

BY THE GLASS WINE LISTS



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BY THE GLASS is the creator of wine serving systems that allow operators to raise quality, selection, turnover and profits of wine sales. With a background in restaurants, hotels and wine-related enterprises, Drummond has a unique perspective on solutions for building wine sales.

The goal of the restaurateur, when it comes to wine by the glass lists, is to provide the guests with a great selection, that pairs well with the menu and manage it effectively in a way that isn't going to cost the operator too much. There are so many different variables that it can become a daunting task to figure out how many wines to offer and then which ones.

As a former restaurateur I have seen this scenario play out too many times ... a customer orders a glass of wine and either doesn't like it and returns it, or worse, doesn't like it and drinks it anyway. Neither scenario is good for the operator or for the customer. The customer just wants to have a glass of wine they can enjoy. The act of sending it back, for most people, is uncomfortable and not part of the equation in enjoying their dining experience. For the operator, a returned glass affects cost of goods, lost revenue and customer perception. It also doesn't benefit the winery as it could result in a poor perception of that particular wine and a loss of a potential customer.

The trend that results is smaller wine lists with more pedestrian or 'safe' wines on them while the demand is to have more choice and quality. So what is an operator to do?

One option to help with this dilemma is a wine by the glass dispensing and preservation system. The systems give the operator control over costs with portion control, wine preservation with Argon or Nitrogen to help extend the life of the wine once opened and the ability to serve the wine at the proper temperature, giving guests the best experience possible.

The premise of wine dispensing systems has been around since the late 70's with the early systems focusing on preservation. The technology is now advanced to where you have not just preservation but portion control, temperature control, card reader systems, customer gift card programs and even POS interface. The benefits of these systems are many but a lot of operators get caught up strictly on the capital outlay and ROI factors. There are different programs being run by the different companies. For example, one, the BY THE GLASS system out of Holland, offers every size from a 2btl Modular system to 20btl Standard systems and everything in between, making it easier for an operator to get into a system that works for them.

Such systems give operators the chance to 'WOW' customers by offering up not only a great selection of by the glass pours, but ensuring the quality of the wine with preservation. You also cannot underestimate the impact of serving a glass of wine at the proper temperature. Most establishments are serving reds at room temperature and with some of the big, bold reds that are out there, all you get up front is the alcohol ... not the characteristics of the wine that were meant to be enjoyed.

Wine preservation systems give both the operator and the customer confidence in the by the glass programs. The customer can utilize a 'try before they buy' strategy when it comes to bottle purchases. They can pair wines with food more easily without committing to an entire bottle. The need to choose one bottle that will meet everyone's palate and match with everyone's food is no longer necessary as people can mix and match from a greater selection by the glass.

Operators can expand their wine by the glass program without fear of wines that go 'off' due to not moving quickly enough. They can push the upper limits of pricing and let customers experience wines they might not otherwise buy as a full bottle. They can control and monitor their costs on by the glass pours and quickly be seen as someone committed to the customer experience.

It benefits wineries and winemakers as well with less dependence on staff to know when a bottle is not at its peak for customer enjoyment. Wineries also benefit from dispensing systems in their tasting rooms again showcasing the wine in the best circumstance temperature wise and allowing them to open library wines without worry of it not lasting through until the next customer visit ... particularly those wineries only open certain days of the week or lacking in consistent traffic.

Overall the positive attributes of these systems and the flexibility and opportunity they provide to operators, makes them a valuable and worthwhile addition to a restaurants wine program.