



Wine about it – right in D.C.!

District Winery, the nation's capital's very first wine-making business, arrived in September at The Yards, ensconced in the District's bustling Navy Yard neighborhood. Co-founders are Brian Leventhal and John Stires. Located near Nationals Park, the two-level, 17,000-square-foot space houses an on-site wine-making facility, rooms for private events, a year-around rooftop terrace, and a stunning restaurant — Ana — named after the Anacostia River which it overlooks.

"We're honored to take our successful Brooklyn Winery concept and give it an identity of its own for D.C.," said co-founder Leventhal. "It is exciting to

introduce people to D.C.'s first winery, and it's encouraging to see so much enthusiasm from the community."

District Winery sources its grapes from boutique vineyards across the country, mainly from California's Sonoma Valley, as well as New York's Finger Lakes District and Washington state's Columbia Gorge. Heading production is winemaker Conor McCormack, who worked with Leventhal and Stires at their parent facility, New York's Brooklyn Winery.

Grapes, grapes, and more grapes

This year, District Winery is acquiring more than 100 tons of grapes — 15 different varieties — from a dozen vineyards. Eventually,

McCormack's team will produce 6,000 cases annually, which will include Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Malbec, un-oaked and barrel-fermented Chardonnays, Riesling, Vignier, and Sauvignon Blanc. But guests will have to wait until next spring to sample the first vintages. Initial offering? Perhaps a lovely dry Rosé.

"Being able to source grapes directly from growers in different regions gives us an opportunity to explore a wide range of climates," said McCormack. "It allows us to showcase multiple styles representing a particular place from a particular year." Restaurant Ana will pour the wines, which will also be available for tasting and retail purchase.

Restaurant Ana

Heading Ana's "seasonal American" kitchen is executive chef Michael Gordon, who previously wielded his whisk at Bouley and the Mandarin Oriental, both in New York. Chef de cuisine is Benjamin Lambert, (formerly with D.C.'s Restaurant Nora and 701), Wit & Wisdom (Baltimore), and Goodstone Inn (Middleburg). Both chefs are inspired by worldwide cuisine. "I've always been fascinated by different cuisines and cooking techniques from across the globe," said Chef Gordon. "I've worked with a variety of styles and find myself drawing upon different techniques and ingredients from one country to another."

Added Chef Lambert: "I'm constantly seeking the perfect balance of sweet, salty, sour, and bitter. Exploring international flavors and cuisines is the best way to achieve [this harmony] in a dish...I constantly experiment with new ingredients." Highlighting their eclectic menu are Maryland crab beignets, rutabaga pierogis, cappelletti with rabbit sausage, pastrami-spiced monkfish, and charred broccoli steak. The casual

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