



TOBIN  
JAMES  
CELLARS

# JAMES GANG GAZETTE

VOLUME 47

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Can any of you recall a moment in your lives where wine brought you an experience so unexpected and incredible that you would remember it for your entire life? I hope so. I'd like to relive my favorite story that happened to me decades ago when I was just a pup.

During college, I started a clothing company that grew quickly, and eventually required several trips to New York City to meet with buyers. I had been continuously reading stories of the greatest chef in America, André Soltner, and his iconic restaurant, Lutèce, named by Julia Child and many publications as the best restaurant in America. It became my mission in life to experience his cuisine at least once in my life. And, after many trips and attempts at reservations, we finally got one. Albeit the last reservation of the evening.

Arriving early, we chatted in the tiny vestibule waiting area with the woman who we had always requested reservations from on the phone (pre-internet). She introduced herself as Mrs. Soltner. Really? Already the perfect evening!

But things went a bit downhill from there. Clearly, we were not regulars, so we got seated in a corner near the kitchen door, hidden with a large plant that obscured our view of other patrons. This was a celebrity hangout, and of course we were hoping for a sighting or two. When our waiter finally arrived, we could tell he was preoccupied with his regular patrons, and that he clearly didn't want to be bothered by us "outsiders." But I was undeterred, I was finally sitting down to dinner at Lutèce.

I convinced my business partner, along with our Sales Manager, Gary, that this was a really special night, and I was going to break our bank and get a few of the most famous wines on earth. We started with an expensive bottle of Champagne, and then ordered one of the most famous Burgundies in the world (Domaine de la Romanée-Conti). That certainly changed our waiter's actions, as suddenly he became our best friend and

fawned over us, especially after we offered him tastes of our wines.

Our sales manager had never been exposed to fine wine before, but wanted to learn. When our waiter removed the bottle with a portion still in it, Gary told him that there was some wine left in the bottle. The waiter, in the thickest French accent you can imagine, told Gary, "No Monsieur, you always leeve a 'turd' in zee bottle." Gary, of course, looked incredulous... "A turd?" he exclaimed!

"Oui, Monsieur, eet eez zee cinnamon." Well, that is what Gary heard. My partner and I knew he was really saying to leave a third in the bottle because that is the sediment. But at this point we just let it ride. And you can imagine Gary's face as he demanded to taste the cinnamon, which the waiter reluctantly poured into his glass. I'll never forget the waiter's face as the chunks clunked from the bottle, and Gary's face when he upended his wine glass into his mouth. "This doesn't taste like cinnamon!" he sputtered. "No, no, Monsieur, I said cinnamon, not cinnamon!"

Dinner came slowly to an end, but I wanted to linger a bit over dessert, so I ordered another once-in-a-lifetime bottle, a sweet dessert wine, Château d'Yquem from Sauternes, France. For many a wine snob, this is the holy grail of wines. As we sipped our Sauternes, and savored our dessert, we noticed one of the chefs, with his high toque hat, going from table to table thanking and chatting with his patrons. When he finally arrived at our table, and asked how our evening went, our "gift of gab" sales manager Gary asked the chef if he'd like a taste of our Sauternes. His eyes lit up when he saw the label, promptly pulled up a chair, and signaled the waiter to bring even more desserts.

The restaurant closed and the four of us continued on at the table for hours, telling stories of where we ski, travel, and dine. We became instant friends, sharing a camaraderie born from that bottle of wine. It was well after 2am, another bottle, and helping turn

off the lights, that it occurred to all of us that we had not shared our names.

In his beautiful, thick accent, our chef apologized, and said, "We haven't told each other our names, I'm André Soltner." I might have fainted.

As big a thrill as meeting your baseball or basketball idol, I had just spent 3 hours with the greatest chef in America and had no idea. Only that he was someone who loved wine, food, life, travel, his wife of 50 years, and a passion for everything he did. I really thought he was the chef who had cooked our food, which he was, but not the living legend himself.

I don't remember how we got back to our hotel; we could have floated for all I can remember. And I know for some, when you finally meet your idol, it can be brief and a disappointment. For me, and I'm choking up as I write this, it was the most magical and memorable experience in my wine and food life.

Decades later I still share this story with my family and friends, always over a bottle of wine, with the hope that many of the wines I have made for you help create some life-lasting memories.

What's happening at the winery? As the pandemic lingers on, our tasting room is almost back to normal. Safety first, but the joy and laughter you all know that accompanies our delicious wines continue. Please stop by for a visit and some tastes.

We have scheduled our James Gang Festival for 2022: March 18 and 19, Friday and Saturday. It's a two-night bash—come for one or both nights. There will be too much happening to experience it all in one night. Same party each night, but it is a big event!

Dig into this box of 2017s, '18s, and a '19 Chardonnay. I even selected a bottle of our absolute best, "the blend," to be included. What a great bottle to make a memory with!

That's all for now, and as always, I hope to see you soon in our tasting room.

Cheers!

*Lance*





**All this fo**



## James Gang Wine Club Selections

### 1. 2018 The Blend

**\$125.00 per bottle**

A new benchmark for excellence has arrived. Our latest creation is a blend of our best wines in the cellar. Paso Robles has become acclaimed for its eclectic blends and this is no exception. We will continue to create this wine each year, but only if we can blend a masterpiece such as this gem. This year's blend consists of Petite Sirah, Tannat, Merlot, Zinfandel, and Syrah. Unconventional? Yes, but an absolute gem! This wine will age gracefully for many years, but it is perfect now. Pair with any rich and full-flavored dishes, and of course, anything off the grill. We only have 40 cases for re-orders, and your wine club discounts apply.

### 2. 2018 Zinfandel, Dusi Vineyard

**\$38.00 per bottle**

90-year-old+ vines! Dry-farmed and head-trained. Arguably the most famous Zinfandel vineyard in the world. Always one of the best Zinfandels we do all year. Zin aficionados can pick a Dusi blindfolded because of its consistently unique flavors. This 100% Dusi bottling is a tradition at Tobin James; our first was a 1985 vintage. Wow! Rich, thick, and jammy, this will improve in a few years, but it is certainly ready to enjoy now. As always, we have a small supply remaining. Call for re-orders.

### 3. 2018 Zinfandel, French Camp Vineyard

**\$38.00 per bottle**

The French Camp vineyard is quite the amazing vineyard. We make no commitments to bottling a vineyard separately each year. It must be great and have a similar flavor profile that speaks of that vineyard. French Camp vineyard does this year after year. We bring in several blocks of fruit from French Camp, so we have the luxury of blending the best of the best from that vineyard. This wine always has a huge core of jammy raspberry with nuances of spice and cracked pepper. Heavily seasoned baby back ribs slow-roasted on the grill comes to mind, but this is a very versatile food wine. Perfect now and will hold for 3-5 more years. About 200 cases remain, so call for re-orders soon.

### 4. 2017 Lagrein, Silver Reserve

**\$48.00 per bottle**

Lagrein is the name of the grape. This is a very obscure grape varietal that originated in the Trentino-Alto Adige region of Italy. In California, only five vineyards produce this little known grape. This grape has traditionally been used as a blending grape because of its dark, inky color and great structure. Our Lagrein is just too good to blend. It is a dark, rich, complex wine with nice ripe fruit and a wonderfully long finish. This is a great food wine that will pair with almost anything, although the bigger flavored dishes will work best. Try a roast chicken with rich pan juices or a savory mushroom risotto. The gorgeous structure of this wine will allow it to age beautifully for many years as well, but it tastes perfect right now so enjoy. About 150 cases remain—this wine will sell out soon.



er \$179<sup>00</sup>!!



### 5. 2017 Private Stash, James Gang Reserve

**\$48.00 per bottle**

Private Stash is back! This bold, Bordeaux-style wine is particularly blended in the Old World style and is co-fermented in French/American oak barrels. It's a beautiful blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot. This marriage of three noble varietals is well-balanced with great tannin structure and lush, velvety fruit. Suggested food pairings for the Private Stash may be a juicy porterhouse, herbed rack of lamb, or any rich, bold-flavored dish. The Stash is tasting great now, being that it is four years old, but will continue to age well for the next few years or so. We have more, so call today to order.

### 6. 2017 Malbec, James Gang Reserve

**\$38.00 per bottle**

Malbec is a spectacular grape that is considered one of the six Bordeaux varietals. Most Malbec in California is blended into "Bordeaux blends," such as our beloved "5." We have always produced 100 cases or so of stand-alone Malbec for the tasting room, but the 2017 was so delicious—and so bountiful—we were able to bottle enough for our club members. The last vintage of Malbec that was included in your shipment was the 2010. Our 2017 Malbec shows typical deep color, mouthwatering acidity, and a delectable plum-like flavor component. This wine will pair with so many foods, it's our go-to wine for food and wine pairings. Delicious now, this will hold for quite a few years, but it's ready to drink! Only 100 cases remain and they will go quick!

### 7. 2019 Chardonnay, Radiance

**\$18.00 per bottle**

This is one delicious Chardonnay! Vibrant and racy, this luscious wine bursts with zesty lemon, pear, and pineapple on the nose and palate. Mouthwateringly perfect acidity that makes you crave your next sip over and over again. Pair it with fresh cracked crab, shrimp, fish in light buttery sauces or Asian spices, or light veggie-laden pastas. Any time is Radiance time—Relax with a glass!

### 8. 2018 Port, James Gang Reserve

**\$25.00 per bottle**

We have always wanted to make a true Port using authentic Port varietals and Port winemaking techniques, but we could not find the right grapes. So we decided to plant some! In 2004, we planted a vineyard with Tinto Cão, Touriga Nacional, and Souzao. Our first full harvest with these grapes was 2009. After starting fermentation, we added the best brandy imaginable to stop fermentation with 10% residual grape sugar, exactly the method employed in Portugal. We then aged it in barrels for two years and then aged it in the bottle for a year before releasing it. This is the method for a true Vintage Port. We believe this Port will continue to improve in the bottle for many, many years, but why wait? It is absolutely delicious now. Enjoy after dinner with Bleu or Stilton cheeses, almonds, anything chocolate, or all by itself!

### **Our Gift to You! Of course there's more!**

**Retail Value \$25.00**

Four years ago, we sent out a gorgeous silvery-grey plush blanket designed by co-owner/winemaker Claire Silver. It was so popular that we decided to do it again, in our Blue Moon color theme. Soft as soft can be, we know you'll love it. Happy snuggling and sipping! Enjoy!



# JAMES GANG FESTIVAL

Friday, March 18, 2022

&

Saturday, March 19, 2022

**Call for Tickets TODAY!!**

**SALE!**



**Watch Tobin James  
Social Media for a CRAZY  
Black Friday/Cyber Monday  
Special!**

## Holiday Package Specials

Choose one or all of our pre-packaged specials

### Don't Be a Scrooge...Share!

2 bottles of each wine for a full case

- "Made in the Shade" Merlot
  - "Ballistic" Zinfandel
  - "Primo" Sangiovese
  - "Bella Bella" Barbera
  - "Rock-N-Roll" Syrah
  - "James Gang Reserve" Primitivo
- \$225**

### Mix, Mingle & Blend

- "Silver Reserve" GSM
  - "FIVE" Bordeaux Blend
  - "Big Shot" Blend
- \$125**

### Blue Moon Christmas

- "Blue Moon Reserve" Petite Sirah
  - "Blue Moon Reserve" Zinfandel
  - "Blue Moon Reserve" Syrah
- \$205**

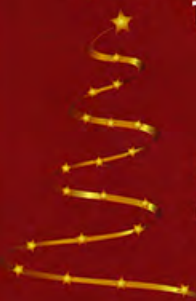


## The Holidays Are Coming!

Why not send the perfect gift that is guaranteed never to be returned?

Tobin James Wine!!!

**Call our "Gift Line"  
at (805) 239-2204**



Business Owners: Tobin James can send wine to your favorite clients! A truly unique gift they'll remember you by!

## Here's a few of our current wines...

Remember – 20% discount on a case or more (mixed welcome!)

Free shipping in California to James Gang members.

2017	Sauvignon Blanc	Sundance . . . . .	\$18
2017	Chardonnay	James Gang Reserve . . . . .	\$28
2018	Cabernet Sauvignon	Notorious.. . . . .	\$18
2014	Merlot	Made in the Shade . . . . .	\$22
2017	Syrah	Rock-N-Roll . . . . .	\$18
2016	Petite Sirah	Midnight Magic.. . . . .	\$25
2016	Zinfandel	James Gang Reserve . . . . .	\$32
2017	Zinfandel	Fat Boy . . . . .	\$55
2017	Cabernet Franc	James Gang Reserve . . . . .	\$38
2017	Tannat	Palindrome . . . . .	\$42
2016	Late Harvest Zinfandel	Liquid Love . . . . .	\$18
2014	Dessert Wine	Charisma.. . . . .	\$20
2020	Moscato	Dream Catcher.. . . . .	\$12
NV	Sparkling	Dream Weaver.. . . . .	\$12

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