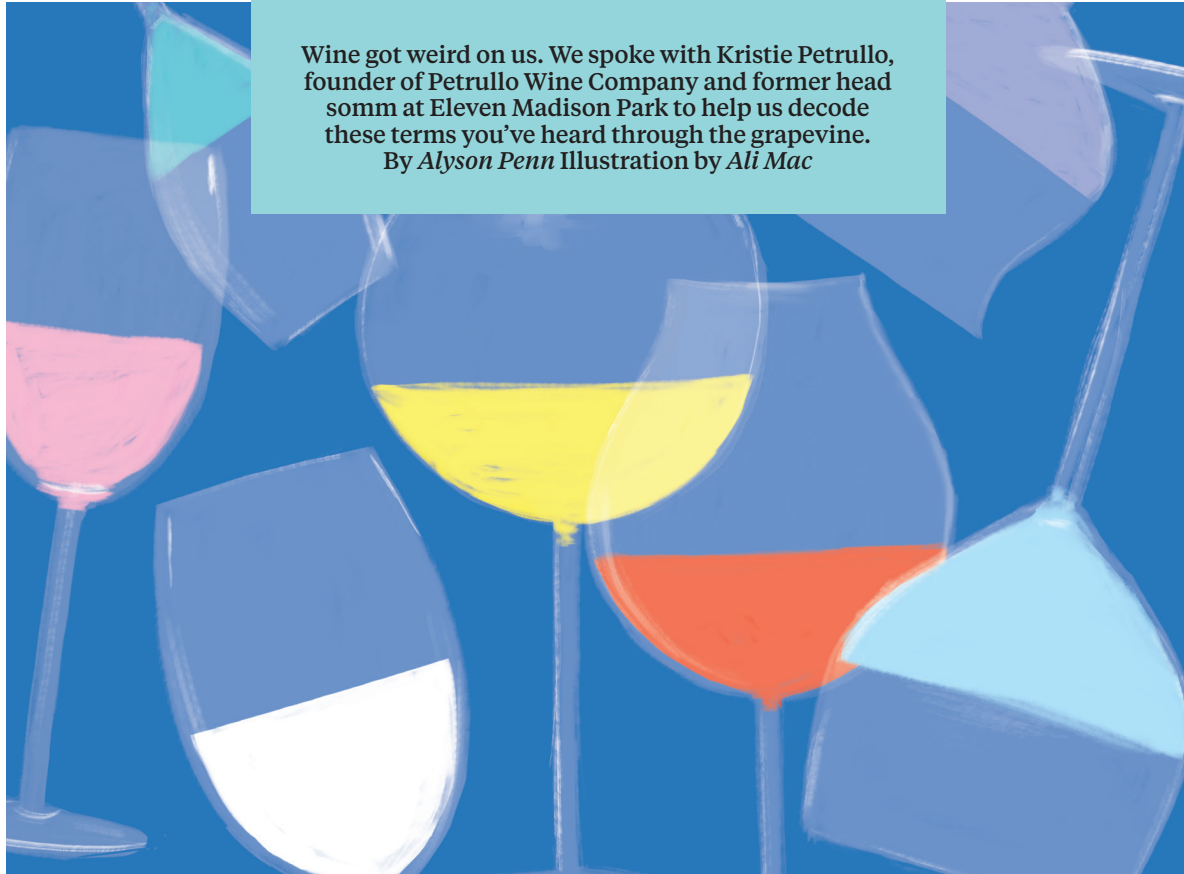
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WINE GUIDE

# Wine for dummies

Wine got weird on us. We spoke with Kristie Petruzzo, founder of Petruzzo Wine Company and former head somm at Eleven Madison Park to help us decode these terms you've heard through the grapevine.  
By Alyson Penn Illustration by Ali Mac



## Natural

Think of this as the umbrella term for a winemaker using zero to minimal intervention or manipulation in the vines and in the winery. That means no pesticides, chemicals or additives like sugar or cultivated yeast. But Petruzzo explains one caveat: “There is no legal classification or certification” for a wine to be considered natural.

**Why you order it:** You take your wines as they are.

## Organic

Organic wine means no pesticides and chemicals were used in the vineyard, but there may be additives or manipulation in the winery. According to Petruzzo, the process to become certified organic is crazy expensive, so a lot of small vineyards unofficially

follow these rules.

**Why you order it:** Healthy vines make healthy wines.

## Biodynamic

Think of it as organic but turned several notches up. It’s essentially a theory by philosopher Rudolf Steiner that promotes biodiversity to the fullest, meaning that the soil, trees, bugs, etc., are all equally important to creating the healthiest vino from the surrounding environment. Some biodynamic practices include using your own compost, prepping with herbal spray and growing grapes by the lunar calendar.

**Why you order it:** You believe Mercury is in retrograde.

## Vegan

Even though wine is, well, wine, animal by-products are usually

involved. For the fining process (adding a substance to the wine to remove basic particles), the winemaker uses bentonite (a type of clay), charcoal or any nonanimal product instead of egg whites or gelatin.

**Why you order it:** Duh.

## Pét-nat

Think of this as the hippie younger sibling of champagne. The juice is bottled before the first fermentation finishes, with no yeasts or sugars added. Pét-nat (short for *pétillant-naturel*) has a light bubble with a nuttier and richer mouthfeel, and it may have a bit of a hazy color.

**Why you order it:** You’re bored with champagne but still want the fizz.

## Orange

Orange is a type of natural wine

made from white grapes. The seeds and skin are crushed with the grapes and retained during fermentation, creating the darker color and a slightly dry, citrus or sourdough taste.

**Why you order it:** You don’t see the world in red and white.

## Blue

If you’re not a purist when it comes to vino, blue wine from the Spanish company Gik might just be your poison. The team behind the nontraditional wine wanted to mix things up “for fun” with a blend of red and white grapes. The skin of red grapes and indigotin (indigo dye) gives the drink a deep blue hue. And though the sweet, fruity wine is not available in New York City yet, it’s scheduled to arrive later this year.

**Why you order it:** Instagram.

Hello New Friend, gin and fresh blood orange juice cocktail



## JUST OPENED

The city's first farm brewery restaurant opens in Brooklyn —and a LES bar reopens.

### ↑ Annicka

The Greenpoint restaurant and bar only serves booze that's made in New York.

→ 544 Manhattan Ave, Brooklyn (718-599-1556, annickanyc.com)

### Bar Belly

The Leadbelly revamps as "midcentury coastal." With a piano (natch?).

→ 14 Orchard St (barbellnyc.com)

## FEAST YOUR EYES

### Boozy hot chocolate

What better way to warm up than with melted milk chocolate, Baileys and vanilla ice cream?

→ PHD Terrace at Dream Midtown, 210 W 55th St (646-756-2044, phdterrace.com), \$14.



PHOTOGRAPHS (FROM TOP): COURTESY ANNICKA; COURTESY DREAM MIDTOWN

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