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Gourmet  
Bistro & Catering**

**WINE CLASS**  
**Food & Wine Pairing 101**  
 Monday, June 8th • 6-9pm

Taste 6 wines paired with gourmet selections, enjoy enlightened information, and have a great time! Michael Bailey has years of knowledge & Zeeta will pair that up with fabulous eats.

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- Tuesday Markets begin May 5.
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- Cooking and sampling demos at Hey Bayles!
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# Taking Flight

JUMPING HEADFIRST INTO THE WORLD OF WINE By Krista Harper

**Y**ou might call my dad a wine connoisseur. He belongs to a wine-of-the-month club, goes to wine tastings at least a few times a month and likes to joke that his huge wine collection in the basement is going to be my inheritance.

For years, my dad has tried valiantly to impart his wine wisdom to me. He likes to pour me small glasses and ask what I think. Honestly, it's hard for me to tell the difference between one bottle and the next, but to keep him happy, I'll drink a glass or two and listen patiently as he critiques or marvels at the wine's various attributes.

But I'm usually just humoring him. After all, I'm a college student — the vast majority of wines I've enjoyed have cost less than 12 dollars, and sometimes less than five. I've been known to exclaim, as my father does, "Look at the legs on that

wine!" but it's to poke fun at my dear old dad, not to make an educated point about the bottom-shelf wine I'm drinking.

I have no idea how to judge a wine, except for a general assumption that you get what you pay for. Sure, I like some wines more than others, but ask me the difference between pinot noir and cabernet mignon and I'll be at a complete loss. When it comes down to it, wine is part of the grown-up world that I'm still intimidated by, and I'm not alone. Many people, young and old, are wine-shy. It's one of those things that can seem to have a steep, hoity-toity learning curve, like playing golf or making French pastry.

For the benefit of would-be wine drinkers everywhere, I got some help from the experts. I sat down with the managers of three of Eugene's wine bars and boosted my wine IQ, both for my own benefit and to impress my father when he comes down to see me in June.

Angus James, who co-owns The Broadway, pointed to a sign hanging in his shop just minutes after I sat down: "The best wine is the wine you like the best!" He smiled reassuringly.

"Don't be intimidated — wine is just fermented grapes," he said.

That seemed to be the general attitude I heard at the other two wine bars I visited as well. Wine newbies might not have so much to be afraid of, after all.

B2, the wine bar at Crescent Village, opened last November, and was the first bar I went to. Manager Andrew Deffenbacher laid out the basics of wine for me.

First, there are many basic things that can happen at a wine bar. You can order a glass or a bottle of wine, you can participate in a wine tasting or you could order a flight. Tastings usually involve a representative of a winery and a special selection of their wines to sample. "Flights," which I'd never heard of before, consist of three or more smaller glasses of wine, usually with an order and

a theme in mind. For example, you might order a flight of Oregon pinot noirs, a lighter red wine that Deffenbacher informed me is Oregon's most famous kind of wine. The first pinot in the flight would be the lightest, the second would be medium-toned in flavor and color and the last would be the heaviest.

The relatively temperamental grapes that make pinot, Deffenbacher told me, gained fame in French wines from the Burgundy region, but as it turns out, grow equally well in Willamette Valley soil. Much of France and Oregon have similar climates, he said.

Deffenbacher, 25, also explained the idea of a food wine to me. Some wines are good to drink on their own, he said, and others are meant for drinking with food. The flavor in the wine, he said, is enhanced by the taste of certain dishes, especially meat. A robust red might be best with a steak while a white would pair better with fish. He stressed that this doesn't mean one wine is better than another, just that each is better suited to different purposes.

B2 is owned by Bruce and Beverly Biehl, a brother/sister team that also owns the Eugene Wine Cellars. The color scheme and paintings inside B2 resemble what you might expect if the interior decorator of Starbucks had a significantly higher budget and a bit more time. It has a young feel to it, and from Deffenbacher's explanation, that may not be a coincidence. "Wine used to be something our parents drank," he says. But now it's something people are getting into at a younger age, he says, and it's not a surprise for him to see college students in the bar.

The Broadway in downtown Eugene has been open for nine years. The décor is more simplistic than that of B2, and there's plenty of space to peruse wall after wall of the wines that are on sale. Angus James, one of the owners, is the one who so confidently told me that the most important thing about a wine is that I like it.

To impress a fervent wine drinker like my dad, James suggested I offer or at least talk about Oregon's non-pinot wines. Since Oregon's pinots are internationally known, it's likely that my dad, a Washingtonian, would know about them. But it's less likely that he's explored more unique Oregon wines, like syrah from the northern

