

Artisan Uprising, Blood into Wine Part 2

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Promoting themselves, **David and William Vondrasek** met with LA wine writers for lunch at **West Restaurant** in the **Hotel Angeleno** in West Los Angeles. Armed with multiple bottles of four different wines, the brothers spoke of their journey, and their commitment to being hands-on for all phases of their Artisan Uprising label. And that's the key, their limited production wines will always remain so, only what their "sweat equity and brut force" can produce. A small production of the 2012 vintages, only 225 cases, will increase to 444 cases for 2014, but may not go beyond that, as David and William are "hands on and low tech".

West Executive Chef Laura Scollan created a menu of four small plates to accompany the wines. It was an inspired pairing, the food brimming with flavors that brought out the best of the four wines.

The menu

First course:

2014 Artisan Uprising Rosé of Merlot - a beautiful salmon color, dry, rich, with full body, and relatively high alcohol (15.2%) for a rosé but very well balanced, with a splash of Petit Verdot and **Malbec** added to the blend (5%). This is a fascinating wine, as it definitely echoes the character of Merlot, yet has floral and stone fruit notes. It crosses the palate fresh and clean, with good acidity, and a long finish, \$18.

Cider-glazed scallop with truffled parsnip puree and rainbow colored cauliflower, a perfect pairing!

Second course:

2012 Artisan Uprising Merlot - a smoky, earthy wine, smooth and well balanced, with a savory character, almost like cured meat, and a long finish, tinged with dark chocolate notes, \$32. This was a hit, displaying the



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beauty of Merlot!

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Chicken Roulade, stuffed with wild mushroom mousse and prosciutto, and served on sweet potato puree, with a sprinkling of pistachio, the earthiness of the dish brought out the savory character of the Merlot.

Third course:

2012 Artisan Uprising Malbec - deep purple color, rich and smooth, with blackberry fruit, herbal notes, good acidity, smoky, with a splash of 5% Merlot, it ends long and full, \$35.

5-Spiced duck breast on buckwheat soba noodles with micro greens, duck confit-napa cabbage spring roll in rice paper, the richness of the duck complimented the fullness of the Malbec.

Fourth course:

2012 Artisan Uprising Petite Sirah - inky and lush, and more approachable than many **Petite Sirah** tannin-wise, maybe because of the added 5% Merlot, rich cherry and blueberry fruit, coffee, a hint of licorice, earthy, \$32. This is a big wine!

Braised short rib on sunchoke Okinawan purple mash, with baby spinach and a tiny carrot on top, the depth of flavor showcased the plushness of the wine, again a very good pairing!

Artisan Uprising is handcrafted and from the heart, truly a labor of love, and like all good things, in short supply. David and William don't have a tasting room, but the wines are available for **purchase online**, while the Petite Sirah is on the wine list at **Cliff's Edge** in Silver Lake. The 2013 wines will be released soon, with the addition of a Petit Verdot, but don't procrastinate, with good word of mouth, they will be snapped up, and the artisan's journey will come full circle.



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