



JOLO®

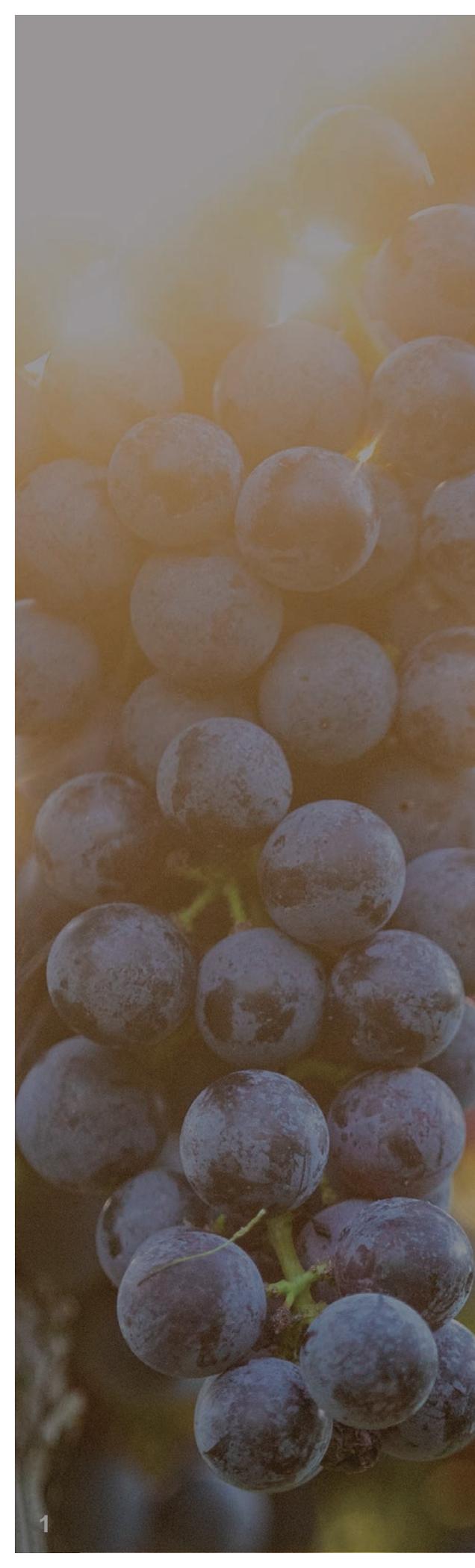
MAGAZINE

Cape Fear
LIVING
Capturing Coastal Carolina Charm

WINE, TIME &
TERROIR
WHY VERTICAL TASTINGS EXIST

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

Pages 13-15



HELLO FROM THE RAYS

As we turn the page into spring, we find ourselves once again standing at the edge of possibility. Winter has been long—and this year, unusually cold. In fact, we experienced the coldest sustained stretch we’ve seen in nearly forty years here in North Carolina. While that may have made for frosted mornings and snow-covered vineyards, in the vineyard itself, that deep cold was not our enemy. It was a gift.

During dormancy, the grapevine shuts down. Sap flow slows to nearly nothing, energy retreats into the roots, and the vine rests. In this state, healthy vines can tolerate temperatures down to zero degrees—and often even a few degrees below—without harm. What would devastate a summer canopy becomes protective in winter. The vine sleeps, conserving strength for what is to come.

And what is to come is always the miracle.

Every spring feels, in many ways, like waiting for a child to arrive. There is anticipation, excitement, and just enough uncertainty to keep us humble. We do not yet know what this vintage will become. We do not know how the season will unfold. But we know it is alive with promise.

Here at JOLO, bud swell typically begins in early to mid-April. By Mother’s Day, we often see six-inch shoots stretching confidently toward the sun. Some years, tiny cluster formations are already visible—delicate, intricate, and impossibly fragile. It is during this window that vigilance becomes constant. A late frost, heavy spring rains, or extended dampness can challenge the young vines. Too much rain during flowering can cause shatter, knocking off blossoms before they have a chance to set fruit.

And yet, the grapevine possesses a remarkable advantage: it is hermaphroditic. Each tiny flower contains both male and female

reproductive parts, allowing it to self-pollinate without reliance on bees or external pollinators. This biological independence is one of the great evolutionary strengths of the vine. While many fruiting plants depend entirely on insects or cross-pollination, the grapevine is capable of completing its own cycle, quietly and efficiently.



It is no small detail that the grapevine's lineage reaches back more than sixty million years, surviving the great extinction event that reshaped life on Earth. Very few fruit-bearing plants can trace their ancestry across that boundary. The vine endured, adapted, diversified—and today exists in thousands of cultivars around the world. Its resilience is written into its DNA.

Perhaps that is why wine has accompanied humanity for nearly as long as civilization itself. The vine is both fragile and extraordinarily durable. It rests when it must. It awakens when conditions are right. It survives storms, frost, drought, and time.

Spring in the vineyard reminds us that wine is not manufactured—it is nurtured. It is not scheduled—it unfolds. Each vintage begins the same way: dormant wood, patient roots, and the quiet hope that the season ahead will allow nature and stewardship to work together once again. As we welcome this new growing season, we do so with gratitude for the cold that preserved our vines, anticipation for the buds soon to break, and optimism that this year's story will be one worth telling.

With warmth and excitement for what lies ahead, we look forward to welcoming you to either of our estates.

JW & Kristen Ray
Joey & Logan Ray



A large group of people is gathered in a well-lit room with a high ceiling featuring exposed wooden beams. The room is decorated with various international flags, including the Portuguese flag and the European Union flag. A large, stylized white letter 'P' is prominently displayed in the upper left, with a cluster of grapes integrated into its top curve. The word 'Rayson' is written in a white, elegant cursive font across the middle of the image. Below it, the words 'AROUND THE WORLD' are written in a clean, white, sans-serif font. The people in the foreground are mostly seen from the back or side, engaged in conversation. A large map is visible on the wall to the left.

P

Rayson

AROUND THE WORLD



In promotional partnership
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Rayson
AROUND THE WORLD

MORE
INFORMATION





SPAIN TRAVEL

Vignette

Bilbao to Rioja to Madrid November 2025

FROM BILBAO TO RIOJA TO MADRID: DISCIPLINE, TIME, AND THE SOUL OF WINE

Our journey through Spain unfolded as a living classroom in wine—one that revealed not only how wine is made, but why it matters. In Bilbao, innovation rises confidently from deep tradition. The city's bold modern architecture stands just miles from vineyards shaped by centuries of discipline, reminding us that progress and heritage are not opposing forces. Here, creativity is strongest when anchored in memory. It is a theme that echoes throughout Spain's wine culture: modern expression supported by ancient roots.

SAN SEBASTIÁN, TXAKOLI, AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE COAST

Just beyond Bilbao, along the rugged Basque coastline, our journey led us to San Sebastián, where wine speaks in a different dialect altogether—one shaped by salt air, steep hillsides, and relentless Atlantic winds. Here, the dominant local wine is Txakoli, a style as distinctive as the landscape that produces it.

Txakoli is built primarily on the indigenous Hondarrabi Zuri grape (with smaller contributions from Hondarrabi Beltza), a variety uniquely adapted to coastal conditions. Grown on dramatic slopes overlooking the Bay of Biscay, these vines endure constant wind, high humidity, and frequent rain. The result is a wine of naturally high acidity, low alcohol, and striking freshness—light-bodied, citrus-driven, and often bottled with a gentle spritz that enhances its vibrancy.

In San Sebastián, Txakoli (pronounced chock-oh-lee) is not treated as a curiosity or specialty wine. It is poured with intention, often from height, to awaken its natural effervescence and aromatics. Paired seamlessly with pintxos—Basque small plates built on pristine seafood, anchovies, shellfish, cured meats, and olive oil—it becomes a masterclass in regional harmony. The wine does not compete with food; it sharpens it. For many drinkers, Txakoli immediately evokes comparisons to Vinho Verde from Portugal—and for good reason. Both wines are coastal, Atlantic-influenced, high-acid, low-alcohol expressions

designed for immediacy and refreshment. Like Vinho Verde, Txakoli embraces youth, brightness, and a subtle natural carbonation that makes it feel alive in the glass. But where Vinho Verde often leans into orchard fruit and soft herbal notes, Txakoli carries a distinctly saline edge—a whisper of sea spray that ties it unmistakably to place.

Together, these wines illustrate an essential truth about viticulture: grapes evolve to survive their environment, and the best wines lean into that reality rather than fight it. In San Sebastián, wine is not about power or prestige—it is about precision, refreshment, and timing. It is meant to be opened young, shared freely, and enjoyed in the moment, often within sight of the ocean that shaped it.

This coastal chapter reinforced what Bilbao first suggested: innovation and tradition thrive when they remain honest to their land. Txakoli does not aspire to be something else. It does not chase oak, age, or weight. It celebrates acidity, restraint, and place—proof that greatness in wine is not defined by intensity alone. That philosophy sharpens as the road turns south into Rioja, one of the most tightly regulated wine regions on Earth. Rioja is a Denominación de Origen Calificada (DOCa)—Spain’s highest classification—and its standards extend far beyond geography. Even the composition of the wine itself is governed by law. A red Rioja produced from destemmed grapes must be at least 95% composed of authorized red varieties—Tempranillo, Garnacha Tinta, Graciano, Mazuelo, or Maturana Tinta. If whole clusters are used, the requirement adjusts slightly to 85%, acknowledging traditional methods while still protecting typicity. Rosé wines must contain a minimum of 25% red varieties, and white Riojas are limited to a defined list of approved grapes.

Labeling is equally precise. If a single grape variety appears on the label, at least 85% of the wine must come from that grape. If multiple varieties are listed, the wine must be 100% composed of those named. In Rioja, identity is not implied—it is enforced.

Aging requirements reinforce that discipline. Crianza, Reserva, and Gran Reserva wines are not



stylistic suggestions; they are legal obligations measured in years of oak and bottle time before release. Wines are not bottled when they are finished fermenting, nor released when they are commercially convenient.

They are released when time itself has fulfilled its mandate.

Then there is the detail that surprises many: even Rioja’s richly fruited, bold red wines—wines most people instinctively describe as “dry”—may legally contain measurable residual sugar. Under European law, a wine may be labeled dry with up to 4 grams per liter of residual sugar, or up to 9 grams per liter if balanced by sufficient acidity. This small allowance, invisible on the palate when well integrated, underscores how European wine law recognizes balance rather than absolutism. “Dry” is not defined by zero—it is defied by harmony.



RIOJA DOCa CLASSIFICATION GUIDE

Spain’s Rioja DOCa is one of the most tightly regulated wine regions in the world. The classifications below govern minimum aging requirements, varietal expectations, and release timing, preserving consistency and regional identity.

These requirements are enforced by the Consejo Regulador and apply differently to red, white, and rosé wines, with red wines carrying the most stringent aging mandates.

CLASSIFICATION	PRIMARY GRAPES	TOTAL AGING REQUIREMENT	OAK AGING MINIMUM	BOTTLE AGING MINIMUM
Joven	Tempranillo-led Blends	No Minimum Aging	Optimal/ Minimal	None
Chianza	≥85% Tempranillo (reds)	2 years	6 months	12-18 months
Reserva	≥85% Tempranillo (reds)	3 years	1 year	2 years
Gran Reserva	≥85% Tempranillo (reds)	5 years	2 years	3 years

THE DIAMONDS OF

J O I L O [®]



THE LITTLE JEWELS IN YOUR WINE GLASS

By JW Ray, Owner & Winemaker

If you've ever opened a bottle of red wine at JOLO Winery & Vineyards or Rayson Winery & Vineyards and noticed tiny crystals on the cork or resting in the neck of the bottle, you may have wondered what they are. Some guests even think it may be sugar crystals or that the wine has somehow spoiled. In reality, you've discovered one of the most beautiful—and reassuring—signs of minimally manipulated wine.



Winemakers affectionately call them “wine diamonds.”

WHAT ARE WINE DIAMONDS

Wine diamonds are small crystals of potassium bitartrate, a natural compound formed from tartaric acid, one of the principal acids found in grapes. Tartaric acid plays a critical role in wine—it contributes brightness, structure, and long-term stability.

Over time, especially when wine is stored at cool temperatures, some of this tartaric acid bonds with naturally occurring potassium in the wine and forms crystals. These crystals are completely harmless, tasteless, and perfectly natural.

In fact, the substance is so pure that the food industry refines it into what we know as cream of tartar.

WHY YOU MAY SEE THEM IN OUR WINE

At many large commercial wineries, wines undergo a process called cold stabilization before bottling. In this process, wine is chilled to near-freezing temperatures for several weeks. The goal is simple: force these



crystals to precipitate in the winery so consumers never see them in the bottle.

While effective, cold stabilization removes a portion of the wine's natural tartaric structure.

At JOLO and Rayson, we follow a more traditional Old World philosophy of minimal intervention. Rather than aggressively stripping the wine of its natural components, we allow the wine to remain closer to its original balance.

That means we never cold stabilize our red wines, however, we do cold stabilize our white and rosé wines because they have another acid called malic acid to provide that green apple tartness that malic acid is known for. In the red wines, we transform that tart malic acid to a soft and buttery lactic acid through malolactic fermentation, which is standard in all fine red wine production. This is why we do not want to remove the other main acid or diminish it so the wines maintain their vibrancy, food friendliness, and age worthiness.

By preserving the wine's natural tartaric acid, we maintain:

- Better structural balance
- Improved aging potential
- Greater authenticity of the wine's natural chemistry

The trade-off is that occasionally those beautiful crystals may appear in the bottle. To us, that's a badge of honor.

WHY YOU OFTEN FIND THEM ON THE CORK

Another reason guests sometimes encounter wine diamonds on the cork, or in the neck of the bottle, has to do with how we store our wines before they reach your table.



Our bottles are cellared upside down (to ensure the corks stay hydrated and swollen) in our climate-controlled warehouse at 57°F, an ideal aging temperature. Over time, as the wine slowly evolves in the bottle, tartaric crystals can gently precipitate out of the wine and settle toward the neck.

Because the bottles are stored inverted, those crystals often collect near the cork—so when you open the bottle, you may see a few sparkling fragments resting on the cork or hardened in the neck (if they have hardened in the neck, just punch through with your corkscrew!).

They are simply the natural byproduct of wine aging gracefully.

THE CONNECTION TO DECANTING

These harmless crystals are also one of the classic reasons wines are decanted.

Many people assume decanting is primarily about letting wine “breathe.” While that can help younger wines soften, mature wines rarely need additional oxygen. After decades in bottle, they have already experienced an incredibly slow process of micro-oxygenation through the cork.

Instead, decanting historically served a more practical purpose: Separating clear wine from the natural sediment that forms during aging.

In older wines this sediment can include:

- Tartrate crystals (wine diamonds)
- Polymerized pigments from tannins and color compounds

These components are completely natural and expected in wines that are built to age. Decanting simply allows the clear wine to be poured off the sediment, leaving the crystals and solids behind in the bottle.

A SIGN OF AUTHENTIC WINE

Wine diamonds are not flaws—they are evidence that a wine has been treated with respect.

They remind us that wine is not a manufactured beverage but a living agricultural product that continues to evolve long after it leaves the vineyard.

At JOLO and Rayson, we believe wine should remain as close to its natural origin as possible. When you encounter these tiny crystals, you’re witnessing the same traditional chemistry that has been occurring in great European cellars for centuries.

So the next time you see a few sparkling “diamonds” on the cork, take it as a sign that the wine in your glass is authentic, minimally manipulated, and built for longevity (and a few platinum medals and best of show awards!).

And if you happen to spot a few jewels in your bottle—consider yourself lucky. Our winemaking team left you a little treasure!

RAISING A GLASS TO JOLO PINK®

“When a wine from North Carolina is the Best in Show, it is reminiscent of a Judgment of Paris moment. There are no preconceived ideas in a blind tasting; you’re just judging what’s in the glass.”

*-Judge Sunny Fraser
American Fine Wines Competition*



3X
BEST IN SHOW

Wine, Time & Terroir

From Prehistoric Roots to Unrepeatable JOLO Vintages

By JW Ray, Owner & Winemaker

Wine is humanity's oldest crafted beverage—older than beer, older than spirits, and older than written language itself. Archaeological evidence places intentional winemaking at more than 8,000 years ago in the Caucasus region. While water sustained life, wine shaped culture.

For much of human history, clean drinking water was unreliable or unsafe. Wine, with its natural acidity, alcohol, and antimicrobial properties, became a safer daily beverage. In ancient Rome, wine was often diluted with water—not to weaken it, but to purify it. Children, laborers, and nobility alike consumed wine as part of everyday life.

Wine became central to family gatherings, religious ceremonies, harvest festivals, and diplomacy. Unlike distilled spirits, which emerged much later, wine grew alongside humanity itself. A bottle is rarely opened alone—it invites conversation, food, and shared experience. Wine is rarely, if ever, mixed and usually consumed in its purest form.

What sets wine apart from nearly every other agricultural product is not only its origin, but its antiquity and resilience. Wine comes from a perennial vine, not an annual planting. These vines return year after year, sending roots deep into the earth—often far deeper than many of the world's oldest trees, whose roots spread wide but shallow.

The grapevine is among a very small group of living plants whose lineage reaches back before the K–Pg (formerly K–T) extinction event, the cataclysmic asteroid impact approximately 66 million years ago that wiped out nearly 75% of life on Earth, including the dinosaurs. Fossil evidence places ancestral members of the Vitaceae family firmly in the Late Cretaceous period, meaning the grapevine survived one of the most violent biological resets in planetary history—and continued to evolve afterwards.

Very few fruit-bearing plants can make this claim.

While countless species vanished, the grapevine endured, adapted, and diversified. That survival was not accidental. The grapevine possesses an unusually complex and flexible genetic structure.



With roughly 30,000 genes—significantly more than humans—the vine is exceptionally capable of mutation, adaptation, and specialization. Modern genomic research has documented multiple whole-genome duplication events in the vine’s evolutionary history, moments when its entire genetic code effectively doubled, providing extraordinary raw material for variation and resilience.

This genetic plasticity explains why the grapevine has produced more than 10,000 known cultivars worldwide, each capable of expressing different traits depending on climate, soil, elevation, and human stewardship. Few agricultural species demonstrate such a capacity to adapt across continents, centuries, and climates while remaining fundamentally recognizable.



Unlike annual crops that live one season and are replanted, grapevines are perennial witnesses to time. They return year after year, sending roots ever deeper into the earth—often far deeper than many of the world’s oldest trees, whose roots tend to spread laterally near the surface. A mature vine’s roots can extend tens of feet downward, penetrating layers of soil and fractured bedrock, drawing from water and minerals laid down millions of years before the vine itself was planted.

When we speak of terroir, we are not speaking metaphorically.

Wine is one of the rare agricultural products capable of expressing not only a single season, but deep geological time—a conversation between ancient earth, living vine, and human hands. Each bottle is the latest chapter in a story that has survived extinction, climate upheaval, and the rise and fall of civilizations.

This is not merely agriculture. This is continuity.

No wonder, then, with the proven resiliency of the grape vine, that wine has long been associated with vitality and longevity. Across history, and even into modern nutritional research, moderate wine consumption consistently appears alongside some of the world’s healthiest and longest-lived populations.



In the so-called Blue Zone regions—places where people routinely live well into their 90s and beyond—wine is not treated as an indulgence, but as a daily, communal companion to food, conversation, and rest. Consumed slowly, with meals, and in moderation, wine delivers naturally occurring polyphenols, antioxidants, and organic acids derived from the grape’s ancient and resilient biology. These compounds, born of a vine shaped by survival and adaptation over millions of years, help explain why wine has endured not only as a cultural cornerstone but as a dietary constant in societies defined by balance, connection, and longevity. Wine was never meant to be rushed or abused—it was meant to be shared, savored, and woven into life itself.

At JOLO Winery, this sense of place begins with Pilot Mountain itself. Its quartzite foundation, formed more than 600 million to 1 billion years ago, predates nearly every famous wine region in the world. This ancient geology creates lean, well-drained soils that challenge the vine, producing wines of clarity, balance, and unmistakable origin.

A bottle of wine tells multiple stories at once: place, craft, and people. No two vintages are identical—and that is not a flaw. It is the point.

In nearly every other beverage on Earth, difference is treated as failure. Beer is engineered so that one can taste indistinguishably from the next. Bourbon is blended across barrels to erase variation. Orange juice, tomato juice, soft drinks—all are products of recipes, formulas, and controlled inputs. Producers strive relentlessly for sameness. Consistency is the goal.

Wine is the antithesis. It is utterly inimitable.

Wine refuses to be replicated. It cannot be mass-standardized without losing its soul. Every vintage is shaped by a singular, unrepeatable convergence of weather, soil moisture, sunlight, timing, and human decision. A cooler spring, a warmer harvest, a storm that arrived—or didn’t—at exactly the wrong moment: each leaves an indelible fingerprint. Once that year passes, it can never be recreated. The conditions are gone forever.

This is why vertical tastings exist—a concept found nowhere else in the beverage world. When wines from the same vineyard, the same vines, and the same hands are tasted across different years, what emerges is not inconsistency, but narrative. Each bottle becomes a chapter. Together, they form a biography of place told through time.

Wine is not a recipe.

It is a record!

And that is where its romance lives. Every bottle is singular. Every vintage is finite. When you open it, you are experiencing something that will never exist again—anywhere, for anyone. Wine is not meant to be repeated. It is meant to be remembered.

If there exists a more romantic beverage on earth, I have yet to find it.

TOP 100 MOST ROMANTIC IN THE UNITED STATES

by OpenTable, 2026



RESERVE YOUR
EXPERIENCE

Q & A

BEHIND-THE-SCENES STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet the Minds Behind the JOLO Experience

A Q&A with Vice President of JOLO Brands, Carrie Brown,
& Director of Digital & Social Media, Coleman Craddock

MEET COLEMAN CRADDOCK

Coleman Craddock, Director of Digital & Social Media, is the heartbeat behind so much of what makes JOLO extraordinary. Coleman leads our social strategy, designs the creative elements guests encounter at every event, and manages OpenTable operations, email campaigns, and day-to-day restaurant operations. She supports our wine club software management at both locations and is instrumental in bringing our most beloved curated experiences to life — from Chef's Counter and Galentine's to Élevage and Founders Tastings. With a natural warmth and a smile that lights up every room, Coleman brings creativity and connection to everything she does.

WHAT IS ONE DETAIL ABOUT JOLO THAT GUESTS OVERLOOK?

I think guests sometimes overlook the true farm-to-table nature of JOLO. It's easy to get caught up in the conversation, the food, and how beautiful the wines are, but there's something special about realizing the wine in your glass was grown and crafted from the very land you're sitting on.



COLEMAN CRADDOCK
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE FOOD & WINE PAIRED DISHES RIGHT NOW?x

At JOLO's EndPosts, my go-to pairing is the Eggplant Rollatini with a glass of JOLO PINK—it's a perfect balance. At Rayson's Bistro Europa, I'm obsessed with the Steak Moutarde paired with a glass of our Rayson Cabernet Sauvignon.

WHO HAS INFLUENCED OR MENTORED YOU MOST IN YOUR JOLO JOURNEY?

My biggest influences are three of my closest friends & coworkers, who I'm lucky to learn from every day. Carrie Brown inspires me with her work ethic and ability to juggle so many responsibilities while keeping everything running seamlessly. Levi Banks has a wealth of wine knowledge, and has a way of connecting with people when he speaks, his passion for learning pushes me to keep growing and become more detail oriented. Cat Beal brings unmatched energy and warmth—she has a gift for making every guest feel at home and lifting team morale effortlessly. Each of them has shaped the way I approach both hospitality and leadership.



CARRIE BROWN

VICE PRESIDENT OF JOLO BRANDS

MEET CARRIE BROWN

Carrie Brown, Vice President of JOLO Brands, is the heartbeat behind the JOLO experience. From overseeing the day-to-day operations of both JOLO and Rayson to leading hiring, training, and team development, Carrie ensures every detail is executed with intention and excellence. She also manages all guest communications—from newsletters to text messages and email—keeping our community connected and engaged. Her leadership and dedication are felt in every corner of the brand, making her an essential part of what makes JOLO so special.

WHAT FIRST DREW YOU TO JOLO WINERY?

In high school, I was looking for a way to earn a little extra money, and JOLO had just been open for about a year and was looking for additional tasting guides. What started as a part-time opportunity quickly turned into something much bigger, and I've been fortunate to grow alongside the company ever since.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOMENT TO WITNESS DURING A GUEST'S VISIT?

Having been with the company for so many years, I've been able to build personal relationships with many of our guests. One of the most special parts of my job is witnessing their milestones—anniversaries, birthdays, engagements, and celebrations of all kinds. Being part of those moments, sometimes year after year with the same guests, is incredibly meaningful and something I feel very lucky to experience.

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT YOU OR YOUR STAFF?

Our team works incredibly hard every single day to provide the highest level of hospitality possible. We are also extremely close—we spend time together outside of work and genuinely support one another. When we say we're family-oriented, we truly mean it. We look out for each other and go above and beyond, not just for our guests, but for one another as well.

WHEN GUESTS LEAVE JOLO, WHAT FEELING DO YOU HOPE THEY CARRY WITH THEM?

I hope they leave feeling like they've experienced something truly special and that they've found a place they can always return to. My goal is for every guest to feel that JOLO is somewhere they can come for exceptional hospitality, memorable experiences, and a sense of belonging.



RESERVE YOUR NEXT JOLO EVENT



MORE
INFORMATION



At JOLO Winery and Vineyards, celebrations are elevated by breathtaking scenery, thoughtful hospitality, and award-winning wines crafted on our estate. Nestled at the base of Pilot Mountain, our property offers a refined yet welcoming setting where guests can gather to celebrate life's meaningful moments—from rehearsal dinners and milestone birthdays to baby showers, corporate gatherings, and private celebrations. Whether hosting an intimate dinner or a lively reception, JOLO provides a distinctive backdrop where exceptional food, wine, and service come together to create an unforgettable experience.

SPACES DESIGNED FOR EVERY CELEBRATION

THE PAVILION

Our spacious 40' x 70' pavilion offers an open-air setting ideal for larger celebrations, accommodating up to 180 guests, while overlooking the vineyards and the iconic views of Pilot Mountain.

THE EVENT CENTER

An elegant indoor venue accommodating up to 72 guests, featuring scenic views of the estate and convenient private amenities for your event.

THE COMMUNITY TABLE

Ideal for more intimate gatherings, this elegant al fresco setting accommodates up to 20 guests. Perfect for private dinners, meetings, or celebrations, it offers a refined experience with stunning views overlooking Pilot Mountain.



SMOKE & SILK

The Art of Pairing Wine with Cigars

By Colleen Thompson, Editor in Chief, Cape Fear Living Magazine

There was a time when the ritual was simple: a glass of brandy, a perfectly cut cigar, and the slow punctuation of smoke at the end of a long dinner. Wine, by contrast, belonged squarely at the table. Yet as dining culture has evolved—more fluid, more exploratory—the conversation around what fills the glass when the ash settles has shifted. Collectors, sommeliers, and enthusiasts are discovering that wine and cigars, when thoughtfully paired, offer a layered, contemplative experience that rivals the classic spirits match. This is not novelty. It is harmony.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RITUAL

Cigar culture has long been entwined with Europe's wine-producing nations. In 18th- and 19th-century Spain and France, cigars from Cuba and the Caribbean arrived in port cities already steeped in the wine trade. Merchants moving Bordeaux or Rioja often favored Havanas such as Partagás or H. Upmann—cigars prized for earthy depth and meticulous construction.

Still, fortified wines and aged spirits dominated the pairing canon. Vintage Port accompanied a Romeo y Julieta Churchill; Cognac complemented a Montecristo No. 2. Their higher alcohol and sweetness stood up to the tannin, spice, and smoke of tobacco, while table wine—particularly dry wine—was considered too delicate.

That assumption has softened. Cigar makers in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic refined fermentation and aging techniques, producing richly layered maduros like the Padron 1964 Anniversary Series or the Oliva Serie V Melanio. Winemakers, in parallel, embraced riper fruit profiles, extended oak aging, and broader textures. Modern palates, accustomed to Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, Amarone della Valpolicella, and oak-aged Rioja Reserva, are now well prepared for the interplay. The key lies in understanding structure.



WHY IT WORKS

A cigar, like wine, is agricultural. Its wrapper—whether a silky Ecuadorian Connecticut, a dark Connecticut Broadleaf Maduro, or a reddish Habano leaf—contributes sweetness, spice, or cocoa tones. The filler, often a blend of Nicaraguan, Dominican, or Cuban tobaccos, adds body and character: earth, leather, black pepper, espresso. Aging in cedar-lined humidors integrates these elements much as barrel aging shapes a wine.

Wine operates along parallel lines—fruit, acidity, tannin, oak, alcohol—woven into a cohesive whole. When paired well, wine does not fight the smoke. It refreshes the palate, amplifies certain notes, and softens others.

THREE PRINCIPLES FOR PAIRING

1. Intensity with Intensity

- a. A delicate Burgundy Pinot Noir may vanish beside a Liga Privada No. 9 or Arturo Fuente OpusX. Match power with power: structured reds like Napa Cabernet or Priorat pair beautifully with a bold Maduro or Nicaraguan Habano. Conversely, milder cigars such as Ashton Classic or Davidoff Signature favor lighter-bodied wines.

2. Complement or Contrast

- a. Earth-driven cigars—Partagás Serie D No. 4, with pepper and cocoa—mirror oak-aged Rioja or Bordeaux notes. Bright, high-acid Champagne like a Blanc de Noirs can refresh a creamy Connecticut cigar, cleansing the palate with each sip.

3. Texture Matters

- a. Cigars coat the mouth with smoke and tannin. Wines with plush fruit or creamy mousse offer relief. Amarone's glycerol richness tempers Oliva Serie V spice, while Vintage Port cushions Broadleaf dark chocolate notes. Sharply acidic, lean wines may feel austere against smoke.

UNEXPECTED SUCCESSES

While reds often dominate, certain whites shine. An oaked California Chardonnay, with baking spice and toasted hazelnut, complements the nutty smoothness of a Montecristo White. A mature Sauternes alongside a moderately sweet, aromatic cigar creates honeyed, toasted almond interplay, indulgent yet balanced.

Balance is paramount. Cigars amplify bitterness and astringency; wines already angular may feel harsher in their presence.

THE SETTING MATTERS

Wine-and-cigar pairing is deliberate, best reserved for the end of a meal, outdoors, or in a ventilated lounge, where cedar, smoke, and fruit aromas can unfold freely. Serve reds slightly cooler than room temperature; excessive warmth exaggerates alcohol, which can clash with spice-forward cigars. Personal preference reigns: some favor the acidity cut of Champagne with a Connecticut, others the lush harmony of Cabernet and a Maduro, slowly burning into the evening.

A SHARED LANGUAGE OF CRAFT

At their core, wine and cigars share reverence for origin and time. From volcanic Nicaraguan soils to Bordeaux gravel banks, from cedar aging rooms to French oak barrels, both demand patience. Both reward attention. Both invite conversation.

In an era of curated experiences, the marriage of wine and cigars offers something elemental: fire and fruit, leaf and vine, smoke and silk. When thoughtfully chosen, the pairing does not compete—it converses.

JOLO WINE	CIGAR MATCH	TASTING NOTES & PAIRING RATIONALE
JOLOTAGE®	Padron 1964 Anniversary Series Maduro	JOLOTAGE's bold fruit, layered tannins, and cedar notes complement Maduro's espresso, cocoa, and earthy smoke. A structured red for a full-bodied cigar experience.
PILOT FOG®	Davidoff Signature Connecticut	Light, bright, and elegant, Pilot Fog's crisp acidity and subtle floral notes refresh the palate against a creamy Connecticut cigar, creating lift and balance.
MUDDY PAWS	Arturo Fuente Hemingway Maduro	Juicy dark berries and peppery spice in Muddy Paws echo the Maduro's chocolate, espresso, and spice, while its silky tannins soften the smoke for a harmonious pairing.
CRIMSON CREEK®	Montecristo White Series Connecticut	Lush cherry and plum notes, with smooth oak influence, harmonize with the Montecristo White's nutty, creamy character, offering an indulgent, approachable combination.



WINE-TAIL SEASON IS HERE

Bloom & Sip



PINK GRAPEFRUIT SUNSET SPRITZ

“A floral and citrus-forward sip that captures the soft glow of a spring sunset.”

*-Colleen Thompson
Cape Fear Living Magazine*

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 oz JOLO Pink
- 1 oz elderflower liqueur
- 1 oz fresh grapefruit juice
- Splash of soda water
- Grapefruit slice for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS:

Fill a large wine glass with ice. Add JOLO Pink, elderflower liqueur, and grapefruit juice. Stir gently, top with soda water. Garnish with a grapefruit slice.



**SHOP
JOLO PINK**



BEACH BUBBLES FIZZ

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 oz JOLO Beach Bubbles®
- 1 oz passionfruit purée
- ½ oz lime juice
- Fresh mint leaves

INSTRUCTIONS:

Muddle 3–4 mint leaves gently in a shaker with lime juice. Add passionfruit purée and shake lightly with ice. Strain into a flute and top with JOLO Beach Bubbles. Garnish with a mint sprig and a halved or sliced passionfruit placed in the center of the glass.

VIBE:

Exotic, bubbly, and visually stunning—ready to transport you to the tropics.

“Tropical vibes in every sparkling sip—bright passionfruit and mint make this a vacation in a glass.”

*-Colleen Thompson
Cape Fear Living Magazine*

**SHOP
BEACH
BUBBLES**



STRAWBERRY & GOOSEBERRY ROSÉ SMASH

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 oz Rayson Rosé
- 1 oz elderflower liqueur (optional for floral notes)
- 3–4 fresh strawberries, sliced
- 3–4 fresh gooseberries, halved
- ½ oz fresh lemon juice
- Splash of soda water
- Fresh mint sprig for garnish

“Bright, fruity, and effervescent—a perfect spring sipper with a playful twist on rosé.”

*-Colleen Thompson
Cape Fear Living Magazine*

INSTRUCTIONS:

In a shaker or glass, muddle the strawberries and gooseberries with lemon juice. Add Rayson Rosé and elderflower liqueur (if using), stir gently. Pour over ice in a wine glass or highball. Top with a splash of soda water for light effervescence. Garnish with a fresh mint sprig and a couple of whole berries.

**SHOP
RAYSON ROSÉ**



VIBE:

Fruity, slightly tart, and perfectly balanced—this cocktail feels like spring in a glass.

PEARL D'BLANC ROYALE

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 oz Rayson Pearl D' Blanc
- ½ oz St-Germain or elderflower liqueur
- ¼ oz fresh lemon juice
- Lemon twist for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS:

Add elderflower liqueur and lemon juice to a flute. Top with chilled Rayson Pearl D' Blanc. Stir gently and garnish with a lemon twist.

*“Sparkling sophistication with a floral twist
—elegant enough for brunch, bubbly enough
to celebrate spring’s arrival.”*

-Colleen Thompson

Cape Fear Living Magazine



**SHOP RAYSON
PEARL D' BLANC**





THE WORLD OF CAVIAR

The Elegance of Pairing Wine with Caviar

Caviar—those tiny, luxurious pearls of flavor—has long been a symbol of sophistication. Its delicate brininess, creamy texture, and subtle nutty undertones make it one of the most exquisite indulgences in the culinary world. Yet, pairing it with the right wine elevates the experience from indulgence to pure elegance.

UNDERSTANDING CAVIAR

Not all caviar is created equal. The species of sturgeon, its environment, and the curing process all shape the flavor, texture, and intensity of the roe. Appreciating these distinctions is essential when selecting the perfect wine pairing.

BELUGA: THE PINNACLE OF OPULENCE

Beluga caviar, harvested from the *Huso huso* sturgeon, is revered for its large, delicate pearls and silken texture. The flavor is buttery and refined, with a gentle salinity that melts seamlessly across the palate. Its softness calls for restraint in pairing—think the most elegant, finely beaded sparkling wines or mineral-driven whites that won't overpower its subtle luxury.

OSETRA: NUTTY AND COMPLEX

Osetra (also spelled Ossetra) offers medium-sized pearls in hues ranging from amber to golden brown. Its flavor profile is layered—nutty, slightly fruity, with a whisper of the sea. This complexity makes it exceptionally versatile for wine pairing. A crisp sparkling wine highlights its brightness, while a structured, high-acid white can amplify its nuanced depth.

SEVRUGA: BOLD AND BRINY

Sevruga caviar features smaller, darker pearls and a more pronounced oceanic intensity. Brinier and more

assertive, it awakens the palate with each bite. Wines with vibrant acidity and lively effervescence are ideal here, cleansing the palate and balancing the salt-forward character.

KALUGA: THE MODERN LUXURY

Often called the “River Beluga,” Kaluga is prized for its large, glossy pearls and rich, creamy taste. Slightly firmer than Beluga, it offers gentle minerality alongside its buttery profile. Increasingly popular for its sustainability and quality, Kaluga bridges tradition and modern refinement beautifully.

AMERICAN VARIETIES:

HACKLEBACK & PADDLEFISH

American options such as Hackleback and Paddlefish present an accessible yet refined introduction to caviar. Hackleback is clean and lightly briny with a smooth finish, while Paddlefish leans earthier with soft, steel-grey pearls. Both offer a balanced profile that pairs effortlessly with crisp whites or delicate rosés.

THE SPARKLING STANDARD

Traditional wisdom favors sparkling wines with caviar for good reason. The crisp acidity and delicate bubbles cleanse the palate, cutting through the richness of the roe and refreshing the senses between bites. Fine mousse and subtle minerality mirror the sea-kissed character of the pearls without overwhelming them.

While Champagne remains the classic companion, modern pairings embrace a broader spectrum of sparkling wines—those with precision, brightness, and elegance at their core.



WHITE AND ROSÉ OPTIONS

High-acid, unoaked white wines make equally graceful partners. Wines with citrus zest, saline minerality, and a clean finish echo the briny freshness of caviar. Chablis-style expressions, Sauvignon Blanc, or mineral-driven blends offer lift and clarity alongside creamier roes. Dry rosés introduce a subtle berry brightness that can accentuate Osetra's nuttier tones or complement the silkiness of Kaluga. The result is playful yet polished—an interplay of fruit and salt that feels both contemporary and timeless.

SERVING TIPS

Serve caviar well chilled, ideally nestled over crushed ice to maintain its texture and integrity. Use mother-of-pearl, bone, or glass spoons—never metal—to preserve its pure flavor.

Pour sparkling and white wines slightly cooler than usual to heighten freshness and structure. Keep accompaniments minimal: blini, crème fraîche, or lightly buttered toast points are all that's required.

In the end, caviar is about restraint and reverence. When paired thoughtfully with wine, it becomes more than a luxury—it becomes a sensory ritual, where texture, salinity, and effervescence meet in perfect harmony.





NEW

GRAND CRU EXPERIENCE

Experience the ultimate culinary adventure with our exclusive Grand Cru experience in the Pearl D' Blanc Private Dining Room. With seating for just six guests, this intimate, multi-course tasting pairs exquisitely crafted dishes with award-winning Rayson wines for a perfectly balanced experience.

Each course celebrates artistry, flavor, and refinement—designed for those who appreciate the extraordinary.

- Single 6 PM seating
- 5-course tasting with wine pairings
- \$249 per person
- Chef-curated, rotating menu

**Reservations required—please call or email
Carrie@Raysonwine.com to secure your spot.**



**VIEW
MENU**

*Menu rotates monthly.



Perfect PAIRINGS

RECIPES WORTH RAISING A GLASS TO



STRAWBERRY & GOAT CHEESE CROSTINIS

SERVES 2-4
(AS APPETIZER)

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 baguette, sliced and toasted
- 4 oz goat cheese, softened
- 1 cup fresh strawberries, sliced
- 1 tbsp honey
- Fresh mint leaves for garnish.

METHOD:

Spread goat cheese evenly on toasted baguette slices. Top with sliced strawberries and drizzle lightly with honey. Garnish with fresh mint leaves and serve immediately. **Pro Tip:** Use a small melon baller to create strawberry spheres for a playful, elegant bite.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

JOLO
TWINKLES®



RAYSON
PEARL D' BLANC



SESAME GINGER CHICKEN SKEWERS

SERVES 2-4
(AS APPETIZER)

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts, cubed
- 3 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp olive oil (for grilling)
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- Wooden or metal skewers

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

JOLO GOLDEN
HALLOWS®

RAYSON
ROSÉ



METHOD:

Whisk together soy sauce, honey, rice vinegar, sesame oil, ginger, and garlic. Toss chicken in the marinade; refrigerate 30 minutes–4 hours. Thread chicken onto skewers. Grill over medium heat 10–12 minutes, turning occasionally, until cooked and caramelized. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and green onions before serving. **Pro Tip:** Brush with a little extra honey-soy glaze in the final 2 minutes for a glossy finish.



HANDHELD TARTS

WITH HEIRLOOM TOMATOES,
MUSHROOM, AND GRUYERE
MAKES 8-10 TARTS

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 sheet all-butter puff pastry, thawed
- 1 cup Gruyère cheese, grated (or fontina)
- 1½ cups mixed mushrooms, finely sliced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2–3 heirloom tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- Fresh basil, thinly sliced
- Salt & pepper
- 1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Sauté mushrooms in olive oil until golden and moisture evaporates, 6–8 minutes. Add garlic the final minute. Season lightly. Roll pastry slightly thinner, cut into 8–10 squares. Lightly score ½-inch border and prick centers with a fork. Sprinkle Gruyère inside borders, top with mushrooms and tomato slices, season with thyme, salt, and pepper. Brush edges with egg wash and bake 18–22 minutes until golden and puffed. **Pro Tip:** Salt tomato slices and rest on paper towels for 10 minutes before assembling to prevent soggy pastry.



PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

JOLO CRIMSON
CREEK



RAYSON
CHARDONNAY



MINI LEMON & ROSEMARY TARTS

MAKES 8-10 MINI TARTS

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 sheet all-butter puff pastry or tartlet dough, thawed
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 3 egg yolks
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 tsp finely chopped fresh rosemary

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a mini muffin or tartlet pan with pastry. Roll and cut pastry to fit cups. Prick bottoms with a fork and bake 10–12 minutes until lightly golden. Whisk egg yolks, lemon juice, zest, sugar, and rosemary over a double boiler until thickened (5–7 minutes). Stir in butter until smooth. Spoon lemon-rosemary curd into cooled tart shells. Chill 15–20 minutes to set. **Pro Tip:** Use a very small pinch of finely chopped rosemary — too much can overpower the lemon flavor.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

JOLO
TWINKLES



RAYSON
PEARL D' BLANC





BRING THE VINEYARD HOME

A JOLO & Rayson Garden Party in Your Backyard

By Colleen Thompson, Editor in Chief, Cape Fear Living Magazine

Spring is the season of renewal, and there's no better way to celebrate than taking your entertaining outdoors. Imagine warm sunlight streaming through budding branches, the soft scent of fresh flowers mingling with crisp spring air, and a perfectly chilled glass of JOLO or Rayson wine in hand. Whether you're hosting a casual picnic-style afternoon or an elegant tasting, a backyard garden party captures the effortless charm of vineyard living without leaving your home. **Pro Tip:** Start by imagining the vibe you want your guests to feel—relaxed picnic, chic tasting, or somewhere in between. A clear vision guides every styling choice.

STEP 1: SET THE SCENE

Think of your backyard as the blank canvas of a private vineyard terrace. Layered textures, soft linens, and natural accents—like potted herbs, trailing greenery, or small floral arrangements—instantly elevate the space. For smaller gatherings, spread woven blankets with coordinating cushions and rustic wooden boards to create a chic, al fresco vibe. **Pro Tip:** Mix heights and textures—stacked boxes or crates under trays, varying flower vase sizes—to give your tablescape a dynamic, editorial look.

STEP 2: CURATE YOUR WINE FLIGHT

A backyard tasting is your chance to bring the vineyard vibes home. Start with sparkling or crisp whites, move through rosés, and finish with light reds. JOLO & Rayson Wines are perfect for this journey: each bottle tells a story, from the vineyard to your glass.

Wine & Food Pairings:

- Sparkling (Rayson's Pearl D' Blanc, JOLO's Twinkles): Perfect with oysters, fresh berries, or light canapés. Effervescence meets springtime freshness.
- Crisp Whites (Rayson's Vidal Blanc, JOLO's Golden Hallows Reserve®): Bright, citrusy wines pair perfectly with salads, seafood, or citrus-forward dishes.
- Rosés (Rayson Rosé, JOLO's PINK): Serve alongside charcuterie, grilled vegetables, or soft cheeses—bridging the flavors of spring with ease.
- Light Reds (Rayson's Cabernet Franc, JOLO's JOLOTAGE): Herb-forward dishes, roasted poultry, or mushroom tarts complement these approachable, fruit-forward wines.

Pro Tip: Print or handwrite simple tasting cards with flavor notes and suggested pairings—it's interactive and gives guests a "vineyard tasting room" experience at home.

STEP 3: SEASONAL BITES & SHAREABLE FARE

Food should be effortless, shareable, and just as beautiful as the wine. Think citrus-marinated olives,

artisanal cheeses, fresh fruit, delicate pastries, or smoked salmon crostini. For a casual picnic feel, layer a neutral linen with cushions and wooden serving boards—it's both inviting and Instagram-ready. **Pro Tip:** Keep bite-sized options that can be grabbed with fingers or small tongs—this encourages mingling and conversation without interrupting the flow of the party.

STEP 4: SET THE MOOD WITH DETAILS

A backyard garden party is as much about atmosphere as it is about taste. Curate a playlist of light jazz, acoustic, or upbeat instrumentals that invite conversation without overpowering it. Chill your whites and rosés to perfection, decant reds, and present each wine in elegant glassware for a polished feel.

Subtle décor completes the scene: trailing greenery along tables, florals in soft spring hues, textured linens, and charming serving trays. Add soft candlelight or string lights to create warmth and intimacy, making the space feel like a private vineyard terrace.

Pro Tip: Layer lighting—mix candles, lanterns, and string lights—to create depth and a cozy, evening-ready ambiance.

STEP 5: BRING THE VINEYARDS TO LIFE

With JOLO & Rayson Wines, seasonal bites, and thoughtful décor, your backyard transforms into a vineyard retreat. It's a spring gathering that feels effortless, elegant, and endlessly inviting—a celebration of wine, friends, and the simple pleasures of outdoor living. **Pro Tip:** End with a signature toast—choose your favorite JOLO or Rayson bottle and make it a moment to remember. Cheers to spring!

PRO TIPS FOR A VINEYARD-WORTHY BACKYARD PARTY

- **Chill & Serve Like a Pro:** Sparkling, Rosé, & Whites (45–50°F), Chardonnay (50–55°F), All Reds (55–60°F)
- **Bring Vineyard Vibes Home:** Potted herbs, grapevine accents, rustic boards
- **Interactive Fun:** Tasting cards, guess-the-flavor games, wine swaps
- **Mood Matters:** String lights, lanterns, cozy seating areas
- **Food & Wine Harmony:** Fresh, seasonal bites complement bright wines
- **Capture the Moment:** Snap tablescapes, candid sips, and golden-hour sunlight



AN INVITATION TO INDULGE

JOIN WINE CLUB

Spring is the season of new beginnings — and there is no better time to treat yourself to something truly special.

At JOLO Winery & Vineyards and Rayson Winery & Vineyards, we believe that great wine is more than what's in the glass. It's the people you share it with, the moments you create, and the experiences that stay with you long after the last sip. That's exactly what our Wine Clubs were born to be.

Whether you're just beginning to explore the world of wine or you consider yourself a seasoned connoisseur, we have a membership level designed just for you — with options for every palate and every budget. As a member of either — or both — of our beloved Triad wineries, you become part of an intimate community of wine lovers who share a passion for the exceptional.

Members enjoy access to limited-edition and pre-release wines before anyone else, exclusive invitations to member-only events and tastings, personalized wine recommendations tailored just for you, priority reservations at our restaurants and event spaces, exciting member perks you won't find anywhere else, and meaningful discounts on wines and events throughout the year. And the best part? You choose how you





indulge. Whether you prefer the energy of our beloved Pick-Up Parties, the convenience of To-Go, or the luxury of delivery straight to your door — membership fits seamlessly into your lifestyle at both locations.

Two locations to choose from. One incredible community. Endless reasons to raise a glass.

Spring forward into something new this season — we would love to have you join our wine club family!

PERKS OF JOINING WINE CLUB

As a member, you'll enjoy exclusive benefits, including, but not limited to:

- Access to limited-edition and pre-release wines
- Invitations to member-only events and tastings
- Discounts on wine purchases and events
- Priority reservations for our restaurants and event spaces
- Personalized wine recommendations
- Make limited wine substitutions, pending availability

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR WINE CLUBS





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