

# Ep 41 Wines of Napa Valley with Certified Sommelier Amanda M...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Janina Doyle, Amanda McCrossin



Janina Doyle 00:07

Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier, so stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you.



Janina Doyle 00:30

Hey, hello, how is your January going? I hope it is happy and not too grey and depressing. Are you doing dry January? Hopefully not. Anyway, regardless, dry or not dry. I bring you a fantastic episode. Today I'm talking with certified sommelier and wine personality, Amanda McCrossin, who is going to just show us the tip of the iceberg of her extensive wine knowledge of Napa Valley in California. So stick around because also her accent is so much better than mine. So you will enjoy listening to her. And let's start as I always do with my winery of the week.



Janina Doyle 01:13

So I've gone with one of the most iconic wineries out of California, and that is Robert Mondavi. So I think it's fair to say that Robert Mondavi is one of the biggest single influences in Californian Wine history. Robert Mondavi had a plan to create a winery that was going to be world class, up there with the best wineries in the world, and he certainly succeeded. So this winery was established in 1966. And prior to that, he was working with his family in the Charles Krug winery, which is an incredibly iconic winery in itself, dating back to 1861. And Charles Krug, when he founded this winery, was an absolute pioneer for the California wine industry. So these two wineries are certainly ones worth knowing about. So after a few years working at Charles Krug winery, he left to start working on his vision. One of the biggest decisions he made was to build the winery around the To Kalon vineyard in Oakville. And this is now considered one of the first growth vineyards in the world. Now he believed that in Napa Valley, this was the place where everybody could enjoy the good life. So wine, food and art. If you go to this winery, which is just beautiful. They have a permanent collection of paintings, art sculptures, they have a restaurant, which you can enjoy. And certainly if you pick the major tasting menu, you could have back vintages of the last four decades, I believe. They've also got annual summer

concerts. So really, it's no surprise that this year in the world's best vineyard awards, they won fifth place out of all the vineyards in the world. And instantly that makes them number one in terms of vineyards in Northern America. No, I have to mention their chief winemaker. She's French. Her name is Geneviève Janssens. She studied in France under one of the best wine makers of the 19th century. That's Émile Peynaud. So definitely go check him out. She spent several years as director of production for Opus One which is Robert Mondavi's joint project with Baron Philippe de Rothschild. And in 2010, wine enthusiast named her winemaker the year. She's an incredible woman and she makes incredible wines. Now, if you're following me on instagram. That's @eat sleep\_winerepeat, you'll see for Christmas day, I was drinking Robert Mondavi Reserve Pinot Noir 2015 and also the Reserve To Kalon vineyard Fumé Blanc 2015. And I loved the Fumé Blanc so much, we're going to crack open another bottle now. However, side note what is Fumé Blanc? Now Fumé Blanc is a Sauvignon Blanc. Typically oaked, but it doesn't have to be. Now it was actually Robert Mondavi who coined this term. So Fumé means smoked. You may have heard of Pouilly-Fumé, which is a Sauvignon Blanc from the Loire Valley. And then he used the word Blanc because blanc means white. And the reason for that, he created this term Fumé Blanc was simply because back in the late 1960s Sauvignon Blanc was just considered pretty boring and so he wanted to take Sauvignon Blanc, put it in oak and make it a high quality exciting wine, of which he did. Many people then continued to follow suit, Robert Mondavi really is an innovator, so most Fumé Blanc you will find have some sort of oak ageing, but it doesn't have to be and in terms of US law, Fumé Blanc and Sauvignon Blanc are interchangeable. Okay, enough talking and more pouring.



Janina Doyle 05:00

Oh my god, I just simply love this wine. This is not a cheap wine. Unfortunately, this really is a celebration wine. This is £50 from [vinvm.co.uk](http://vinvm.co.uk) It smells like mandarins and walking through a meadow. Like a little bit of honey blossom and beautiful tropical fruits like mangoes and pineapples. It's so aromatic, it's so pretty and it's so kind of voluptuous at the same time. You can smell the oak ageing, which I believe the fermentation happens in French oak barrels. There's about nine months or so lees ageing at about twice weekly bâtonnage so that hand stirring of the lees to give real creaminess, but definitely for anybody who has only ever had New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, so that pungent, overly tropical style, it's nothing like that. It's also nothing like a flinty mineral Pouilly-Fumé as I mentioned from the Loire Valley or even Sancerre, so none of these. All this gorgeous citrus fruits comes through. So like pink grapefruit. It's really zesting, lovely high lifted acidity. The texture is very, very soft. It's actually surprisingly light. I'd still say it's more medium bodied, but very, very crisp in a way I didn't expect it to be as, ummm, with this ability to kind of just dance around my tongue. It's lively. It's got that nice mineral kiss to it something a little bit flinty, and even a slight, a slight herbal note like a touch of grass, but

it's more about those beautiful citric fruits on the palate. Super refreshing. Nice and almost apricoty. I had this on Christmas day we had pheasant, and it worked really really well you know pheasant is kind of similar to chicken but it's got a little bit more of an earthy oomph it. And we had some apricot and hazelnut stuffing and oh my god, this was just divine. So anyone looking for a very, very special treat. Think about this Pouilly-Fumé. It really is gorgeous. Right, enough of me tasting wine, enough of Robert Mondavi. Although I could never get enough. Let's go over to the chat with Amanda who you're gonna see is an absolute superstar. So I hope you enjoy.

J

Janina Doyle 07:29

Thank you so much Amanda for joining me. I'm really pleased that you found some time and we can talk about Napa Valley and your love for wine.

A

Amanda McCrossin 07:37

I am thrilled to be here especially talking about my favourite subject.

J

Janina Doyle 07:40

Yeah, well, I'm glad actually that we picked Napa because if I threw you off and said let's talk about Croatian wine, you might not be as passionate, right?

A

Amanda McCrossin 07:47

I might be at a loss for words for once in my life.

J

Janina Doyle 07:50

To be honest, me too. I kind of go, Croatia there's a bit of Riesling and then and then I'm done. So let's stick with Napa because I also am a little bit better with Napa. So please, can you just, I suppose introduce yourself a little bit. People may already know you. They may have seen the SommVivant YouTube videos, they may have seen you on Instagram or they may have even heard you on a podcast recently. So you're doing so much across the media's right now so people can totally find you. What is it that you're doing? And how did you get there? Sum that up in two minutes. Go for it. Done! The whole of your history. Go!

A

Amanda McCrossin 08:26

Oh I love how you say SommVivant. It's my Instagram name. But you know, I find the

Europeans say it so much better than I can.

**J** Janina Doyle 08:32  
Oh really, SommVivant. Am I saying it different to you?

**A** Amanda McCrossin 08:35  
Well, you just say it so beautifully and musically.

**J** Janina Doyle 08:39  
SommVivant, SommVivant, SommVivant? No now I'm just putting on a French accent.  
Okay, carry on.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 08:45  
I like it. My accents very American.

**J** Janina Doyle 08:48  
Well of course it should be. Carry on...

**A** Amanda McCrossin 08:52  
So I am, I am the SommVivant. I have been living in Napa Valley for about five years now.  
But my start was not in wine. I actually started in Theatre and Film and TV and got into wine while I was living in New York City.

**J** Janina Doyle 09:06  
You are a wine superstar, secretly behind....

**A** Amanda McCrossin 09:12  
Secretly not so secretly. But I got into wine there and really fell in love with everything that the lifestyle and the culture was surrounding it, and ended up in Napa Valley, which is really just the most amazing place truly in the world. And I find myself so lucky to be there. And while I'm not there presently, because of all the things that are happening as it

pertains to COVID, I'm closer to family at the moment. It is my home base. And it is the place that I sort of cut my teeth and learned about Napa Valley in a way that was just, you know, for me the best way to learn which is hands on. So I started working as a Sommelier at a restaurant called Press which is right in the heart of Napa Valley. And it's an, it's an amazing place. I always joke that I didn't really know how cool it was until I actually arrived and got the job, which is probably better because I didn't fangirl the restaurant too hard. But it was really an amazing opportunity that I got unbeknownst to me at the time. And so I started working at Press, which is the restaurant that holds the largest, deepest restaurant collection of Napa Valley wines in the world. So the entire list is comprised of Napa Valley, going back into the 1960s. And of course, being that we're in the heart of Napa Valley and St. Helena, the provenance of the wines was just superior. I mean, wines that were, had never been moved since there, since their birth. I mean, really, since bottling, they were coming direct from sellers or from the wineries themselves, which was very, very special. Yeah, it was really cool.

J

Janina Doyle 10:39

I've seen a picture because that's as close I'm getting to Napa right now I've seen a picture of the kind of wine cellar in Press restaurant and yeah, that is pretty impressive. So I can only imagine how it feels just to walk in there every day and well I'm sure you're not going to the 1960 collection every day, but knowing it's there, these little gems.

A

Amanda McCrossin 10:56

Well that's the thing, we were. I mean this is sort of what made the job and the place so special is, it wasn't just this like museum wine list that nobody ever touched. We were opening these bottles left and right every single night so on any given night, you know, I'm opening 60s Inglenook, 70s BV (Beaulieu Vineyard), Diamond Creek yeah, and you know, these are things that the rest of the world isn't able to see or to drink. And you know, we're just sort of opening them willy nilly. And and of course, it being a Napa Valley, like I said, we were getting people drinking them that were some pretty important people in the business. So not just the vintners and the winemakers and Napa Valley, who maybe had a hand in these wines. But, you know, Robert Parker often came to visit. Steven Spurrier, I mean, the guys that really made Napa what it was we're actually drinking these wines. So you know, we're cracking these cool bottles, there's very, very interesting people coming into the restaurant left and right. And then, you know, on top of that, I'm living in the heart of Napa Valley. So in the mornings, I'm going out in the vineyards, and I'm talking to wine makers, and I'm going to work at night and opening these bottles. And so it just sort of got to the point where I was like, I should be sharing this, like, This shouldn't just live with one person, right? So it was sort of it was sort of twofold, because I was going into work every

night and guests were asking me where to visit in Napa Valley, which winery should I go to? And so I felt like I needed a compendium for that. So I sort of took, you know, this, this need to document what was happening in my life in a daily basis, and combines that with a clear need, that people had when it came to visiting Napa Valley and where to go. And I was like, let me just pick up the camera and see what happens. And that was sort of the origin story of my YouTube channel, which you know, at first featured a different winery every day that I would go and shoot and I'd edited that videos myself, and then my Instagram, which would be a collection of some of the wines, we were opening the wineries, we were visiting, the stories that I had, and the things that were happening in my life. And so that started sort of a life of its own related to what I was doing at Press, I was essentially running two businesses at once. I guess I wasn't running the Press wine list at the time. But working two full time jobs, I guess is a better say. So yeah, that's how somebody got started. And like I said, having a background in theatre, you know, maybe a little bit better equipped to, I guess, be on camera to some degree, but I just loved what I was doing. And it all just felt very tied together. And I found that the, the content side of my career really was the one that was starting to take more of my time. And so coincidentally, right before the pandemic and the shutdown started, I gave notice at Press, I had worked there as a sommelier...

**J** Janina Doyle 13:34  
How many years?

**A** Amanda McCrossin 13:34  
Well, I had worked as a Sommelier for about three and a half years. And then I took over as wine director after my my mentors, Scott and Kelly, who had run the wine programme for I think, almost a decade by that point. They very kindly gave me the keys. And so I ran it and then so it was about five years total that I was at Press. Five, five years and change.

**J** Janina Doyle 13:56  
Five lovely, exciting magical years, it seems.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 14:00  
Oh, truly, I mean, it was the place where I got to learn everything that I know about Napa Valley. You know, it's, I think it's the place that I probably learned the most when it comes to wine, and I have the best memories from there. But yeah, I think these days, I'm just, not just, I'm creating content and doing a podcast now called Wine Access Unfiltered and

doing stuff on Instagram and creating content on YouTube. So I'm staying busy in a very virtual world. I don't know what it is I actually do for a living but that is what I'm keeping myself busy with.

J

Janina Doyle 14:29

I don't think we need to know what we're doing in life. Sometimes. You know why we haven't had names but everything.

A

Amanda McCrossin 14:35

I don't know.

J

Janina Doyle 14:36

Anyway, so you go with the flow. But truly for everyone listening, I have seen the way you talk about wine and people will see this as we discuss more Napa Valley, you have an amazing way to show that passion and make wine exciting. So absolutely. You'll do fantastic things even more when you focus on entirely creating this content.

A

Amanda McCrossin 14:54

Oh, thank you. I appreciate that.

J

Janina Doyle 14:55

No, you're welcome. Now let's talk about Napa a little bit. Now you found that lots of people were asking you questions when they would come into your restaurant. They were already in Napa. Was there a specific question that they had, more often than not? Was it always just, where should I go? Or where people asking me questions about the mountains versus the fertile soils and the valley floor? Where people very geeky when they were coming into Napa, to your restaurant?

A

Amanda McCrossin 15:19

Well, that's the thing about Napa is it's always such a, it's not like, you know, some obscure region that I think only wine geeks go to. Napa Valley, at least, you know, for us in the States. And I think, you know, to an extent the rest of the world as well, because our clientele is certainly very international, I think because it is this sort of destination, you know, place, bucket list place that people always dream of going to, whether it's because

they love wine, or they just, you know, they want to go there on their honeymoon, or, you know, there, there are Sommeliers that want to learn more about California Wine. I think Napa Valley is this place where we would really have a wide spectrum of different knowledge levels and things that people wanted to achieve while they were there. And so it's a little bit you know, we sort of tease like, it's, it's sort of like Las Vegas in some ways, like, you know, Las Vegas is a place like, you know, you think of it for a place for gambling, right. But like, there's so much to do there in Las Vegas. And I don't know if you've been to Vegas, but like,

**J** Janina Doyle 16:12  
I know, people who have.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 16:14  
Yeah, and there's like great shows, and there's great food. And you know, I'm told there's great golfing and spas, and to some extent, Napa Valley is a similar situation, you know, we're definitely known for our wine. But what I was finding is that people were coming in and so it was table to table, we really didn't have the same questions being asked over and over. Although I will say the one that was asked most of me was, where's the best winery to visit? And that was always the hardest to answer. Because they are all so different. There are literally no two wineries that are the same. And you sort of go for different reasons, you know, and so the first question was always like, Well, you know, how much time do you want to spend there? Is this a place that you really want to get to know the winemaker? Or are you just like looking to chill and have a couple glasses of Sauvignon Blanc with great scenery? Because, you know, they are going to be very different experiences. And that's what's so interesting about Napa is, even though it's such a small place, we're only, I'm sorry, I'm going to speak in miles, but we're only 30 miles.

**J** Janina Doyle 17:10  
No, we do miles. We do miles. We are good.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 17:13  
Okay. Oh, great. All right. Well, silly me. So yeah, it's 30 miles north to south and five miles across. So it's not very big, but it is very diverse. And yeah, and within that you have little pockets of places everywhere from Spring Mountain to Coombsville. To you know, the hotter, more intense wines of like Oakville and St. Helena and Rutherford. When people would ask, Where should I go to visit, it always sort of unveil a lot of other questions, and it

would create this conversation. And so what was nice about working at Press, and I don't know, I mean, you were Sommelier at a steakhouse as well. And I don't know if you had this luxury, but I was definitely felt very fortunate that my only job in the restaurant was to talk to tables about wine and to sell them wine, which was just the best because when people sat down, they really had this sort of like one on one experience and whether or not they wanted to deep dive about 60's vintages of Inglenook or what, you know whether they wanted to talk about like, well, who was making this wine in 1987? And where did the fruit come from? Like, if they wanted to really geek out on that we have the time to do that, or if they just were like two honeymooners and they just wanted to talk about, you know, their favourite place to have some cheese and wine, like we could totally go down that rabbit hole too.

J

Janina Doyle 18:25

Hmm, Hmm. So if people were saying to you they wanted just to, as you said, sip a Sauvignon Blanc and just see something beautiful. In what parts, having never been to Napa myself, where do you feel in terms of scenery? Is there a few places that really are jaw droppingly beautiful?

A

Amanda McCrossin 18:44

Oh, there's plenty. I mean, they're all beautiful in a different way. But there are some really special spots, I think, definitely, if you are at pretty much anywhere on Prichard Hill, which is not an actual AVA, it's a geographical designation. So, so Prichard Hill is, it technically should be its own AVA. The problem is, and I shouldn't say problem, but Chappellet which is at the very top of Prichard Hill, and one of the first wineries on Prichard Hill, established wineries on Prichard Hill. They actually trademarked the name Prichard Hill. And, yeah, so there's never been an opportunity for an actual AVA called Prichard Hill to exist. So it's sort of an unofficial AVA, but where it is it sits on the eastern side of the valleys. So on, you know, the Howell Mountain side though it's not technically Howell Mountain so it's just south of Howell Mountain. And it's sort of spans between St. Helena and Rutherford, just a little bit down into the Oakville side as well. And so it's just this big, beautiful sort of like, it's a hillside mountains sort of, we call it like the Rodeo Drive of Napa Valley because it's some of the most famous, you know, expensive real estate in Napa Valley. So, Bryant family, Colgin, exactly, Continuum, Brand, Ovid is up there, and it really is amazing. And so pretty much anywhere in Prichard Hill, you're going to have an incredible lookout, depending on where it's sitting on the mountain or on the hill, it could have faced all the way down towards the south. And you could even see like San Francisco on a on a clear day. So that's, that's one place. But then if you want it to be like on the valley floor, you would have a totally different exposition. And so there's a place called Frog's Leap. It's

sort of right in the middle in Rutherford, and they have very expansive views that sort of, it would sort of be 180 because you could see the Vacas and the, the Vacas side and the Mayacamas side. So you can see both ranges of mountains and that's also when you said, where's your, you know, a great place to sip some Sauvignon Blanc and eat cheese, like, that's my favourite place to do that.

**J** Janina Doyle 20:46  
Okay, so specifically at Frogs Leap winery.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 20:48  
Yeah. I love that place. It's just so sweet and simple. And they were some of the first to farm organically in Napa Valley.

**J** Janina Doyle 20:54  
Okay, good wine fact! This is what I'm hoping, as we kind of talk, you're going to come up with these lovely little wine facts that I would have no idea about. So I'm gonna learn on the way. You mentioned Inglenook quite a few times, haven't you. Now Inglenook, as far as I believe they're one of the oldest aren't they in Napa.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 21:10  
They are one of the oldest, they actually might claim the oldest actual winery. So they have an interesting story because you know, today it's owned by Francis Ford Coppola. Of course, you know, he's famous for the films like The Godfather. So Coppola owns, that he actually bought the winery in the 70s but before that it was Gustave Niebaum who owned it and it was, you know a winery that, I think dates back to the 1800's, don't quote me on that one, but you know, had a really really amazing legacy of winemaking in, in Rutherford until it was sold in the 70s. And I think you know, it really, it took a hit a bit. And I think in the last few years we've really seen it come back to life and Francis really has invested quite a bit of money and actually bought the Inglenook name back. So he didn't, when he bought the winery, he didn't actually own the Inglenook name. Yeah, it was Niebaum-Coppola. So bought the Inglenook name back and then hired Philippe Bascaules from Chateau Margaux who's the head consulting winemaker, Chris Phelps, who's sort of the on the ground consulting winemaker who famously was the original winemaker at Dominus. He had worked for for the Moueix family and Bordeaux, who own Château Pétrus. So he had made Dominus from 83 to about 95. And then there's another wine maker who is on the ground. So it's it's a team of three pretty special individuals who

are making those wines right now. And I think you know, there's some of the most exciting that are happening, but 60s Inglenook is to me, you know, some of the best wine ever made in Napa Valley. And it you know, once you start getting into the 70s that's when like, things start getting a little bit weird in that era, 60s, and 50s Inglenook, like that is some killer killer juice if you can find it, they're just incredibly difficult to find and when you do, I don't find that the provenance is ever as quite as good as I want it to be. They're the probably the hardest mines for me to find right now.

J

Janina Doyle 23:03

Okay, right. I love that and I love all the name dropping, you've done so people can actually understand the winemakers and the people behind it. That's so brilliant. So Inglenook are in Rutherford aren't they?

A

Amanda McCrossin 23:12

They're in Rutherford on the western side. So right as you would get to, like where BV is and you know, sort of what I would consider like the heart of Rutherford which is where Rutherford Grill is, you know, right before you get to that, it's on the left hand side and it has like an entrance sort of like Disney World. It's very beautiful. And some of the original buildings are still intact. And I think part of the original cave is still intact as well.

J

Janina Doyle 23:34

It looks like Disney World. I love that.

A

Amanda McCrossin 23:35

It does kind of look like Disney World.

J

Janina Doyle 23:37

I love that. Okay, but to be honest, am I right in thinking as well, that just all up Napa, all of the wineries are kind of almost like competing with each other to be like the biggest and most interesting, exciting looking architecture, like there's a lot of cool designs right in Napa?

A

Amanda McCrossin 23:53

Well, I think there was this push for that in in the 90s and 2000s, when Napa Valley was

really starting to get popular. And that was sort of what we might consider the second Renaissance, the first being in the 60s with you know, Robert Mondavi and the winemakers really starting to put Napa Valley on the map as a wine growing region. But then in the 90s. That's when we really started to see the big push for tourism. And so yes, to some extent, I'd say there's competition in that regard. But we're also a protected area and that there's no real like big new construction that you can do in Napa Valley. It's an agricultural preserve. So it's essentially like a land trust that you can't really put any new vineyards or new properties on without very, very difficult legislation to go through. So you don't see like large monstrosities in Napa Valley. I mean, I think, you know, we did start seeing a few people start to like push the boundaries, but there's nothing really that's built very high. It's just you know, it's all very beautiful and it's all very different. But it is sort of Disneyworld esque. And that there's two main roads that go up and down Napa Valley, highway 29 and the Silverado trail and when you drive up or down both of those you sort of look left look right. And you see all those like famous wineries that you've seen your whole life and you're going through the wine shop and it is sort of like Disney World in that regard, because they're all super famous. And, you know, it's it's like being an adult in Disney World and you've seen Mickey Mouse for the first time.

**J** Janina Doyle 25:12

I think I would feel exactly that way. Now you mentioned those two roads, the two routes, they are basically the only two roads through Napa right?

**A** Amanda McCrossin 25:20

Oh, yeah, that's it. Yeah, there's a few. I mean, there's roads that go across, and certainly you could come over the mountain. But there are two roads that, you know, I say run parallel, officially, they're not parallel, but run parallel to each other. One closer to the Vaca side, and then one closer to the Mayacamas side, but yes, they are. They are our only two roads, which, you know, makes the fires all that a bit more scary. Because when fires happen, you know, there's only two real exit routes.

**J** Janina Doyle 25:46

Well, let's get to that then. Just very quickly, I don't want to talk of anything too depressing. But the glass fire that started this September, thankfully, it's contained now. What I heard, was it it did touch Napa, but just. So what actually happened inside Napa?

A

Amanda McCrossin 26:02

Well, it was, it didn't just touch Napa. I know it was there. It was, yeah, it was, it was the worst we've seen, I think everyone would agree with, this was the fire that I think no one really ever saw coming because we've been so lucky in years past and even in 2017, you know, huge devastation over on Mount Veeder and down in Stags Leap District and some wineries sort of up in the mountains there. But I think this, you know, this was in the northern part of the valley, in St Helena. And it was, it burned pretty bad. I think, you know, we had a rough year in the sense that it wasn't just this fire, it was, there was a fire over in Sonoma, there was also the Lightning Complex fire that brought in a lot of smoke to the valley during the latter days of our ripening season. And so there was some concern about smoke taint in those early days. And it was interesting, because right before the Glass fire broke out, the real issue was the winemakers were trying to get all of their grapes tested for guaiacol, which is the smoke compound in a grape.

J

Janina Doyle 27:00

Ah, that's what it's called?

A

Amanda McCrossin 27:02

It's called guaiacol. So that's one of the main compounds so and it's bound in sugar. So what you have to do is actually take the grapes and get them through fermentation so that you can test it for guaiacol. And interestingly, guaiacol is also present in oak. So a lot of the time you can't oak the wine until you actually get it tested. So what was happening is there was such a push in demand for all of these test results to come back. And it was right before anyone was really starting to harvest. ETS, which is the main lab in Napa Valley was so backed up, it was like a three to four week wait, that a lot of winemakers were sort of working blind, not really knowing whether or not they had smoked tainted fruit. And so that was a big concern before the Glass fires broke out. And then once that happened, you know, it was sort of like, it was very pocketed, you know, some people were like, it's fine, we're just gonna run with it. Some people have their own labs that they can do it. So I think once again, it's going to be a situation where 2020 you know, we can't blanket statement the whole vintage and say it's, it's a write off, we can't blanket statement, say the whole thing is going to be great, because I think there's just going to be a lot of extenuating circumstances that will make it, so that some people will have, you know, really great wines and some people will just not make a vintage, but what I will say is that, you know, Napa Valley has a lot to lose by putting out bad wine and none of our good producers are going to put out a wine that they're not proud of. So we'll see. I think, you know, for me personally, this was the closest the fires had ever personally come to where I live in St. Helena, so it was about a half a mile from my home.

J Janina Doyle 28:26  
So it's even more emotional.

A Amanda McCrossin 28:27  
Yeah, you know, I think that's one of those things that you know, living in an agricultural community that you're used to fairly quickly and I say used to but it's still it's emotional. And it's, you know, it can be friends have lost homes, and you know, wineries are certainly hurting especially after this, this past year. But the silver lining of all of that is, it is such a tight community and a community that helps each other and so I think once again, Napa will always just be a place that, we're stronger if we're all doing well and so it's a rising tide lifts all boats and so when one is down the whole valleys down and so you see a lot of teamwork and working together to find solutions. So I think as much as it was a really challenging vintage I think you're gonna see a lot of great come from it. So I'm excited to see what happens.

J Janina Doyle 29:09  
Good. No that's really nice. And I suppose from well, quite clearly what I heard of it only just touching Napa is not correct. But the other thing I read was that...

A Amanda McCrossin 29:19  
No, There's a lot of misinformation. It's not you, I think it's just very difficult to know. Even from me, even being there. It's difficult to know what is actually happening in the valley. And like I said, there's so much misinformation so it's it's not you and certainly if anyone's listening and you thought otherwise, I think you know, it's it's just a function of the news not always getting it entirely correct.

J Janina Doyle 29:40  
Well, that's happened before, and it'll happen again won't it. The one thing that I did read was the best thing right now is to go to Napa, to be a tourist there and that is going to really help Napa again. I hear there's like 5 million tourists a year which is an extensive amount.

A

Amanda McCrossin 29:58

It's an astounding number again considering how small we are, I mean, we're a county of 100,000. So, and only, you know, like in my small town of St Helena, it's under 10,000 that live there. So, yes, if you can imagine, like your tiny town being infiltrated with 5 million people a year, like, that's, what it's like to live in Napa. But yes, I mean, we're, we're a tourist community, we're an area that needs that sort of business, that traffic. And so we were definitely hurt in 2020. But I hope, you know, California has not been the most lenient when it comes to shutdowns and openings. So I think California to some degree, just shut down again. But I think you know, by the time everyone's ready to travel again, once those bans are lifted, yes, I mean, let's get to Napa. And it is such an amazing place to visit. I can't believe you haven't been there yet.

J

Janina Doyle 30:45

It's on the list. And actually, it's probably genuinely one of the top places in terms of wine regions that I've really wanted to go to. But, you know, with the whole of Europe to visit and being able to just pop there for a weekend, you can imagine that California hasn't quite got the tick yet, but it will get they will get there. Now interesting what you said about how it's such a tight knit community in Napa, from what I've read, because you know, everything I read is true... 95% of the wineries are family owned, you know, actually, there's not a great deal of big, big wineries in Napa Valley. And that perhaps is part of why everyone's quite together, perhaps.

A

Amanda McCrossin 31:24

Yeah. 95%. Sounds correct. I actually don't know that.

J

Janina Doyle 31:28

Does that sound ok?

A

Amanda McCrossin 31:28

Yeah, that sounds, that sounds right.

J

Janina Doyle 31:29

We will go with that.

A

Amanda McCrossin 31:30

I think a lot of people think, that's the thing about Napa, and especially when I was in New York, I cut my teeth on more European wines and Barolos and Burgundy and Champagne and Bordeaux. And, I sort of had an opinion about Napa Valley wine before I moved out there. And to some degree, a lot of people do. And I think that opinion stems from the Parkerisation of Napa Valley, which still sort of, there is a Parkerisation Sheen, to some extent on, on the wines of Napa Valley. But I think we're really starting to come out of that era and into what we would maybe consider something that's a little bit more classic in style, meaning like the wines that we saw from the 60s and 70s. So wines that had maybe, more of a sense of place versus like style, consistent style.

J

Janina Doyle 32:11

So what do you feel in terms of, because you said Robert Parker's visited you guys in Press restaurant, and of course, Robert Parker has done a great deal around the world. Some people love him, some people maybe don't. And it is that for anyone who's listening, and you say what does, what's the Parker style? That darker, bigger fruit, bolder, concentrated style. In Napa Valley is he seen as, I don't wanna say a hero. Is he held up with high regard? Or is, actually a lot of winemakers kind of fed up of it?

A

Amanda McCrossin 32:41

Well I think the opinion is that right now we have the ability to look at it with a different lens. I think, you know, when Parker was what I would consider in like, in his heyday, so I would say from 97, through maybe earlier than that. Obviously he got famous for talking about the 82 vintage in Bordeaux, but I think Napa, for as it pertains to Parker, really, we started to see a major major influence starting with the 97 vintage. And the 97 vintage was really unique because it was a hot vintage, but it was also a, an enormous vintage. So what happened was 97, you had a nice, warm, long growing season, but there was so much fruit out there that not all of it could actually fit in the winery. And so what you had was fruit come in that was ripe, but then you'd have another third, even half of the fruit still sitting out in the vine. And they would have to wait until they had room in the winery to let that, the initial crop load, ferment and get into barrel. And so what would happen is that fruit was staying out on the vine and it would have extended hang time and get extremely, extremely ripe. And when those scores came in after the 97 vintage from Parker and it was a heavily praised high scoring vintage. That was when you started to see the press to make more high octane, high alcohol heavy extraction, more time in new French oak wines. And so you saw from 97 until probably about 2008, 2010, you know, maybe pushing into 13. Although I think that's when the pendulum just started to take back a little bit. You started to see a lot of wines with a bit more homogeneous

personality, meaning the wines were you know, very big over 15% very juicy, very plushy, soft, soft tannins drinkable wines that were probably more for, say the American palate so that sort of like Coca Cola palette.

**J** Janina Doyle 34:27  
Okay, yea.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 34:28  
So, you know, we say that lovingly now, but I think you know, that was a style that got you points, got you praise, got you customers. And so, you know, Parker had a following. So when people were, would make these wines that were getting 100 point scores or really high scores from Parker, they were making money and so they were incentivized to do that. I think you know, winemakers now how do they view it? They view it as a style as an era and a, an opportunity for people to get more into wine and to spend more money on wine than they ever had before. So I think it's sort of a mixed bag of emotions. I how they feel about Parker. Because, you know, Parker is the reason that Napa Valley is as famous as it is. And it's the reason that people will spend as much money as they will. You know, do I think that all wineries are making, are chasing scores or chasing points now? No, I think a lot of people have seen that as an era that sort of has fizzled a little bit. I think you'd obviously everyone wants high scores and Robert Parker isn't really critiquing wines anymore. So now you've got other critics like James Suckling, and Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW and Jeb Dunnuck, Antonio Galloni. And I think they all have different palates. So the score chasing isn't as prevalent but, you know, for me, personally, Parker, I have a job because of Robert Parker and I immensely respect what he's done for wine. And, you know, I think he's a great guy. And I think he had a lot to say, and I think he, he did amazing things for for California and for American wine in general. So I think we're starting to see a real swing back to back out of that style and into wines that have more of a sense of place and more of a sense of restraint and balance, but I think, you know, it's California, it's hot.

**J** Janina Doyle 36:04  
Ha Ha, you are not going to make Bordeaux.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 36:05  
We're never gonna make Bordeaux. Exactly.

J

Janina Doyle 36:08

Anyway, I like, solid conclusion. I like that. It's a good summary of Robert Parker. Now, let's talk about the wines and maybe the flavours and the grapes. For anybody who is into Napa Valley wines. Of course, they will know the number one grape variety is Cabernet Sauvignon. But I've seen now of course it's must be very small production still, but Italian varieties are starting to be planted. Now there's a lot of kind of maybe more natural winemaking going on. We'll mention Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, let's get the the main ones and of course Pinot Noir down in Carneros but is there some other grape varieties that are starting to shine something that is a bit more unusual that people wouldn't expect?

A

Amanda McCrossin 36:47

Well, I don't know if we will call it unusual. But I think, what's interesting, a more interesting statistic is Cabernet Franc starting about two or three years ago, started to become the highest dollar amount per tonnage. So you know, if Cabernet Sauvignon goes for an average of \$7,000 per tonne, Cabernet Franc was like \$10,000. And that has a lot to do with supply and demand. But what we all are seeing is Cabernet Franc as a standalone variety or as the dominant variety in a blend. So I think that's interesting. That's interesting. It's not an interesting grape because, you know, obviously, we see it on the right bank of Bordeaux is, you know, something that's it's front and centre. And of course, you know, in it in a different capacity in Loire Valley, you know, where it's Chinon and a little lighter and brighter, but I actually really think that you're gonna start seeing a lot of wineries start to make Cabernet Franc alongside their, their big Cabernet Sauvignon. So and we're seeing it already. I mean, you know, Chappellet makes one. Brand on Prichard Hill, they make a proprietary blend that's Cabernet Franc heavy. It's famously, and they've done so for a very long time is the Dalle Valle Maya. The Maya has always been a very, very Franc, heavy wine. And I think it was interesting for me for a while because at Press, we had, I think for a solid like three months, there's always like seasons for what's happening in the valley. And there's like a season for when the winemakers meet with the investors. And so they come for dinner at Press and they, you always see it like all the time. They'll order the wines that I think that they're sort of inspired by investors to be inspired by it. And so there was like a solid couple of months where we were having winemakers come in with their investors or with their clients. And they would order things like Dalle Valle Maya because they were like, we really love Cabernet Franc and working with it, and understandably so. It's a it's a very interesting variety, very aromatic. And when blended with a nice percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon, you know, gives the impression and the allure of the texture of Cabernet Sauvignon. But I think it's far more complex and has the nuance and the character of something that is beautiful and ethereal and soft.

J Janina Doyle 38:48  
Uhhhh, you are describing it beautifully.

A Amanda McCrossin 38:49  
And sort of whimsical, yeah.

J Janina Doyle 38:51  
Okay. That's interesting.

A Amanda McCrossin 38:52  
I think. Yeah. And, you know, Italian varieties. Yeah, we're seeing a little bit like there's little pockets where you see young winemakers that are excited about varieties that are that are not Cabernet Sauvignon. And certainly, there's a push for Charbono, which is also known as Bonarda. So Charbono is one of the original grapes planted. Actually, famously Inglenook made it for a very long time in the 60s, but you're seeing sort of a resurgence of the Charbono grape thanks to a couple of producers, Matt Morris being one of them, you know, tiny, tiny little pockets of production, but it's I don't think it's going to be something that we're seeing take over Cabernet Sauvignon anytime soon. I will add into the conversation, you do have a strong contingency of producers that are experimenting with other varieties because of their beliefs on climate change. So producers like Larkmead and Spottswoode that are starting to plant varieties more like Sicilian varieties that can handle heat better to see how they perform. Exactly. So um, you know, I don't think that we're seeing them on a commercial level quite yet, but you know, something to potentially look for in 15 to 20 years.

J Janina Doyle 39:58  
I mean, I was quite shocked. I saw, I'm probably pronouncing their name wrong, Kongsgaard? Is that how you call, yeah? I was just, with a double A I've always wondered. Yeah. Nailed it. Yeah. Kongsgaard, they do an Albariño. Very, very, very small production, apparently very little of it. So have you ever had the pleasure to taste it?

A Amanda McCrossin 40:19  
Oh yeah. So Kongsgaard is, John Kongsgaard is a very famous winemaker in Napa Valley. He's actually responsible for sort of these bigger oakier more, we'll call them their

techniques came from Burgundy, although we would be wrong in calling them Burgundian in style these days, but yeah, John's Kongsgaard worked for Newton for a long time. And so he was the one that was responsible for the Newton unfiltered Chardonnay. But famously makes one of the most expensive Chardonnay's in California, I think the most expensive one in Napa Valley, which is the Kongsgaard Judge. It's a small, small, small, very gravelly, older vineyard that's, his dad was the judge in Napa Valley, which is called why it's called judge, but it's from his like front yard vineyard. So it's a very special wine. But anyway, his winemaker, Evan loves Albariño and has an Albariño project called Ferdinand. And for whatever reason, I forget how the story went. But yes, they decided to also make an Albariño under the Kongsgaard label, I think to some degree, because, you know, Evan really liked it. I think it's Evan, I hope. I've been phrasing, like 99%. And if it's not Evan, I'm very sorry. But anyway, I've had it several times. It's delicious. It is really, I think restaurant only to my, at least in the state, not in Europe, but we really only sell it to restaurants, but it's delicious. It's minerally but it's got texture, you know, I don't think that it's something that we would think of when we think of like Rías Baixas Albariño, with all the salinity and brightness, but it is really clean and crisp. It just has that sort of like California kissed sort of nectarine, tangerine, lemon curdy lusciousness underneath of it. It's definitely like a light wine and a bright wine. But it definitely doesn't have like the crunchiness that I think we think of when we think of Albariño with you know, like drinking salt water, in a good way.

J

Janina Doyle 42:13

No sea spray. No sea spray. No but that's really interesting, but I just think it's fascinating, you know, that people can really get so much out of Napa when it's not, it's not just Cabernet Sauvignon. They're talking of Cabernet Sauvignon and talking about tastings. Seeing as you've tasted the limited production Albariño I would assume you've tasted Screaming Eagle and Scarecrow then.

A

Amanda McCrossin 42:31

A time or two.

J

Janina Doyle 42:33

Would you care to give an opinion on both Screaming Eagle and Scarecrow? Considering people listening, the majority, including myself have never tasted these very, very expensive cult wines.

A

Amanda McCrossin 42:44

Sure. Yeah. What fun wants to talk about because they couldn't be more different. So I guess we'll start, we can start with Screaming Eagle which for both of these wines, the vineyard is of the utmost importance. But they again, they couldn't be more different. So Screaming Eagle vineyard in Oakville, it sits right, you can see it from the Silverado trail. It sits just before, just south of the Oakville cross. And what's really cool about this vineyard is it's in this little pocket where you get, it's it's hot, it's Oakville and you know, we sort of make a comparison between Oakville and Pauillac. So things like more gravelly soils, you get a lot of like red tufa, volcanic soils, you know, really, really deep, intense, mineral rich soils in in Oakville. And so we're on the eastern side of that where the soils tend to be a little bit more red, but we're Screaming Eagle is, it's this little pocket where they get sort of a consistent breeze. And so it's a little bit like Santa Barbara, where it's like, you know, they call it refrigerated sunlight, so you get extended hang time. So you get all of this heat, but the grapes stay really is sort of like nice and cool. And so they get this really long, extended growing season. So it makes for an extraordinary vineyard. You know, Screaming Eagle sort of hit at a time. That was just perfect. And so you know, Jean Phillips owns the vineyard. And I don't know if you know the story about like, basically what happened was they were friends with the Dalle Valles whose vineyard sits, you know, maybe as a crow fly as a half mile from where they are. You could sort of see it from Dalle Valle. It's sort of like up on the hill. And so they had started their project in the late 80s. Like 1987 hired Heidi, an unknown Heidi Barrett at the time. Okay. And Jean Phillips asked Heidi Barrett to make their very first vintage of Screaming Eagle. Screaming Eagle had been selling their grapes to Beringer and a few other properties at the time. So if you've have ever had pre 91, like 91 and before Beringer Private Reserve, a lot of that fruit came from screaming Eagle.

J

Janina Doyle 44:34

Oh good tip.

A

Amanda McCrossin 44:36

Yeah. So Heidi Barrett ended up making that wine. First vintage 1992 and famously got well now that's two double 100 points for us. I think at the time it was an, it was 100 and a 99 Plus, but now they're both 100 point scores. But what's really interesting about Screaming Eagle is that it is incredibly restrained and focused, mineral laden, really, really, really understood. Like think more Bordeaux than than Napa Valley.

- J** Janina Doyle 45:03  
That is so not what I though.
- A** Amanda McCrossin 45:05  
And I think for a lot of people they think it's you know going to be this big monster.
- J** Janina Doyle 45:08  
Jammy.
- A** Amanda McCrossin 45:10  
Exactly. They think of as like a big you know, typical 100 point score. It is the opposite.
- J** Janina Doyle 45:15  
I think people have lied to me. Oh yeah, totally tasted it was like jammy and delicious and gorgeous. Like no it wasn't you didn't drink it, you lied. Okay.
- A** Amanda McCrossin 45:24  
I have never had that experience. They are laser laser focused when they come out, you know, not wines that I would consider pleasant, you know, early on in their in their lives. You know, you can see where they're going, but I think they hold their cards close to the chest, like it's a very intense grippy wine, not a wine that is after, you know, smooth plushy tannins. It's a wine that loves texture. Like I said, it's just it's very deep. It's very nuanced. You know, definitely. There's new French oak on it, for sure. It's California. I mean, we're not in Bordeaux. It is California. But I think there is definitely a sense of restraint. They're beautiful, beautiful wines that couldn't be more different than I think what I expected as well. I think I expected to get it and it to be, you know, really over the top, really inky you know, juicy, juicy juicy. It is so far from that. It's not even funny.
- J** Janina Doyle 46:18  
Okay, so great for anybody who has a few £1000. That's a good one to go for them. As you do, and how about the Scarecrow?



Amanda McCrossin 46:29

Opposite. So that is the wine that is fairly over the top.



Janina Doyle 46:33

So thats the Chunky Monkey, okay.



Amanda McCrossin 46:35

It's it's chunky, but it's again, it's not as, it's very rich, and it's very soft. And what's really interesting about Scarecrow is, I have a client, he owns a vineyard, or I guess I had a client at Press that used to order Scarecrow on the regular. And every time he would just say like there's, they've had every wine in the planet. And he was like, there's nothing like Scarecrow and I think he's right. And a lot of it again has to do with the vineyard. So it's the JJ Cohn vineyard, which is in Rutherford, and it's crazy, crazy, crazy old vines. I mean, these are like monster grandfather vines. And so this fruit I find, you know, is really, really silky and viscous. And so the wines are are soft and they're plushy, but they seem to just have this like lift and a brightness about them. But for me, like Scarecrow is all about, you know, really soft strawberry kirschy, umm, you know, it's a jammy-esque wine but not a jammy wine in a bad way. It just like it has the smells and the aromas of like a strawberry jam, but it actually has like a lot of depth and complexity. It's got a softness to it, and a viscosity to it that's sort of otherworldly, and it is a delicious wine, but it is, it is big, and it's soft, and it's plushie. And, you know, I don't know where the alcohol sits, but I think I'm sure it's 14.5. Yeah, I mean, Celia Welch has made wine for forever. I think they're very first vintage was 2004. Also famously, the Etude single vineyard from Rutherford, JJ Cohn vineyard, which is a wine that Tony Soter made for years. That's from that vineyard and they taste remarkably similar. So I think it is all about the vineyard when it comes to Scarecrow.



Janina Doyle 48:15

Okay, very interesting. And that one, if anyone's excited about trying this wine, it's only gonna set you back maybe £600, £700, £800, I'm not entirely sure, but that one's a bit cheaper.



Amanda McCrossin 48:25

Yea Yeah. It is cheaper. Screaming Eagle is still the most expensive wine in Napa Valley.



Janina Doyle 48:31

Oh, absolutely. And definitely all these are on allocation in general aren't they. So, not that easy to come by. Just I suppose one question to finish off with in terms of Cabernet Sauvignon. I think that the mountain fruit, mountain Cabernet Sauvignon is starting to get a lot more interesting. People have always just again, we talked about these big chunky Napa Valley wines. Could you shed some light on just your feeling about the Cabernet Sauvignons coming from a lot higher up in the mountains?



Amanda McCrossin 49:00

Yeah, I think um, you know, there's two sets of mountains. And then there's sort of some diversity within that. And so you've got Spring Mountain, we'll sort of generalise here. Spring Mountain, Howell Mountain, Mount Veeder, and then sort of like everywhere else, right. So I think we're where we'll focus on is, you know, we'll start with Spring Mountain. Spring Mountain is what they say is the coolest, wettest of the AVA's, but it's also a place where I think the wines have the most restraint, and then most herbaceousness to them. So they are still big, big wines. Because I think, again, like we're talking about a region that that gets, that has a Mediterranean climate, generally a fairly long growing season. But these wines are a little bit more herbaceous. When you're talking about Howell Mountain, those are the wines that probably have the most intensity and the most, the most body to them. I think you know Howell Mountain again, like is a region that you could delineate between, from producer to producer. But if you were to categorise Howell Mountain, you would categorise it as like big, strong muscular tannins, you know, really, really dark profiled fruit. Conversely, you've got Mount Veeder, which is going to be across the way on the Mayacamas side of the mountains, sort of further towards the south. So famously like Mayacamas is a producer there, and those wines, to me have a little bit more of a high toned feel to them, when it comes to the fruits, just lifted and almost like, almost Italian in nature. So that's sort of like not VA, but like, you know, that high toned, lift, brightness, you know, super focused, lots of cranberry, maybe leaning more towards like the purple side of the spectrum for fruit. And I find those wines are not quite as tannic, and rich, and like, you know, just muscular. I mean, there's still mountain wines, especially as you get, you know, over 1400 feet elevation, there's still big wines, but I think they have a little bit more focus and less of that broad shoulder that like the Howell Mountain wines do. They're beautiful. I love all of the mountain wines, they are so different.



Janina Doyle 51:05

I think that just kind of sums things up, because we would need to speak for another hour, wouldn't we? Because also, the soil is everything is diverse. It's not just Napa full stop. But it's just nice to know that you know, people really there is the fertile valley floor, and then

there's everything going up. And so that just, hopefully gives people just that tiny suggestion that, my God, pay attention if you get a Napa Valley wine if it has one of the sub appellations, because quite clearly, there is so much to offer. And they're very versatile and very different.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 51:34

Yeah. And like I said, it's only 30 miles by 5 and within that we contain half of the world's geological soil types.

**J** Janina Doyle 51:42

Well, there you go. Another fun fact. Yeah, that's a good summary. Yeah, thank you so much. Honestly, I want to know more. I need to know. And I think everyone's probably listening has realised how much you know. Officially, I am knighting you as the Napa Valley Queen.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 51:58

Well thank you.

**J** Janina Doyle 51:59

You are so welcome and very deserving of this very prestigious award that I've just given you. There's no prize. It's just virtual. Like most things. It's a virtual price.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 52:10

Perfect.

**J** Janina Doyle 52:10

You're welcome. But anybody who wants to listen more, again, it's just SommVivant, on YouTube and on Instagram, and then it's Wine Access Unfiltered.

**A** Amanda McCrossin 52:19

Yes, Wine Access Unfiltered. Exactly.



Janina Doyle 52:21

There we go. And they can listen to you chatting. And the nice thing about your podcast is it's about wine, but you're chatting with sports stars and comedians, and it's actually a very relaxed feel. It's a good old gossip, as well as touching on different wines that you're drinking.



Amanda McCrossin 52:34

Yeah, I, we sort of equated it to like the fun conversations we were having with guests at the restaurant that weren't in the business. And just, you know, a wine podcast that's not necessarily about wine, it's about the conversation. And you know, we sort of bob and weave around the wine and you know, have some good laughs and a good chat.



Janina Doyle 52:50

And that's what it is all about. Thank you so much, Amanda, you're fantastic. Keep up all your amazing media appearances, because I'm certainly enjoying it. And I know everyone else will be as well.



Amanda McCrossin 52:59

Oh, thank you so much. I will absolutely do that.



Janina Doyle 53:01

Bless you, take care and I'll speak to you soon.



Janina Doyle 53:06

So during that chat, Amanda touched on Robert Parker, who created the 100 point system, which of course, is generally used today when scoring wines, but the other person she mentioned was Steven Spurrier, who maybe you do or don't know, Steven Spurrier is British. And for those of you who like to read the Decanter magazine, you will find him in there. He always has a column and I think he is the consulting editor for Decanter. He's written several books. And for those of you who love English wine, he in fact makes a wine called Bride Valley and that's down in Dorset. Now what probably made him most famous was in 1976, which was the Judgement of Paris. Now if you don't know about the Judgement of Paris and you want to have a bit more of a fun way to find out, I highly advise you to watch the movie Bottleshock. Now Bottleshock is set in California. At the

time, Steven Spurrier had his own wine shop in Paris. Now this is all true. It's also true that he decided he wanted to put Californian wines against the top French wines. So this is your Bordeaux's and your Burgundy's. However, disclaimer, never let the truth get in the way of a good story. In the movie, they do make out that Steven Spurrier was so behind Californian wine that he did this tasting to prove how good California wines were. This is not actually fact. If you do meet him, he will openly tell you that he really truly believed that the French wines were better and he wanted to kind of put an end to the story that Californian wines were doing well. And so we did this blind tasting, expecting the French to do fantastically of which they did not. And it was two wines that came in first place, both from Napa Valley. Beating all of the top Burgundy's was Chateau Montelena 1973 and then beating the Bordeaux's was Stags Leap Cabernet Sauvignon 1973. So this went on to really put Napa Valley wines on the map. So you can probably see intention or no intention. Steven Spurrier did amazing things for the reputation of high quality wines from California. So I'm going to finish with a wine quote from Alan Rickman who was playing Steven Spurrier in Bottleshock. So, as Steven Spurrier in the movie, he says:



Janina Doyle 55:27

"Great wine is great art, my friend. I am in effect, a shepherd, whose mission it is to offer the public another form of great art and to guide its appreciation, there off."



Janina Doyle 55:38

So if you haven't seen the movie yet, do go and check it out. Now thank you so much for listening. I really hope you enjoyed this episode. If you did, let me know Amanda's fantastic, right? Whichever app you're listening to, make sure you've subscribed, you've liked and you have commented. Please share with all your wine loving friends. And don't forget there are the exclusive episodes if you'd like to come and join the team at [patreon.com/EatSleepWineRepeat](https://patreon.com/EatSleepWineRepeat). So, until the next episode, cheers to you.