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(High resolution images are available by request)



## LGBTQ+ SOCIAL CLUB THE ACADEMY SF'S WINE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS WOMEN, QUEER, AND BIPOC INDIVIDUALS IN PUSH FOR MORE DIVERSITY IN THE INDUSTRY

Upcoming “Academy of Wine” tasting classes include *Celebrating Black Voices* (Feb 23), *Women Sake Masters* (Mar 2), *Renowned Women in Wine* (Mar 23), and its 3rd annual *Pride Wine Festival* (Jun 17), co-presented with Out in the Vineyard

**SAN FRANCISCO, FEBRUARY 16 –** [The Academy SF](#), a LGBTQ+ social club in San Francisco’s Castro District noted for being the only brick-and-mortar institution of its kind, recently released a [new wine list](#) highlighting women, queer and BIPOC individuals, and has several upcoming events focusing on promoting traditionally marginalized voices in the industry.

The new wine list is available for members and guests of the social club throughout its expansive lounge spaces. All of the “by-the-glass” selections on the list - 12 in total - represent wineries with ownership and/or winemakers who are queer, female, and/or BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). Over 60% of the “by-the-bottle” list represents these same demographic categories.

Highlights from the list include a sparkling brut rosé from Oakland-based powerhouse Black women-owned brand the **McBride Sisters**; “Pink Pride” rosé from gay winemaker **Mark Lyon** of **Eco Terreno**; **Theopolis Petite Sirah** from celebrated Black female

winemaker **Theodora Lee**; and **Edge Cabernet Sauvignon** from Indian winemaker **Priyanka French**, a rising star and fierce champion of diversity in the industry.

"There are tons of incredible wine lists out there, especially here in San Francisco. Decent wine knowledge and a good palate can create that; but changing the industry, while also enjoying delicious wines is our mission," said **Wine Director Michael Wells**, a certified sommelier who is also a professional ballet dancer and choreographer with Diablo Ballet in Contra Costa County. Wells curates The Academy's wine program including the **Academy of Wine** series of "tasting classes" with an educational but friendly and approachable atmosphere.

"As a queer person in wine, I'm very aware of what it feels like to be marginalized in this industry: having to work harder than other colleagues, your expertise being constantly questioned, and changing your personality depending on the clientele. I've also been honored to work with, and learn from incredibly talented women, queer and BIPOC wine professionals actively working to change that paradigm. As a wine buyer and curator, I now feel a responsibility to use my platform to further their work," said Wells.

The [February 23 edition](#) of *Academy of Wine* is part of The Academy's programming focus on Black History Month, entitled **Celebrating Black Voices in Wine**, and welcomes back **Christopher Renfro** of [The Two Eighty Project](#), an outstanding local nonprofit organization dedicated to "building a sustainable food and wine community that nourishes every member of the local economy and ecosystem," as well as working to diversify the wine industry and provide educational and financial opportunities for tomorrow's wine makers. Along with Renfro's appearance as a fundraiser for his organization, the tasting lineup includes selections from McBride Sisters, as well as **Fog Crest Vineyard** in Sebastopol, co-owned by **Rosalind Manoogian**, one of Sonoma County's [noted African American wine professionals](#).

[On March 2](#), *Academy of Wine* makes a slight exception to its namesake, featuring sake for the first time, from five notable women tojis, or brew masters. The event is part of The Academy's month-long celebration of Women's History Month, and will be led by **Brittany Klipper** from [Komé Collective](#).

Continuing the theme of paying tribute to notable women in the industry on March 23, The Academy welcomes back **Theresa Heredia**, a lesbian Latina and accomplished head winemaker of **Gary Farrell Winery** in Healdsburg, for **Academy of Wine: Renowned Women in Wine**.

Pride Month brings the return of [Pride Wine Fest](#) on June 17, the 3rd annual edition of this event which made a notable debut as pandemic restrictions were gradually being lifted in 2021. Pride Wine Fest is a collaboration with **Gary Saperstein**, owner of [Out in the Vineyard](#), who produces the annual **Gay Wine Weekend** event in Sonoma County. The festive food and wine event features local queer-owned wineries and LGBTQ+ vintners.

#### About Academy of Wine

**Michael Wells** has presented the *Academy of Wine* series to hundreds of devoted attendees since The Academy's opening in 2017. The event series' unique combination of accessibility, genuine learning, and social interaction have made it successful to the tune of selling out nearly every event. Over time, *Academy of Wine* has evolved to also further the club's wine mission of lifting up marginalized voices in the industry. *Academy of Wine* events typically occur once per month and are open to anyone who wishes to attend, with significant discounts available to [Academy Members](#).

#### About The Academy

The Academy is a LGBTQ+ social club, open to all, focused on promoting genuine social interactions while offering engaging programming in collaboration with nonprofit organizations, local businesses, and leading community members. The Club is located in San Francisco's Castro District and was founded in 2017 by co-founders **Paul Miller** and **Nate Bourg**.

In addition to the social club and its associated programming, The Academy also offers a barber salon, a daytime co-working lounge called Academy Daylight, and has space available for private events.

The Academy welcomes wine industry professionals at its events who are interested in collaborating and being part of its mission. Contact [info@academy-sf.com](mailto:info@academy-sf.com) for industry and/or press comps.

**Calendar editors, please note:**

### **Academy of Wine: Celebrating Black Voices in Wine**

Thursday, February 23, 2023 from 7:30-9:00pm

The Academy SF  
2166 Market Street, San Francisco, CA

**Tickets:** \$26 Academy Members; \$40 non-members + suggested donation to The Two Eighty Project  
<https://www.academy-sf.com/event-details/academy-of-wine-celebrating-black-voices-in-wine>

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### **Academy of Wine: Women Sake Masters**

Thursday, March 2, 2023 from 7:30-9:00pm

The Academy SF  
2166 Market Street, San Francisco, CA

**Tickets:** \$24 Academy Members; \$40 non-members  
<https://www.academy-sf.com/event-details/academy-of-wine-women-sake-masters>

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### **Academy of Wine: Renowned Women in Wine**

Thursday, March 23, 2022 from 7:30-9:00pm

The Academy SF  
2166 Market Street, San Francisco, CA

**Tickets:** on sale soon

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### **3rd Annual Pride Wine Fest with Out in the Vineyard**

Saturday, June 17, 2023 from 6-9pm

The Academy SF  
2166 Market Street, San Francisco, CA

**Tickets:** Limited early bird \$45 Academy Members; \$60 non-members; VIP tickets also available  
<https://www.academy-sf.com/event-details/3rd-annual-pride-wine-fest-at-the-academy>

*Connect with The Academy on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#):*

