

8TH ANNUAL SOMMELIER REPORT 2010

A W&S EXCLUSIVE

ALLEGRA ANGELO
KELLY FORD
GARTH HODGDON
DENNIS KELLY
MATT MATHER
ERIC RAILSBACK
MARK SAYRE



best new sommeliers

These seven sommeliers represent the best of the new guard working the floor of top restaurants across the US. Voted by their peers as the most motivated and energetic in their studies, the most thoughtful in their wine ordering and—most importantly—the most personable at tableside, these are the sommeliers you want to have pouring your wine. So make your reservations now at the tables of America's Best New Sommeliers.



Eric Railsback *RN74, San Francisco, CA*

Eric Railsback's gateway wine was grüner veltliner. "My older brother used to pour it for me when I was 17," he says. "It was one of the first wines I really liked." His brother, then a sommelier at Paley's Place in Portland, also landed Railsback his first restaurant gig—as a busser at Wildwood, across the street. When Railsback moved to Santa Barbara for college, the Portland connections led to a server position at

The Wine Cask, a restaurant/wine bar/retailer. "I started spending all my money on Burgundy until they figured out that I wasn't twenty-one." His love of grüner eventually led him to Knoll, in Austria's Wachau, where he worked the 2006 harvest; he spent the following harvest at Domaine Dujac in Morey-St-Denis. "I was so young, and I was trying to get into wine as fast as possible," says Railsback. "Over there, I wasn't only working in the vineyards, but also tasting older vintages and meeting people." On both trips, he ran into Rajat Parr, wine director of the Mina Group, who shared his interest in Austria and Burgundy. As Parr was getting ready to open RN74, he tracked down Railsback in LA, where he

was assistant sommelier under Jared Heber (a 2005 W&S Best New Sommelier) at Gordon Ramsay At The London. "I lured him up to San Francisco with a couple great bottles—the 1995 Thierry Allemand Cornas and the 2000 Pierre-Yves Colin Montrachet," says Parr. "I told him that we would be tasting wines like this every day." "He was pretty convincing," says Railsback, who started at RN74 in 2008 and is now training with Parr to serve as wine director for the Mina Group while Parr works harvest for his wine label. Age: 25

Winespeak One reason I went to Austria was for the label pronunciation. The worst thing is to go to a table and not know how to pronounce the label.

Dujac- '07 Every night at dinner, we did a blind tasting. We'd go into Jacques Seysses's cellar and pull wines. His family had been trading wines with other producers since the '60s, so he had everything, from all over. The only thing we couldn't pull was DRC and '61 Bordeaux.

The importance of being a cellar rat It's hard to understand wine from reading books. You get a better grasp being in the cellar, talking to the winemaker. If I'm not [at the restaurant], I'm in France or Austria, or going to tastings and wine events. I'm absorbed every day.

Raveneau He's been my favorite producer since I was 19. You can open these wines and see them transition from young and tight to complex in ten hours. I used to bring a wine of his in before work at The Wine Cask, decant it, shake it up and then try it after work. It can evolve and change so quickly.

After work PBR and Hamm's. After tasting wine all day, the last thing that I want to drink is wine. I want something refreshing.