

## THE MEATBALL SHOP LAUNCHES ITS OWN WINE



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Plenty of restaurants have their own "house wine" — a recommended red or white that's plentiful and inexpensive. But not too many American restaurants actually have a wine of their very own. Recently, The Meatball Shop launched their own TMS Red Wine, a collaboration between the restaurant group and Languedoc winery Mas de Daumas Gassac. We chatted with chefowner Daniel Holzman about the wine and why they decided to bring in their own.

Why did you decide to launch your own wine? One of the greatest parts about having six restaurants is getting to work directly with our suppliers, whether it be vegetable growers, cheese makers or, in our latest venture, wine makers in the south of France. Getting to travel with our team from the restaurants to the winery, meet with Samuel and help blend the wine was an amazing experience that is something everyone who can, should do.

Tell us about the wine itself. Samuel, a second generation owner and winemaker, grows over 50 varietals at his Languedoc winery Mas de Daumas Gassac. We chose to blend 40% Syrah with 35% Merlot and 15% Grenache, after playing with the three different varietals and tasting the outcomes. The wine is fresh and juicy and pairs extremely well with our beef meatballs and tomato sauce.

From a business perspective, how does it make sense to branch out into wine? We love the idea of having a house wine; it makes it simple for our guests who want a glass of wine but don't want to choose from a long list. For us, it was fun to work with a winemaker who we respected so much and already chose to support on our menu. Buying wine by the pallet has some financial benefit, but there's lots of inexpensive wine in the market that's easier to come by. For us it's all about having something special that no one else can have. Also, we brought a team of some of our best employees over with us to help make the wine — sending servers, bartenders and managers on a trip to France is an awesome way to say thank you for a whole lot of hard work and dedication.