
Jan. 11, 2011



Miami Wine Festival Director, Lyn Farmer, tapped 20 of South Florida's top sommeliers to put their palates and purple tongues to work for a good cause by participating in the "Best in Glass" competition, which was dedicated to judging some of the "best of the best" by-the-glass wine selections and a ramp up for United Way's Miami Wine and Food Festival.

A panel of ten judged 235 wines in Miami-Dade College's new Culinary Institute, a state-of-the-art facility due to launch later this year. Thirty-four of them won gold medals and everyone in town will have the chance to taste the medal-winning wines at a local eatery

between March 15 and April 15, the official "Best in Glass Month."

Of the 20 sommeliers originally selected, 10 ended up being the final panel. The were:

- Allegra Angelo, Sommelier, [Michy's](#) and [Sra. Martinez](#)
- Aniece Meinhold, Owner, [The Blue Piano](#) (and author of this blog item)
- Antoni Yelamos, Director of Food and Beverage, [Solea Restaurant & Tapas Bar](#) and W South Beach Hotel
- Cynthia Betancourt, Sommelier and Wine Director Azul, [Mandarin Oriental](#)
- Carlos Jaen, Sommelier, Two Chefs Restaurant
- Daniel Toral, Beverage Director, [Sustain Restaurant](#)
- Eric Larkee, Sommelier, [Michael's Genuine Food & Drink](#)
- John Mayfield, Sommelier, Head Sommelier, [db Bistro Moderne Miami](#)
- Justin Hall, Wine Director at Bourbon Steak Miami

Plus, Grace Abel, the Wine Director of The Grateful Palate in Fort Lauderdale, and Jaime Futscher, of Sunset Corners, joined the team as well.



wine writer and educator himself, Lyn Farmer could have selected from a slew of food and wine writers and other personalities, but instead, he chose sommeliers. Why?

"We wanted a competition that actually means something 'on the street' rather than ratings that may reflect absolutes about wine quality but don't take into account other factors that impact a wine's potential for success."

"We also wanted people evaluating these wines who have a broad tasting experience as well as a sound understanding of the market, and we wanted to preserve some "wow factor" - the chance to occasionally surprise a sommelier with a wine she or he didn't previously know. Based on feedback from the sommeliers involved, I think we succeeded."

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