

Wine Director Raj Parr | RN74

SANDHI WINES & MICHAEL MINA RESTAURANT GROUP

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Photographs courtesy of RN74 and Raj Parr

WHO

Wine Director Raj Parr oversees the wine program at Michael Mina restaurant group and is part of a team producing Sandhi Wines.

WHY

He's been the wine director for all the Mina Group restaurants since 2003 and has more recently started producing wine in Santa Barbara. He's known for his wine knowledge and passion for learning.

BOOKS

- *Secrets of the Sommeliers: How to Think and Drink Like the World's Top Wine Professionals* [[Buy It](#)]

RECOMMENDED BY

- [Sommelier Richard Betts](#) of Betts & Scholl, CC: Wine and Sombra Mezcal

- [Sommelier Mark Bright](#) of Saison and Vinyl in San Francisco, CA

Q & A WITH SOMMELIER RAJ PARR

Q. What is about the wine program at RN74 that makes everyone wants to work for you?

A. I love fine dining and that's great, but to have a restaurant that is fun and exciting, I think it attracts a lot of people who want to work with us. We have a pretty extensive wine by the glass program. We have a lot of affordable and delicious wines, not just the fancy wines. We created a place that I want to hang out in myself, without too much pretension. The wine list is deep and strong in the wines we love in Burgundy and Rhone.

Q. What is about wines by the glass programs that is so hard to have a good one?

A. It's a serious commitment. You have to buy the right wines, make sure you store them, and you have to make sure the wines move. You have to train the staff and make sure the wines are poured at the right temperature and in the right stemware. It's difficult. It takes money and time and energy.

Some people want an easy by the glass program and just have some ordinary white wine and red wine, and that's fine. But, for us, we believe that to have a pretty serious wine by the glass program really makes a difference.

Q. You've starting making your own wine.

A. Yes Sandhi Wines - we started making wine in 2009, which was our first vintage. I spend a lot of time down in Santa Barbara, every other week, working in the vineyards, etc.

Q. What style are you working towards?

A. Something high acid, textural, with structure, salinity and crunchy fruit. I'm not a big fan of soft wine. I want Pinots that are crunchy and firm textured. We don't aim to make soft wines, although in 2011, it's a softer vintage. It's still going to be good with food and not just a sipping wine.

FIND | Wine Stores

Ferry Plaza Wine Merchant

It's in the ferry building and they have a great selection.

Arlequin Wine Merchant

It's like a San Francisco version of Chambers Street Wines. They are fantastic. You go there anytime and find Foillard on the shelf.

[See [details.](#)]



La Ciccia | Yuzuki
Photographs courtesy of La Ciccia | Yuzuki

EAT | Restaurants

La Ciccia

It's a Sardinian restaurant that's unreal. The chef's Italian from Sardinia. I've taken Italians there who say "what the hell's this!"

Yuzuki

An unbelievable Japanese Izakaya place. Wow, it's a knockout and nobody knows about it. An amazing, authentic Japanese Izakaya.



Bar Agricole | NOPA | Bar Agricole
Photographs courtesy of Bar Agricole | NOPA | Bar Agricole

DRINK | Wine

Bar Agricole

Down in the Mission area with a focused and interesting wine list that works with the food.

NOPA

For late nights and after I work, I'll head here. They have a great by the glass program. They are casual too. You can always count on them to have some delicious wines by the glass.

SOMMELIER'S WINE RECS



DRINK | Wine

Germany | Riesling

I've been enjoying some really great German rieslings. 2010 has been a great vintage. Specifically, the Selbach Riesling Kabinett (Fish Label) is delicious and Loosen made some really delicious 2010s as well. The Leitz Riesling at around \$15 retail is a really great value and they are just a wonderful producer.

[See [details.](#)]

Corsica | Rosé

One of my favorite rosés is from Corsica called Antonio Arena. There are a lot of good rose producers from Corsica. It's a totally untapped and unknown rosé market.

[See [details.](#)]

France | Burgundy

I'm really loving the 2010 Chablis. It's a great vintage for Chablis. The straight Chablis from Dauvissat is unbelievable and the Domaine Louis Michel Chablis is a great everyday wine and their Petit Chablis is worth a try too.

Also delicious in 2010, is the Domaine de la Cadette, the Bourgogne Vézelay.

France | Beaujolais

A great bottle of Marcel Lapierre Morgon beaujolais is one of the best values in the wine world.

[See [details.](#)]

France | Rhone

2010 of the Northern Rhone and Cotes du Rhones French - it's one of the most interesting and delicious vintages. I love syrah from the Northern Rhone. It's pretty spectacular.

The reds from St. Joseph can be some of the most interesting and best value wines in the world. A small producer called Gonon in St. Joseph makes knockout wine.

[See [details.](#)]

France | Loire

There's a producer Jacky Blot of Domaine de la Taille Aux Loups makes a sparkling Montlouis called "Triple Zero" and it's incredible and amazing. He also makes still Montlouis and Vouvray.

[See [details.](#)]

France | Jura

Another region I love is the Jura. Not necessarily the oxidative style, but I love the wines from Tissot, who's making Chardonnay, a Pinot Noir, Trousseau - lovely wines from the Jura.

[See [details.](#)]

USA | California

There's a lot happening in California too with small producers like [Arnot-Roberts](#) and [Matthiasson](#). Steve Matthiasson is an amazing guy. And there's a producer called Jolie Laide who makes a Trousseau Gris. It's an amazing time to be in California.