

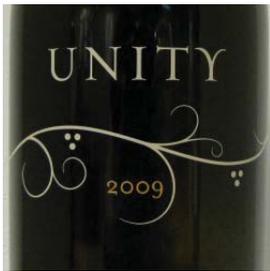
THAT LITTLE WINE BAR

James The Sommelier – Service

‘Wine honors the soul, so honor it with yours.’

Unity through wine

I had one of those evenings, last week, which encapsulated the varied customer base a wine bar often receives. The stage was set with two big tables, essentially dividing the cozy restaurant area in half, and a smattering of couples tables seamlessly filling the gaps. It was, however, the two big tables (let's call them Window table and Wall table) of twelve and ten people respectively, that created that fun juxtaposition leading to a very enjoyable, challenging night.



Wall table was first to arrive. Comprised of a group of ten Japanese ladies the introductions at the door were formal and reserved, with half smiles and slight bows in respectful recognition. While being seated, not one member of their party failed to say ‘thank you’ as chairs were pulled and spaces were allocated with table mats, cutlery and wine glasses – all of them reverting back to polite etiquette ingrained into them from, I'm sure, many private parties and events. It was a nice feeling, to be appreciated like this. To be recognized.

In the meantime, Window table was filling up in dribs and drabs. Clearly a younger demographic, their party was twelve friends, who I later learned were celebrating one of the guest's departure. While still remaining composed and polite – they would not order anything until all of the party was present – it was clear by their excited smiles that there was one main object of the night – commemorative fun. I immediately got on well with them, laughing and joking and acutely aware that their night was the better for it. Certainly not the same graciousness as the Japanese ladies but I appreciated their zeal and enthusiasm.

So, two very different customer bases and, therefore or so I thought, two very different sets of wine recommendations were needed. The Japanese ladies were a mixed bunch, some preferring to start with white and others willing to move straight on to heavier reds. As far as the white was concerned, my experience pointed me towards a powerful Sauvignon Blanc from Rueda, Spain - notorious with our Japanese customers as having an immensely crisp finish punctuated by an elegant, fruity body. It was a hit. For those going straight on to red, they picked from the options I suggested (an Argentinian Cabernet Sauvignon, an Australian Shiraz, a Spanish Tempranillo and a French Merlot) the lively, young Cabernet Sauvignon from Argentina, probably not ideal with their starters of light tapas being far too tannic and with an unhealthy dose of acidity best paired with protein rich red meat. But, they enjoyed it (especially, I think, the price), which is all that matters.

Then, on to Window table - the group of local friends up for a good time. Jokes and innuendos aside, their preferred recommendation in the end was, again, an Argentinian Cabernet Sauvignon from the same producers but this time a reserve bottle. With the same character typical of a Cabernet Sauvignon from Argentina (always racy) this bottle benefits from the added age in oak barrels prior to bottling resulting in reduced acidity and a smoothening of tannins to make a much more balanced full-bodied red.

For more information about wine join our wine classes

at

That Little Wine Bar, 54 Chow Thye Road, George Town, Penang

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