


## FROM THE GRAPEVINE



By JOEL M. FISHER  
With Matthew N. Fisher



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## FROM THE GRAPEVINE

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*Due east from Beverly Hills, in a southern part of Hollywood I found a most unlikely wine bar. [Lou](#) is in a bare, sometimes grungy strip mall beyond heavy curtains and upon entrance, after avoiding the Laundromat, donut store, massage parlor, and hamburger joint, you stand looking across the room at a large bar at the back, with tables and chairs spread out to your left and right. I wrote last year about my visits to the wine bar, where I, my family, and friends liked to sit on the north wall, tucked in under the bar. I liked the wine, and I enjoy the food. Lou presents an extremely diverse selection of wines from around the world from glass to full bottles, with tapa style food plates.*

*From his interesting selections, like the salami and sausage flown in from Seattle by Armandino Batali (yes, that guy's father) to the once tried pig candy (bacon coated generously with brown sugar). Once was enough. Artisan cheeses are in the mix with Chef D. J. Olson's prepared food, and I've taken the opportunity to study the menu. Other items that have caught my attention – sweet corn and avocado soup, the fish plate, comprised of smoked baccala, albacore confit, smoked trout and house-cured wild salmon gravlax. A favorite is the pan-roasted duck breast, with house-cured bacon, red and black beans, and black kale. The Niman flat iron steak, bistro potatoes, asparagus and wild arugula is also a popular choice.*

*Clearly I find the wines of interest: Lou has tasting Tuesdays, where they focus on flights of different wine from Cabernet Franc, to Beaujolais rose during the summer (much of it organic) and roses from [Rioja](#) and [Bandol](#). I also tasted red wines from [Roussillon](#).*

*Lou is Lou Amdur, a New York computer person originally with a PhD from City University of New York. Tiring of this routine, Lou went off to London for a week long intensive course in wine hosted by the famous [Wine & Spirit Education Trust \( WSET\)](#) program. Newly certified, if not revitalized, he came back to New York, decided to come to Los Angeles -- and opened up Lou on Vine Street, near Melrose.*

*I followed a friend into Lou one afternoon. Sitting like an instructor at his desk, wine glasses in front of him, his computer to his left, Lou faces wine representatives who have brought wines for him to taste and, hopefully buy. He sips, swirls, sniffs and tastes. He takes notes. Lou then will ask questions of the rep – what is the terrain like? Any special treatment? How long in the bottle? When was it bottled? What's the soil like in the vineyards? The questions keep coming, the wine reps keep presenting, and the tasting goes on. I loved Lou's patience, I liked his being nice to the wine representatives. With all the bad manners going on these days, it's a pleasure to watch a gentleman at work. I know all the reps appreciate his courtesies and his generosity in giving them time. I have now been to a few of these sessions, observing, and he does not cease focusing on the wines in front of him.*

*Like the professor he was, Lou's love of wine shows. His passion, like mine, is evident in his entire body. I like the man. We never have talked about academia, mostly about wine, or that it's good not to be at a large university any more. Lou has a good temperament, lives in the nearby hills with his wife, NY Times film critic Manohla Dargis. In case you're interested, Lou is at 724 Vine Street, Hollywood 90018, phone number 323-962-6369. See for yourself.*

***As always, happy drinking!***



**Joel M. Fisher, Ph.D.** was Wine Instructor for the Culinary Arts Department of the Art Institute of California Los Angeles for more than seven years. Afterwards he taught at Cordon Bleu, in Pasadena California. He is Director of Public Affairs for Avalon Hollywood, and as a partner in WineVine&Dine conducts wine tastings, wine dinners, and wine-and-food pairing throughout Southern California. He is, since 2005, the organizer of the successful [lawinefest 2006, 2007 and 2008](#) editions. **Matt Fisher** has traveled with the senior Dr. Fisher on 7 of his wine trips through Europe and Washington State. One of his earliest assignments was to figure out their real location while wending their way through the wine routes of Europe and the U.S.