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## Wine Lover's Guide to Charleston

*The South Carolina city is buzzing with imaginative spots to imbibe.*

BY ALEXIS KORMAN



Charleston Grill

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A city beloved for its historic charm might not be front of mind for boundary-pushing beverage programs, but Charleston, South Carolina, has emerged as an epicenter of inventive bars and restaurants. These spots have focused increasingly on a mix of tradition and innovation.



Make the stately **Belmond Charleston Place** your home base when embarking on a drinking tour of the Holy City—so named for the steeple-marked skyline. Belmond's in-house restaurant, **Charleston Grill**, is a must-stop eatery for wine lovers. Amid live jazz set in an old-school dining room, guests can explore a wine list with over 1,300 bottles including labels like J.L. Chave 2004 Hermitage and Domaine Romanée-Conti 1998 Vosne-Romanée, with many of these exclusive wines available by the glass.

Take in panoramic city views and sweeping sunsets at **The Watch**, a rooftop restaurant atop Restoration Hotel. Opened in March, it offers 25–30 wines by the glass alongside Southern bar bites like crispy-fried chicken skins and hush puppies with housemade pimento cheese. Guests at the hotel of the property also have access to an honor bar stocked with regional specialties and a while they peruse Restoration's "culture library".

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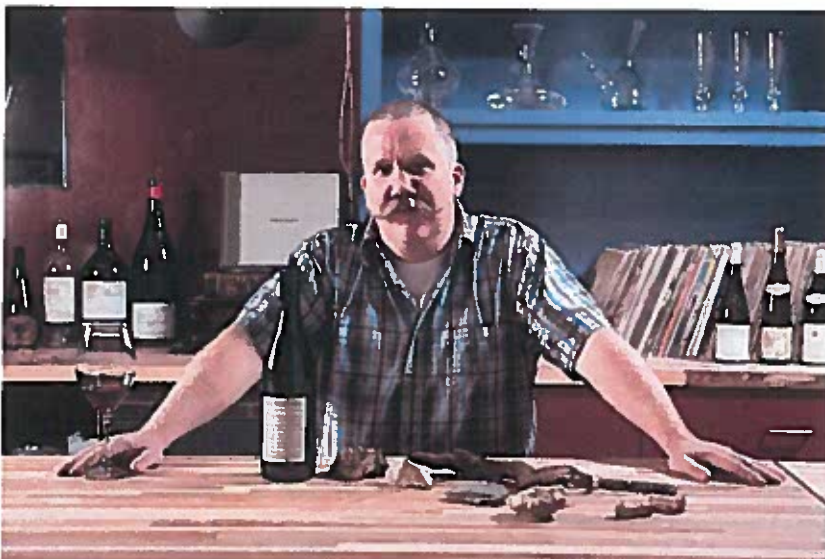


The Watch at the Restoration Hotel

Retreat to a quiet porch at **Zero Restaurant + Bar**, part of a boutique hotel renowned for its cooking school. Guests receive a glass of bubbly upon arrival and a complimentary wine-and-cheese pairing in the evening. Or you can opt for a glass from a concise wine list that has a respectable selection of hard to find, hand-harvested and natural wines.

Chef Sean Brock's **Husk** occupies a circa 1893 Queen Anne-style house and showcases Lowcountry cuisine with a focus on heirloom products and ingredients from nearby farms. Diners can select wine by the glass from a list organized by soil type, in addition to offering off-the-beaten-path bottlings from Slovenia, Armenia and Lebanon.

At **The Park Cafe**, the wine list delivers approximately 40 picks from winemaking regions including Sicily, Crete and the Willamette Valley. Matching the eatery's unfussy food philosophy, you can find many bottles under 40 dollars.



Matt Tunstall of Stems + Skins

Don't miss the chance for a drink at **Stems + Skins**. Located in North Charleston, a 20 minute ride from downtown, it's worth the trip. The bar's tagline, "fresh and freaky ferments," encapsulates co-owner Matt Tunstall's passion for progressive pours (he was formerly in charge of Husk's beverage program). Dive deep into aperitivo hour, where you can choose from vermouth, Spanish cider poured via porrón and wine from magnums served by the glass. Don't forget to order bar snacks like fermented garlic

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served by the glass. Don't forget to order our stacks like fermented garlic honey and ricotta.

Wrap up a tour of Charleston with a nightcap at the **Cocktail Club**. The bar boasts an extensive spirits list complete with a moonshine section and "farm-to-shaker" drinks. Other draws are bottled cocktails for two and pour-it-yourself punch bowls that serve up to six people.

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Korman is known to skip the globe in search of the next perfect sip. She's authored trends-driven travel, wine, cocktail, and food content for over a decade, joining *Wine Enthusiast* in 2010. Based in New Orleans, Korman recently co-founded an artisanal kombucha beverage company, **Big Easy 'Bucha**, which gives back to local charities.

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