

contents **dec** (wine + **dine**)

Local Vine Bears Fruit

A new Belltown wine bar knows what its upscale business clientele wants—and it delivers. **BY SARA DICKERMAN**



AS YOU WALK into The Local Vine, you can almost smell the market research that went into this Belltown wine bar, owned by Allison Nelson and Sarah Munson, business vets with Harvard MBAs. At every step, it's just a little slicker than your average neighborhood wine bar.

That's not to say that its glass-walled fireplace and swooping wooden ceiling are not cool—they are, as is the wine menu, with more

than 100 wines available by the glass and 300-plus by the bottle, including plenty of Washington options, from Chateau Ste. Michelle Riesling (\$5) to Matthews Estate Claret (\$19). A high-tech wine storage system should keep opened bottles fresh for weeks, which lets the Vine open up plenty of "bombshells" for glass pours (even a \$480 glass of California cult wine 2003 Screaming Eagle Cabernet).

My friend and I put together dinner from the enlightened bar menu, designed by Jason Wilson, the chef/owner of Madison Valley's Crush. On my visits, some things on the seasonal menu were luscious: salty cocoa-dipped marcona almonds (\$4), a pork tenderloin on a bed of creamed corn (\$11), citrus-marinated beets and golden raisins (\$6). Others were just off: a flatbread of caramelized onions and mushrooms that were strong-armed by a pushy blue cheese crème (\$11), and some chewy shrimp and crab fritters (\$9). It's hard to complain, though, with a glass of kick-ass French Burgundy in your hand. Dinner daily. *Belltown, 2520 Second Ave.; 206.441.6000; thelocalvine.com.*

→ **BACKPAGES**

50 WINE + DINE // Belltown's Local Vine is a cut above the average neighborhood wine bar. **SARA DICKERMAN**
PLUS: A selection of crisp Pacific Rim whites for your next holiday party. **SHANNON BORG**