

# CUISINE NEWS

## New concept will be 'paradise' for wine, beer and spirits lovers

BY LINDSEY NESMITH  
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A cross between Total Wine, banquet hall and wine bar, Paradise Wine is coming soon to the Pavilion Shopping Center in North Naples. Owners Leigh Benoliel and Blaine East promise 3,000 wines, 1,200 liquors and 800 craft beers in their retail operation. Several in-house selections will also be available on tap at two tasting bars and the full-service bar.

The idea was born when Ms. Benoliel and Mr. East watched a friend enjoy runaway success with a similar concept in North Carolina. It was so popular that there ended up being three stores, Ms. Benoliel says about the sip-while-you-shop experience.

She and Mr. East worked in their friend's flagship store for about six months before deciding to do some reconnaissance in Florida for opening their own store. A Florida native who had enjoyed a career in developing shopping centers, Mr. East was eager to return to the Sunshine State. Ms. Benoliel had worked as a producer and editor for network television and was ready for a change in scenery from southern California.

"We drove from one end of Tamiami Trail to the other, and when we came to Naples, I said, 'This is the place,'" Ms. Benoliel says. After three more trips, Mr. East was also convinced.

Paradise Wine will open in the former site of Anthony's Ladies Apparel. In addition to the retail operation, there will be an event space, an education room, a



Paradise Wine, set to open in July in the Pavilion Shopping Center, will have a retail operation as well as a full bar, tasting bars, event space and wine education programs.

catering kitchen and a 3,000-square-foot patio where guests will be able to enjoy their purchases.

Ms. Benoliel describes it as "80 percent retail, 20 percent infotainment," meaning that customers will not only find a wide variety of beverages to purchase, they will also be able to avail themselves of classes curated by Director of Wine Education Jim Morris and presented by a wide variety of experts from the shop's distributors and suppliers.

Bartender and restaurant competitions will give professionals in the local food and wine industry the chance to compete to have their creations featured at Paradise Wine, and the partners also hope to

draft local restaurants and catering companies for events.

For more information and to watch for an official opening announcement, visit paradisewinellc.com or visit the store's Facebook page.

### Naples Winter Wine Festival announces special start for 2016

Naples Winter Wine Festival has announced plans to open its 2016 festivities with a tasting celebrating the legendary 1976 Judgment of Paris (also known as the Paris Wine Tasting of 1976), a competition in which two American wineries, Chateau Montelena and Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, bested French submissions and



won credibility and renown for California wineries.

Attending the commemorative tasting will be Steven Spurrier, the Parisian wine merchant who created and hosted the original event; George Taber, former Time Magazine journalist who covered the event; and Bo Barrett of Chateau Montelena and Ted Baseler of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, who will present a tasting of their wineries' celebrated vintages.

"We are thrilled to bring the 'wine event of the century' to the Naples Winter Wine Festival," Sandi Moran, co-chair of the 2016 festival, says. "We always try to offer guests unique experiences found nowhere else in the world, and this year's event is no exception. Guests will have an incomparable opportunity to taste wines from the very wineries that put California on the map."

The commemorative event at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 28, at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort will launch a weekend of NWWF festivities themed "Great Expectations" for 2016. Tickets for the 1976 Judgment of Paris commemoration are \$1,500 per person and will go on sale this fall. For more information, call 514-2239 or visit napleswinefestival.com. ■

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