

WOMEN OF WINE CHARITIES

# Sangria Throwdown! 2025



Thursday, May 15, 2025  
Mercedes-Benz of Houston Greenway

*Benefiting the Houston Area Women's Center*



## Welcome to our 11<sup>th</sup> WOW Sangria Throwdown!

When we first created this event in 2012 with five competitors in a small space upstairs at El Real we had no idea it would become so popular and grow so large. We are eternally grateful to the competitors, underwriters, and product sponsors that make this possible. Of course, it takes an incredible committee and a supportive Board of Directors to make this crazy event happen and we are blessed with both.

We'd like to recognize our committee members here and thank them for their time and friendship. They brought so much fun, inspiration, and experience to the planning.

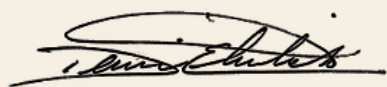
Wendall Braniff	Diana Castro	Andrea Clark
Daisy Durham	Kathleen Endler	Erica Fine
Melissa Frazier	Traci Hahn	Christine Hollenberg
Barbara Lazar	Kim Lytle	Constance McDerby
Anne Murphy	Glory Ngwolo	Jeannie Podraza
Beenish Rehmat	Laura Rosenberger	Joan Sokol
Juliana Villacorta		

We'd also like to especially thank Donna Giles for all the design and graphics work that makes our events look so good.

All of this is done to benefit the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) whose tireless efforts to end domestic violence and provide support and shelter to survivors and their families inspire us. We've set a goal to donate \$150,000 to HAWC this year and the funds raised this evening will help get us there. We thank you for your support in achieving these lofty goals.

We hope you enjoy the evening and find inspiration for your own Sangria party. If you have any questions about our organization, becoming a member, or are in need of HAWC's services, please find any of our board members tonight.

Cheers!



Denise Ehrlich  
Co-Chair, Sangria Throwdown



Nicole Alcock  
Co-Chair, Sangria Throwdown

# THANK YOU!

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR LIFETIME MEMBERS

Nicole Anderson	Melissa Frazier	Monique G. Studak, Thirst for Knowledge
Stephanie Baird, Journey into Wine	Donna Giles, Unified Resources	Jill Vidal-Raines, EB Inc.
Diana Castro	Christine Hollenberg	Pamela Rape
Patricia Chapman J.D., L.L.M., Attorney at Law	Tina Lyles, @ Be Free Management	Gail Viele
Carol Dalton	Laura Rosenberger, JLL Real Estate Capital LLC	Wendall Braniff
Julie Cogan	Sandra Shafer	Dawn Yeung, The Yeung Institute
Denise Ehrlich, Renaissance Wine Marketing	Tharen Simpson	
	Karin Singley	

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSORS

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## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PATRON MEMBERS

Patricia Andrews	Amy Gross	Amanda Lenertz	Kristi Pitre
Presha Carr	Traci Hahn	Laura Liang	Liz Selig
Jennifer Chavis	Candus Hinderer	Karen Matlock	Jimmarie Shiyon
Tamra Daniels	Kimberly Hulsey	Antoinette Maywald	Natalie Noelle Tsui
Carrie Ferroukhi	Alli Jarrett	Anne Murphy	Angelica Vasquez
Julie Gartner	Roxanne Langley	Robin Noser	
Rita Garza	Dierdre Lehman	Suzan Pickels	



## THANKS TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS

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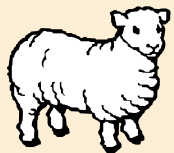
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ATTORNEY AT LAW

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Rosenberger*

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**SAUSAGE TREE**  
PURE IRISH VODKA

  
MARQUES DE LA CONCORDIA  
FAMILY OF WINES  
SINCE 1870

## RAFFLES

### 101 - Be Our Guest! Wine & Food Week – May 31, 2025

This gift basket is full of treats! It includes four (4) Wine Rendezvous Grand Tasting & Chef Showcase tickets for the Wine & Food Week event on Saturday May 31, 2025 in The Woodlands, wine, accessories and more. The Wine Rendezvous Grand Tasting has been touted as one of the most spectacular wine & culinary events in the country. Slip into your finest cocktail attire and be in the company of serious wine enthusiasts as you enjoy wine, chef demonstrations and culinary offerings from numerous restaurants.

**Generously donated by Constance McDerby. Valued at \$850**



### 102 - Wine Tasting for 8 plus Riedel Vinum 4-piece wine glass sets

Create your own wine tasting experience for 8 people! Want to learn about wines from Spain? Or how about Australia? Monique Studak, who has spent over 25 years in the wine industry, will expertly guide you as she shares her combined passion for wine with her desire to educate. Not only will you get to try 4 different wines, each guest will get their own set of Riedel Vinum wine glasses to take home and continue their wine journey.

**Generously donated by Thirst for Knowledge (Monique Studak) and Renaissance Wine Marketing LLC (Denise Ehrlich). Valued at \$950**

### 103 - Journey to Chocolate Bliss at Mostly Chocolate

*Mostly*  
CHOCOLATE

Calling all chocoholics! Enjoy a private chocolate factory tour at Mostly Chocolate for 4 guests that includes a single origin chocolate tasting experience and a complimentary 6-piece chocolate box per person. This is a family-owned Houston business started by husband-and-wife team David and Rina Kamkhagi in 2004.

So, whether you prefer bonbons or truffles, you are bound to be delighted by an unforgettable experience. Please call 713-784-5994 to schedule in advance. **Expires December 31, 2025** (excludes November and December). **Generously donated by Dany Kamkhagi, Mostly Chocolate. Valued at \$700**

### 104 - Raise Your Spirits with William Price Distilling

When you are with your favorite people, raise your spirits with spirits from William Price Distilling! True to their Texas heritage, William Price Distilling embodies the Urban Texan while paying homage to their Texas ancestors. Sample some of their best sellers with this gift basket, which includes:

2 - 750 ml bottles of Coffee Liqueur – cold brew made in collaboration with Katz Coffee

2 - 750 ml bottles of Straight Rye Whiskey 2 - 750 ml bottles of Limoncello Liqueur

The next time you are looking to have a good time with good people, raise your glass with the good spirits from William Price Distilling! **Generously donated by Bryan Clary, Co-Founder and President, William Price Distilling. Valued at \$230**





## RAFFLES

### 105: Celebrate with a Patròn Tequila Gift Set!

This luxurious Patròn Tequila gift basket is perfect for tequila enthusiasts! This set has it all!

1 - 750 ml Patron Silver    1 - 750 ml Patron Reposado    1 - 750 ml Patron Anejo    1 - 750 ml Patron El Alto  
4 - rocks glasses    4 - shot glasses    Barware - shaker, beaker, spoon and tongs

This is your chance to have a set that allows you to craft the perfect cocktail or sip on the rocks! **Generously donated by Trevor Walker, Transatlantic Wine & Spirits of Texas. Valued at \$400**

### 106: Riel Restaurant – Chef Tasting & Wine Dinner for 4

Get ready to savor the globally inspired gulf coast cuisine at Riel! Dedicated to sourcing the highest quality seasonal ingredients, Riel is about highlighting local flavors, utilizing regionally-sourced products and allowing room for interpretation. You and 3 guests get to be guided through a Chef Tasting and Wine Dinner by Executive Chef, co-owner and Manitoba-native Ryan Lachaine. Tax and gratuity are not included. Contact Riel for reservations, 48-hour notice is required. **Generously donated by Dante Laugier, Riel Restaurant. Valued at \$400**



### 107: Massage, Wine and Art!

Soothe your aches and pains with Massage Therapy at Green Chiropractic, then unwind at home with a glass of wine while enjoying a beautiful and original piece of art by Kate Keating! This package includes a Felix Solis 70th Anniversary gift box with two Riedel Vinum Bordeaux Grand Cru wine glasses and two bottles of Condado de Oriza Gran Reserva, Ribero del Duero 2016 (92-point score from Wine Enthusiast) - a robust expression of the Tempranillo grape, carefully selected from the vines that grow on clay and loam soils in Ribera del Duero. During your 60-minute massage, Dr. Green will work with you to get to the underlying cause of any body aches and leave you with at-home tools to help keep those pains away. Bring on your bliss! **Generously donated by Dr. Greg Green, DC (Green Chiropractic), Renaissance Wine Marketing LLC (Denise Ehrlich) and Kate Keating. Valued at \$500**

### 108: Texas Wine School Class for 2 Plus Wine & Gourmet Gift Basket



Want to have fun and learn about wine? Use your \$150 gift certificate to enjoy a class of your choice at the Texas Wine School. Once you are back home, uncork this Gainey Vineyard Ltd Edition Pinot Noir 2016 described as having aromas of black plum with earth and dried herbs on the nose of this bottling, followed by the palate of juicy flavors of baked cherry and more plum with sharp baking spices, all framed by strong but pleasant tannins. Pair the wine with gourmet goodies from DR Delicacy including truffle chips, truffle honey, white truffle oil, black olive tapenade, goat cheese & espelette chips, and cocoa powdered chocolate truffles!

**Generously donated by Texas Wine School (Liz Palmer), DR Delicacy (Diane Roederer) and Renaissance Wine Marketing LLC (Denise Ehrlich). Valued at \$450**

## RAFFLES

### 109: Alley Theatre Tickets for 2 & \$150 Gift Card for Lucille's Fine Southern Food

Enjoy the magic of live theatre at one of Houston's most iconic institutions! From riveting dramas to laugh out loud comedies, the Alley Theatre delivers unforgettable performances by world class artists. Attend a performance of your choice during the 2025-2026 season. Prior to the show, enjoy the Green Room with a private bar and complimentary snacks. Complete the evening with dinner at Lucille's Fine Southern Food, a nationally acclaimed restaurant in the heart of Houston's Museum District. **Generously donated by Alley Theatre (Debbie Lackey), and Lucille's Fine Southern Food. Valued at \$420**

### 110: Houston Grand Opera Tickets for 2 & \$300 Gift Certificate for Guard and Grace

From timeless classics to groundbreaking new works, Houston Grand Opera delivers an evening of culture, elegance and memorable artistry. Attend a performance of your choice during the 2025-2026 season. Complete the evening with dinner at Guard and Grace, a modern steakhouse with flair and an excellently curated wine program. Reservations required. **Generously donated by Houston Grand Opera (Greg Robertson) and Guard and Grace (Matthew McLaughlin). Valued at \$700**



### 111: Three-Course Wine Dinner at Candelari's Italiano for 4 people

For a real Italian experience, enjoy a chef-curated menu paired with wines at Candelari's Italiano, an institution that has been serving Houston for over 20 years. Their famous Italian sausage is made from a secret family recipe. Using only fresh ingredients, hand-made pastas and a wood fired oven for pizzas, you will be delighted with every bite! **Generously donated by Candelari's Italiano (Naveen Nayak). Valued at \$800**

### 112: Drive off the lot in a Mercedes Benz!

#### Mercedes Benz G Model Ride-On Kids Car with Remote

The Mercedes Benz iconic and forever timeless G wagon ride-on car looks like the type of car your cool dad drives when taking you out for ice cream and adventures. Whether your child is on an imaginary high-speed chase, a jungle trek, or simply a casual late-night cruise, this car is all they will need it to be. The parental remote is a great addition, giving you control of the vehicle if the child is too small to drive themselves. **Generously donated by Mercedes-Benz Greenway. Valued at \$350.**



# LIVE AUCTION

## TRAVEL THE WORLD THROUGH A WINE & FOOD TASTING FOR 10

You won't be disappointed with this fabulous, educational, and fun tasting combining delicious wines with scrumptious bites! Master Sommelier Guy Stout will present a selection of wines from around the world in his always fun and inimitable way, and Chef Barbara Friedel McKnight will present a selection of fun bites paired with the wines and all enjoyed in her lovely, historic Hofhienz House venue near Downtown Houston.

One of only 278 Master Sommeliers in the world, Guy Stout has been recognized as a Houston Icon for his contributions to the wine and food industry of Texas. Guy is a Certified Wine Educator (CWE), a Certified Specialist of Wine (CSW) and a previous President of the Society of Wine Educators. A graduate of the University of Houston Hilton School, Guy has served on the board of directors of the Court of Master Sommelier and is an active wine judge for a variety of national competitions. These days Guy and his wife Kim are focused on their eponymous winery, Stout Family Wines, along with son Ian.



Culinaire Catering Chef and Founder Barbara Friedel McKnight is a graduate of both the University of Texas at Austin and the Baden-Wuerttemberg Hotel and Restaurant School in Germany. Years of experience at five-star Hotel Savoy in Zurich, Switzerland and at Jackson & Co Catering in Houston led to the founding of Culinaire - Inspired Catering and Events in 2001. Culinaire has grown into one of Houston's most highly regarded catering companies, and since 2006 has been headquartered in the historic Hofheinz House near Downtown Houston. Chef Friedel McKnight's ongoing support for the community includes service on the boards of Recipe For Success, Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), Lawndale Art Center and Chaîne de Rôtisseurs.



**Generously donated by Barbara Friedel McKnight (Culinaire) and Guy Stout, MS (Stout Family Wines). Valued at \$4,400**

## MEET THE JUDGES

### PHAEDRA COOK

*Houston Food Finder*

Phaedra Cook is the editor and publisher of *Houston Food Finder* and has covered Houston's restaurant and bar scene since 2011. After many years of contributing to *My Table Magazine*, in 2014 she became the lead restaurant critic for the *Houston Press*—the first freelancer to ever have that role. She was hired as food editor before leaving to start *Houston Food Finder*, the first online-only publication exclusively covering the city's restaurant and bar scene.



### KATIE STONE

*Houston Restaurant Weeks*



Katie Stone is president of The Cleverley Stone Foundation, which produces Houston Restaurant Weeks and Eat Drink HTX. Now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year, HRW is the largest annual fundraiser for the Houston Food Bank and has raised \$20 million. Founded by her late mother, philanthropist and media personality, Cleverley Stone in 2003.

While in college at UT Dallas as a part of their internationally acclaimed chess program, Katie founded USA Chess that organizes summer chess camps for children in over 100 cities across the U.S. Katie turned to professional poker and is now one of the most recognizable and skilled female poker players in the world.

### BAO ONG

*Houston Chronicle*

Bao Ong is the restaurant columnist for the *Houston Chronicle*. He previously worked on staff at *Eater New York*, *Bon Appétit* and *Time Out New York*. In addition to Bao's background in journalism, he also graduated from the French Culinary Institute. He moved to Houston in summer 2022 and in his first year, he won the top award in the Comment and Criticism category awarded by the Texas Managing Editors organization.



### ROBIN BARR SUSSMAN

*Food, Wine & Travel Writer*



Native Houstonian Robin Barr Sussman (rbs@pdq.net) is a freelance culinary, wine and travel writer who studied at the Culinary Institute of America Greystone, Calif. As a chef for Sonoma County wineries, her specialty was food and wine pairing. Her stories have appeared in *Texas Monthly Magazine*, *Wine & Spirits*, *Houston CultureMap*, *Houston Modern Luxury Magazine*, *Houston CityBook Magazine*, *Fodor's*, *BestWineries.com*, *Private Clubs*, and more.

### ERNIE MANOUSE

*TV and Radio Host*

Ernie Manouse is an American television host, radio personality, writer and producer. He currently produces and co-hosts *Hello Houston*, a new daily radio program on Houston Public Media Radio 88.7FM. His work with HoustonPBS has met critical acclaim in the southern United States, earning him numerous KATIE awards and regional Emmy Awards.





# MIXOLOGISTS



## THOMAS MARSELLA

A Houston native and former musician, Thomas got his first start in the wine world by bar backing and polishing glasses at 13.

After moving through food prep and bartending duties, mentoring by Adele combined with private studies, he has established himself as a face of 13 and a shift manager. Thomas has passed his Introductory Sommelier. His favorite wines include many styles of Italian wine, with a growing interest in natural and biodynamic wines.

## BRENDA ARREDONDO



Brenda, a first generation American, has witnessed the growth of Houston and the expansion of the service industry during her nearly 20 years of experience. In that time she learned the foundational skills needed

to flourish in this career. Over the last 3 years she has been soaking up all things wine knowledge with 13 Celsius. She credits the mecca of diverse food and all the people she has connected with as the main reason Houston will forever be her first true love.

### The Sangroni

- 1 bottle La Farra Prosecco
- 4 oz orange juice
- 4 oz pineapple juice
- 4 oz Malfy Gin
- 4 oz Cocchi Rosa Americano Aperitivo
- 2 oz Campari
- 0.5 oz Yuzuko Yuzu juice
- 0.5 oz cherry syrup
- Combine all ingredients into a punch bowl, add ice as desired and stir. Add in fresh orange slices and maraschino cherries for extra fun!



# MIXOLOGISTS



## BRAD FOWLER

Brad Fowler, a native of Salt Lake City, started his service industry career in his hometown and favors whiskey cocktails for their straight-forwardness yet tricky balance challenges. His move to Houston landed him at Trattoria Sofia in the Heights at first and then he subsequently was recruited to join Candelari's Italiano where he serves an eclectic mix of long-time friendly and connected regulars reminiscent of Cheers which helps him to maintain his enthusiasm to innovate new tastes for their sophisticated and varied palates.

### Peach Passport

- 3 oz Ramon Roqueta Rosat, DO Catalunya, Spain
- 1 oz. white cranberry & peach juice
- .5 oz Bauchant Orange Liqueur, Cognac, France
- .5 oz St. Germaine
- Combine all the ingredients over ice, stir, and garnish with peach slices.



## MIXOLOGISTS



### JOSÉ M. OLAYOLA

José is a seasoned bartender and hospitality professional with a proven track record at some of Houston's top dining destinations, including Mi Luna Tapas Restaurant, Cyclone Anaya's, Backstreet Cafe, Mia Bella Trattoria, and a'Bouzy. He now serves as the bar manager at Pacha Nikkei, where he brings creativity, leadership, and a passion for mixology to the forefront.

#### Pacha Nikkei's Mist of Bloom

This makes a pitcher.

1 bottle of **Areyna Torrontés, Valle de Cafayate, Salta, Argentina**

1 oz Mathilde Peche Liqueur

2 oz apple and peach juice

2 oz white cranberry juice

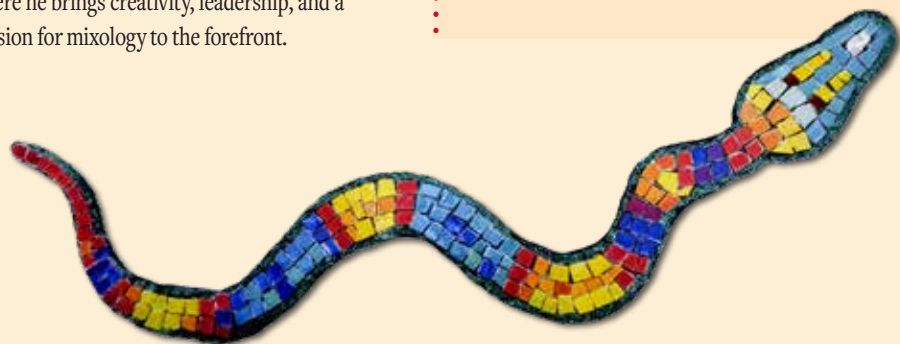
2 oz Caravedo Pisco Quebranta

0.5 oz simple syrup

1 oz Sprite

1 drop of lavender bitters

Combine all ingredients except the Sprite and let the mixture infuse overnight for best flavor. When ready to serve, pour over ice, top with Sprite, and add a drop of lavender bitters. Garnish with fresh peach slices and strawberries.



## MIXOLOGISTS



### SANDY EPPS & MARY DODSON



After many years working in the Music and Wine industries, owners Sandy Epps and Mary Dodson are frequently struck by the similarities of the two. Sharing the independent spirit of talented musicians and winemakers, they knew they could build a business that paid homage to that spirit and share it with friends and neighbors. Mary's keen sense of flavor profiles and food & wine pairings lead to delicious and inventive Wine & Dine events at Reata Cellars.

#### Cantaloupe?? Reata Can!

**SERVES 6**

3 oz Mary's Awesome Spicy Fermentation - Recipe below

1oz ginger beer (non-alcoholic)

1 oz fresh squeezed lime juice

2 oz Vermut Flores - White Vermouth

2 oz **Drumshambo Gunpowder Irish Gin**

2 oz **Prospero Brut Sparkling, Spain**

Stir together all ingredients except sparkling. Pour mixture evenly over 6 cups of ice. Top each glass with equal amounts of sparkling. Garnish with a cantaloupe melon ball, a sprig of mint and a wedge of Lime.

#### MARY'S AWESOME SPICY FERMENTATION:

3 cups cantaloupe Juice

1 serrano pepper - de-seeded, sliced in half

Zest of 2 large Limes

3 handfuls of fresh mint leaves, lightly crushed to release aromas 1 stalk lemongrass

Steep together juice, mint, lemongrass and lime zest for about an hour. Add serrano for last 10 minutes (Be careful -the longer it steeps - the hotter it gets!)

Store in refrigerator up to one week.





# MIXOLOGISTS



## LISA CARPENTER

Originally from New York, I've now been in Houston for over 20 years. I've always been in the service industry, but after moving here and being able to experience such a diverse and incredible food and beverage scene it ignited my passion to explore different areas. The Library has presented a fantastic opportunity to learn so much about wine, work with a very knowledgeable team, and be part of a lovely community that is so happy to have us.



### The Library "Hall Pass" Sangria

#### SPICED SIMPLE SYRUP:

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper
- 3 whole cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 dried allspice berries
- 1 star anise

Boil water; combine all ingredients and let sit overnight. Strain through cheesecloth.

#### SANGRIA BASE:

- 1 750 ml bottle **Areyña Malbec, Luján de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina**
- 1/2 cup **Bauchant Orange Liqueur, Cognac**
- 1/2 cup **Alfonso Solera Brand, Jerez**
- 1/3 cup L'Aperitivo Nonino Botanical Drink
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1 orange, 1 lemon, 1 lime, 1 gala apple, 1 cup pitted dark cherries
- Combine all ingredients with Spiced simple syrup, let sit overnight, serve over ice.

# MIXOLOGISTS



## JESSICA GARCIA

Jessica Garcia is the Wine Director of her family's restaurant, El Meson in the rice village. She graduated with a Bachelor of the Arts from St. John's Collage in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In an effort to hone her knowledge, she made her way to California where she worked for Pisoni Vineyards and Hahn Family Wines, as well as Lawson Dry Hills in Marlborough, New Zealand. She also worked as sommelier at the Casanova Restaurant in Carmel. She returned to Houston in 2015 immediately raising the bar for the El Meson wine program. Under her supervision El Meson earned Wine Spectator's designation as Best of Award of Excellence since 2016.

### My Sherry Amor

- 3 oz **La Posta Glorieta Pinot Noir, Mendoza, Argentina**
- 1 oz Cream Sherry
- 1/2 oz Bourbon
- 1/2 oz Luxardo Cherry Liqueur
- 1 oz Pomegranate Juice
- Splash of St. Elizabeth's Allspice Dram or infuse with cinnamon sticks
- Garnish with sliced oranges and apples.



# MIXOLOGISTS



## DANNY RODRIGUEZ

From bussing tables to crafting jaw-dropping cocktails, Danny Rodriguez does it all. Born and raised in the heart of Miami, Florida, Danny developed a passion for creating unique and memorable experiences for every guest.

With 12 years of experience in the food and hospitality industry, eight of those behind the bar. Danny has played a key role in opening some of Houston's most high-end restaurants and bars, including Guard & Grace, Credence, Clarkwood and Loch Bar.

Danny's broad knowledge of spirits, liqueurs, and flavor balance paired with his artistic creativity has shaped him into a versatile and innovative mixologist. He is currently tending bar at Doris Metropolitan in Houston, where he brings his expertise back to fine dining with a refined and elevated approach to cocktail service.

### Doris Metropolitan Sandia Sangria

- 2 btls Ramon Roqueta Rosat, DO Catalunya, Spain
- 3/4 oz Alfonso Solera Brandy, Jerez, Spain
- 3/4 oz Fruitful mixology watermelon liquor
- 1/2 oz simple syrup
- Infuse with diced strawberries, strain
- Chill
- Place a cubed strawberry in bottom of wine glass, pour over ice cubes, garnish with small watermelon wheel cut into pie pieces, center cut to slide on glass, mint sprig.



# MIXOLOGISTS



STELLA'S  
WINE BAR



## JUDITH PIOTROWSKI

As a bartender, Judith cut her teeth at a corporate chain. A few years later, she found herself in some of the most successful craft cocktail bars in Houston. After a few years, Judith made her way into the world of luxury travel, working at places like the Four Seasons and The Post Oak Hotel. As the Director of Bars at The Post Oak Hotel, Judith is in charge of product placement, menu development, and training for the beautiful Post Oak Hotel property.

### Everything and the Kitchen Sink

- 1 oz. Medusa Albariño, Rías Baixas, Spain
- 1 oz. Ramon Roquesa Rosat, DO Catalunya, Spain
- 1 oz. Korbel Sweet Rosé Sparkling Wine, California
- .5 oz. Freakshow Zinfandel, Lodi
- .5 oz. Alfonso Solera Brandy, Jerez, Spain
- .25 oz Bauchant Orange Liqueur, Cognac, France
- .25 oz. La Fuerza Rojo Vermouth, Mendoza, Argentina
- .25 oz. Wakaze Yuzu Sake
- 1 oz. Pineapple juice
- .5 Lemon
- .5 oz. Simple syrup
- 1 dash Cherry bark vanilla bitters
- 2 dashes Orange bitters
- Combine all ingredients except the sparkling rosé wine, shake and strain into a wine glass. Top with sparkling rosé and add ice. Garnish with cherries and orange slices.





# MIXOLOGISTS



## ZEB FLETCHER

Born and raised in Houston. Fell in love with beer first, then cocktails, then wine. In the industry for 15 years now. Nobie's is essentially a part of my life. I also play the drums and guitar.



### Another Love Sangria

Add 18 oz. each of fresh jasmine and toasted coconut to gin and let them infuse in a jar overnight. Cut lemons into wheels, cube the mango, and deseed the jackfruit. Toast the cinnamon until fragrant, not burned. Strain the infused Gin and combine with all the ingredients in a large punch bowl or pitcher. Cover and let it sit for a few hours - the longer the better. Add ice when ready to serve and garnish the glass with fresh mint and a skewer of jackfruit and mango. Yields 4 litres.

1 btl **Areyna Torrontés, Valle de Cafayate, Salta, Argentina**

1 btl **Mayu Sauvignon Blanc, Chile**

500 ml jasmine toasted coconut infused **Drumshambo Gunpowder Irish Gin**

500 ml **Domaine de Rombeau Rivesaltes Rancio 09**

6 lemons

3-5 cups mango

4-6 cups jack fruit bulbs

6 Ceylon cinnamon sticks

Honey to taste



# MIXOLOGISTS



## ANDRES BLANCO

Andres is a native of Mexico City, and one of the top sommeliers in Houston. He recently joined the team at MAD, the second restaurant led by Michelin Starred BCN chef/owner Luis Roger. Andres has been collecting awards as he worked his way up through the ranks of the sommelier world. Most recently, Andres received a James Beard nomination for Outstanding Professional in Beverage Service while serving as Head Sommelier for Les Jardinier, another newly minted Michelin Star restaurant. Andres is no stranger to competition, having won Iron Sommelier twice (2017 and 2019), and will bring his "A game" to Sangria Throwdown. Blanco has worked to highlight Mexican wines throughout his career and founded MexSom, an organization that promotes wine education in the Latin American community through posting wine class videos in Spanish.

### SanMadria

In a large pitcher, combine the following:

12 oz of **Ramon Roqueta Rosat, DO Catalunya, Spain**

4.5 oz of Sangria Base (Recipe Below)

10 oz Fever Tree Soda Water

Add Lemon Wheel, Mint, Raspberries, Orange Peel and let steep (overnight is best). To serve, pour over ice, add more fruit and enjoy.

### SANGRIA BASE FOR A PITCHER

2.2 Simple Syrup

5 oz Sangria Syrup (Recipe Below)

1 oz **Drumshambo Gunpowder Irish Gin**

1 oz **Alfonso Solera Brandy, Jerez, Spain**

### SANGRIA SYRUP RECIPE- Makes 1 quart

3 cups orange juice

¾ cup lemon juice

3.5 ounces sugar

1 bay leaf

5 juniper berries

10 black peppercorns

1 cinnamon stick

2 cloves

1 bunch fresh mint, destemmed

Zest from 1 orange

Zest from 1 lemon

Combine all of the ingredients in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer, stirring constantly.

Once the sugar has dissolved, remove from the heat and allow to cool. Strain through a fine sieve and store in sealed container until ready to use.



# MIXOLOGISTS



## DANTE LAUGIER

Dante was born in Houston, and grew up in Sugar Land. He attended the University of Houston for Architecture and graduated in 2012. Dante's journey in the restaurant business started in 2007 as a dishwasher and bus boy at Outback later becoming a host and then server. A stint at Gaido's in Galveston brought him into the world of fine dining and on to Maggiano's Post Oak, Carabba's Kirby. After a small break for a year to work hotels, Dante landed a job at Pesce Seafood Culture as the private dining manager until the restaurant closed. Forays into catering with Chef Smirnov Catering and Event Elementz followed, and then in 2023 Laugier came to Riel where he now runs the wine program and the events and catering department.

### Amber In Alchemy

3 oz **Prospero Sparkling Rosé, Spain**

.75 oz **Drumshambo Gunpowder Irish Gin**

.5 oz **Chinola Passionfruit Liqueur**

.25 oz **St. Germain**

1.25 oz **Hibiscus tea**

.25 oz **Pisco**

.5 oz **Lime juice**



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## MATTHEW MCLAUGHLIN

Matthew began his lifelong love affair with wine at just twenty years old (don't tell the cops!) when he took over the wine program at the restaurant where he worked in Michigan as a young man. Over the course of the following thirty years, Matthew has worked in a variety of capacities in

the restaurant and wine world, including stints as the Wine Director at old favorites such as Mockingbird Bistro and The Tasting Room as well as his current post at Guard & Grace in downtown Houston. His years of work in the industry and passion for wine earned him the title of Iron Sommelier in 2024. In his off time, Matthew enjoys dining out with his wife, camping, and listening to his extensive vinyl collection.

### Gold Dust Woman

*\*This recipe is for a pitcher or punch bowl (serves twelve)*

Ingredients:

1 750 ml bottle **Gerard Bertrand "Orange Gold" wine**

12 oz **Dos Maderas Rum**

6 oz **Blood orange juice**

4.5 oz **Honey**

3 **Pears**

6 **toasted cinnamon sticks**

3 **Star anise pods**

**Saline solution**

12 **Dehydrated blood orange slices**

Step 1: **Make Pear Syrup**

1. Soak three pears in 12 oz of **Dos Maderas Rum** for two hours

2. Remove pears and set aside rum to be added to sangria later

3. Chop pears

4. Combine chopped pears in a saucepan with 4.5 oz honey, six toasted cinnamon sticks, and the three star anise pods. Sauté until pears are soft.

5. Strain syrup from pears and set aside pears for garnish

Step 2: **Make Sangria**

1. Pour bottle of **Gerard Bertrand "Orange Gold"** into pitcher

2. Add the 12 oz of **Dos Maderas Rum**, set aside from soaking pears

3. Combine with pear syrup, 6 oz blood orange juice, and 1 tbsp saline solution

4. Stir and add pears

5. Garnish each glass with dehydrated blood orange slice

*\*Pro Move\* -- before adding pears, fill two or three ice cube trays with your sangria mixture to make sangria ice cubes that melt back into sangria!*





## THANK YOU TO OUR MATADOR TEAMS

Companies and individuals gathered eight of their friends to form a Matador Team and choose a competitor to cheer on. We all know the competition is much more fun when you have a horse in the race! They enjoyed VIP tickets, and a team happy hour to get ready for the competition. Good luck to all and may the best team win!

### MATADOR TEAM

Wine Not?  
The Anonymous 8  
The Pour Decisions  
The Lunatics  
Firth Third Fiesta Femmes  
Bobbie's Boozy Babes  
La Familia  
Los Internacionales  
Vaqueras de Vino  
Crystal Lowe

### COMPETITOR

Doris Metropolitan  
13 Celsius  
Stella's Wine Bar  
MAD  
Riel  
Nobie's  
El Meson  
Candelari's Italiano  
Guard and Grace  
Reata Cellars



Jordan & Skala  
Engineers

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***See you in September!***



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