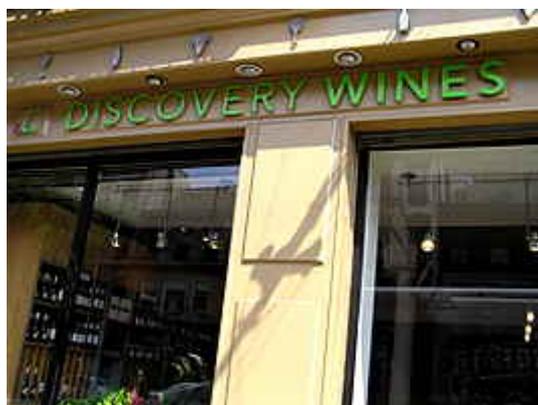


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## Discovery Wines Store NYC



Discovery Wines in the East Village - discover the difference!

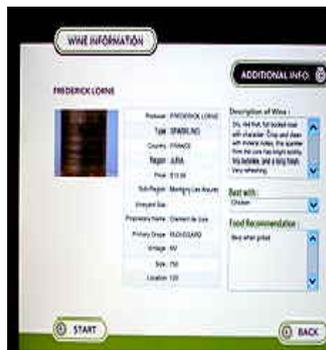


I first learned about [Discovery Wines](#) when I met Scott Reiner, one of the partners of Discovery Wines at a wine and tapas party on May 19, 2005, celebrating Spanish wines and the opening of **Secretes Fine Tapas**, a new tapas restaurant in the East Village. Over the course of the evening, I became intrigued with the concept of Discovery Wines, and when Scott invited me to a wine and tapas tasting at the store on June 16, 2005, I readily accepted.



When I arrived, I knew I had “discovered” a great find in Discovery Wines. First of all, the store is beautiful; it looks like it stepped out the pages of *Architectural Digest* with light wood, well-lit, wide aisles where shoppers with baby strollers and dogs are welcome, and where you can wander through the store without fear of running into cases of wine on the floor. There is also a bar where they have smaller tastings or host special events. The staff is knowledgeable and helpful without being pretentious or overbearing, and they have daily wine tastings! However, one of the most unique items that they have is their touch screen kiosk, where shop patrons can use the kiosk to scan their bottle of wine to learn about the nuances of the wine, as well as learn what types of food would pair well with it. I found myself entranced by the kiosk, when I entered in a price range and all of the wines in that price range appeared. I also tried finding bottles of wine by type of wine, as well as by food pairing choices for cheese, meat, seafood, etc. It is as simple as holding a bottle of wine under the scanner, and a list of the wine’s characteristics appears. This kiosk is amazing. Anyone can feel confident making a wine selection, even if they have limited wine knowledge.

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The wine tasting that I attended had 15 Spanish wines available that were poured by the Importers and Distributors, with a small selection of sparkling and white wines and a larger selection of some very interesting red wines in a wide range of prices, to fit most budgets and palates. Afterwards, I had the opportunity to sit and talk with the partners of Discovery Wines and learned more about them and their interesting wine store, which will celebrate its one-year anniversary on September 27, 2005.



**Luxury Experience Magazine:** There are 3 partners with 3 very diverse backgrounds: a former event planner/singer/restaurant manager, an ex-banker/wine importer, and an ex-academic film professor/software consultant/head wine buyer at a large New York wine store. Tell me about your backgrounds, and the concept behind Discovery Wines.

**Elisa Cooper:** I started throwing parties when I was 11 in Kentucky, became an opera major in college, came to New York and studied jazz while working at restaurants like many actors and singers. I didn't make it as a singer, but I did progress in restaurants and event planning.

**Scott Reiner:** I grew up in the Bahamas and England, worked as a banker and then later as a wine importer. I always loved wine and would travel with friends to discover new vineyards. Anthony and I select the wines for the store, and concentrate on smaller vineyards, so we really have a good idea of what is out there.

**Anthony White:** I taught film at Columbia, worked for a PR firm, and later worked for a software company in Texas where I consulted to many wine and spirits companies, and I was encouraged to take classes on wines, so I did. I later worked for 5 years as a head buyer for a large New York wine store.

**LEM:** As the saying goes, "knowledge is power", and wine knowledge is especially important today as consumers are becoming savvier. Although the road to becoming a Sommelier requires many long hours of classes, interested consumers can expand their wine knowledge from attending wine symposiums, wine paring dinners at restaurants, reading wine articles, through in-store wine tastings, and now they have another way of obtaining knowledge: through your kiosk, which allows them to shop for wines by category, price, nuances, find food and wine pairings, and even check the price of the bottle they selected. How did Discovery Wines decide to use this technology?

**Scott:** Our overall approach was that we wanted to change how people looked at wines, where they could search out smaller "boutique-y" stuff at great prices. We have daily tastings, and combined with the kiosk,

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we help consumers discover unknown wines. We have different types of consumers. Some know what they want, while others are not confident in their wine knowledge, but don't want to ask questions, so they only buy what they know. Consumers are now using the kiosk and are also interacting with the staff to increase their wine knowledge. Also, all of the information on the kiosk is also on our web site [Discovery Wines](#) so our consumers can pre-search their wine selections online before even coming to the store. We try to make our customers feel that wine doesn't have to be a snooty thing that if you like it, buy it.

**LEM:** Discovery Wines has a wide selection of wines from around the world from larger vineyards to artisanal, in all price ranges from bargains to rare collector wines. What are some of your criteria when selecting new wines?

**Scott and Anthony:** First and foremost, they should be delicious, and representative of what the wine should taste like. Second, we look for smaller productions. Third, we look for good value for what we can sell it for, as well as wines that are a good value regardless of price.

**LEM:** After the movie *Sideways* came out, suddenly pinot noir became "the" wine that everyone started drinking. Have you seen any other wine trends, such as any new "hot" wine regions or types of wines?

**Scott and Anthony:** Austrian wines are big, as are wines from VDP, and rosé wines are doing well, from all regions.

**LEM:** How often do you hold your Wine Tastings?

**Scott and Anthony:** We hold daily wine tastings, with larger tastings once per month. On Fridays and Saturdays from 3:00 pm &ndash; 6:00 pm, we have 4 distributors or winemakers come in and usually have around 12 wines available for the tasting.

**LEM:** What types of other events do you have at Discovery Wines?

**Ellisa:** We hold parties, corporate events, and bridal showers with "stock the bar" parties, where the wines are a unique gift and create a memory.

**LEM:** Wine is like music; sometimes you want something special to create a mood, but we all have a favorite genre. What is your personal favorite wine?

**Scott:** I'm a France guy; I love the Rhone Valley (Rhone, Burgundy and Bordeaux), Languedoc and Loire right now.

**Ellisa:** I like a wine that drinks like a meal; big, flavorful, soft, a wine that meets all of your needs in your mouth. I like acidity, but women that drink wine regularly have to make choices, since our metabolisms are different from men. I like wines that are easy &ndash; not a lot of tannins that have you reaching for the cheese. I like Austrian and Californian wines. And speaking of music, I love old style jazz: Sarah Vaughn, Nancy Wilson, and Rosemary Clooney, who is not the best singer, she just sings the best and she is from Kentucky!

**Anthony:** The 3 of us have similar palates, and like Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir, but Italy is my big thing, especially Sicily.

**LEM:** What are your future plans and ideas for Discovery Wines?

**Ellisa:** Expand the store and perhaps add a wine bar. We have a full kitchen and can do corporate events, chef events, and parties. The only thing that limits us is our creativity and our pocketbook. We work with people so that they will feel comfortable and at ease here. We just did a book signing, and people of all ages came downtown to attend.

**LEM:** What wines and regions do you see as the best value?

**Scott and Anthony:** Chile and Argentina, of course, but France has spectacular values even with the

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inflated Euro. You can find good values everywhere; you just have to search them out, which we do.

**LEM:** You have a Rare and Collector wine section. How do you select them?

**Scott and Anthony:** We select great wines that are good examples of what they should taste like at the price. We select wines that are older and hard to find, or just hard to find wines. For example Martinelli produces less than 200 cases per year of a type of wine so it is unbelievably hard to get.

**LEM:** Are wine labels important to customers when selecting a wine?

**Scott:** You would not believe on how many people select a wine by the label name. One of the favorite labels is Cockfighter's Ghost, which is an Australian wine.

**LEM:** If a customer could only purchase one wine to cellar, what would you recommend?

**Scott:** Château de Beaucastel, Hommage à Jacques Perrin, 2001 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, which is a big, luscious wine, that I would cellar for 20 years, although some people would start drinking it anytime after 15 years, with a price of \$400 a bottle.

After our meeting, I enjoyed wandering around the store and making some more discoveries. I believe I am now addicted to the kiosk, so if you come in and find a blonde woman glued to the kiosk, that would be me!

Read more about New York in the **Destinations, Restaurants, Chefs' Recipes, Gastronomy, Arts & Antiques, Music Scene** and **Wine Cellar** sections.

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