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**“A Great Evening Out!” – *The New York Post***

“With its **clever concept, fun songs and six glasses of wine**, Wine Lovers: The Musical provides not only a fitting intro to the world of wine, but also a highly entertaining and comical diversion to your evening out...**The cast under the direction of Holly-Anne Ruggiero, is terrific!** And then there are the songs. Full of jubilant wordplay and energetic numbers...written by wine expert Michael Green along with Gary Negbaur, are easily reminiscent of Gilbert and Sullivan; the **standout production numbers** for us were those on White Zinfandel and Screw-top bottles.”

*Dave Bower and Monica Sirignano – The Free George*

**“Four Stars! A unique offering – clever and entertaining!”**

*–Alan Smason (Examiner)*

**“A perfect way to spend an afternoon....great music, good wine – a match made in heaven!” – *Chicago AP***

**“A Great Evening Out!” – *The New York Post***

“The show is directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero who did a fantastic job steering through the piece...**this was a unique, fantastic new concept well executed and thoroughly enjoyable**....Since the creative team of WINE LOVERS did such a great job with a wine tasting musical – I hope they’ll create a chocolate tasting musical..” – *Explore Dance*

**“‘Wine Lovers – The Musical’ is a unique, interactive experience that allows audiences to taste six wines while learning about the joy of wine and love...”**  
*– Bark to Bottle*

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## WINE LOVERS PRODUCTION HISTORY

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2006 – WINE LOVERS opens Off Broadway in New York City for a two month limited run

2007 – 2011 – WINE LOVERS is performed in a variety of spaces Nationwide on National Tours, Individual Productions Fundraisers, Amusement Parks and more

2011 – WINE LOVERS Opens on Norwegian Cruise Line, appearing on the Norwegian Pearl and being performed multiple times per sail.

2013 – WINE LOVERS Opens on the Norwegian Getaway out of Europe.

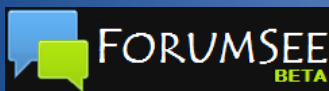
2014 – WINE LOVERS Opens on the Norwegian Breakaway out of New York.

2015 – WINE LOVERS partners with Troika Entertainment to produce a Second National Tour

2018 – WINE LOVERS Continues to be performed all over the world, having premiered in more than a dozen countries and thirty stated.

### *Featured In*

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## CREATIVE TEAM BIOS

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**HOLLY-ANNE PALMER (Director, Producer)** Ms. Ruggiero is the Artistic Director of *Impulse Theatre*, Lead Producer of *Wine Lovers LLC* International and the Creative Development Director for the *Broadway Artists Alliance of New York City*. She specializes in helping small theatrical business grow to multi-million dollar company's supporting live arts in a variety of venues. Current projects include The National Tour and Norwegian Cruise Line production of *Wine Lovers – The Wine Tasting Musical*; *Boyz Night* (In Development) and *City Of Light* (Writer/Director – In Development). **Recent Credits:** *Bring It On – The Musical* (Broadway, National Tour AD); *TCG 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Broadway Gala* (New York); *Wine Lovers* (Director, Lead Producer – New York; National Tour, Norwegian Cruise Line), *Soul Doctor – The Musical Journey of Shlomo Carlebach* (Le Petit Theatre), *Dirty Pictures* (NY), *Oklahoma* (Reagle Players), *All Shook Up* (Ogunquit Playhouse – Starring Sally Struthers); *Steel Magnolias* (Starring Loni Ackerman), *The Wedding Singer*, *White Noise*, *Aida* (Le Petit Theatre, New Orleans). **Selected Credits: Broadway/National Tour/West End:** *Jersey Boys* (Resident Director); *Billy Crystal's 700 Sundays* (Associate Director); *Walking With Dinosaurs* (North American Tour); *Dracula*; *Zhivago*; *As You Like It*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Cover Girls*. **New York:** *Gentleman's Wish*; *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* (Barrow Group, NY); *For the Love Of Christ, The Musical!* (Cherry Lane Theatre), *Platforms* (Theatre at St. Clements); *Dancing With Abandon*; *Inventing Avi Aviv* (Abingdon Theatre); *Morgan Karr: An Awfully Big Adventure* (Joe's Pub); *City of Light* (Book/Director). *Journey to Jersey Boys*; *The American Dream*; *Autophobia*; Broadway Spotlight 2005-2007; *Where are you going, Where have you been?*; *A Happy Goy In The Shiva House*; *The Transfiguration of Benno Blimpie*; *Secrets of A Soccer Mom* (Associate). [www.hollyanneruggiero.com](http://www.hollyanneruggiero.com)

**MICHAEL GREEN (Conciever/Book/Lyrics/Music):** Michael Green is a world-renowned wine and spirits consultant and educator. For the past 25 years Michael has worked in the wine and spirits trade as an educator, importer, writer, consultant and retailer, including 19 years as Gourmet Magazine's exclusive Wine & Spirits consultant. Green is the creator Wine Down, one of New York's premier wine tasting parties. Additionally, he has been a guest on Food Network's Emeril Live and Cooking Live as well as CBS Marketwatch, NPR and Clear Channel radio. He has been featured in many national publications including The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Times-Picayune, Business Week, U.S. News and World Report and House Beautiful. Michael has consulted with many of NYC's top restaurants, and his varied, lengthy client list includes three-star rated Oceana and Molyvos, as well as Christer's and Empire Restaurant. He is a proud graduate of the University of Virginia. He resides in New York City.

**TRAVIS KRAMER (Book)** is the creator & writer/lyricist of IT'S KARATE, KID! THE MUSICAL (Best Musical, NYIT Awards 2005), co-creator & writer/lyricist of the blaxploitation musical DIAL 'N' FOR NEGRESS with Kevin Smith Kirkwood, writer/lyricist of SEX ROAD TO RUIN - a segment from THE PAPERBACK MUSICAL, and lyricist of original compositions for the Resonance Ensemble world premiere of Charles L. Mee's MAIL ORDER BRIDE. Travis has also written pop culture parodies for CRACKED MAGAZINE, illustrated FLORIDA MARLINS FROM A TO Z for Barnes & Noble, and designed publicity & props for the Off-Broadway cabarets IT'S ME BABY, IT'S KEVIN! and IMPOSSIBLE BITCH! Other freelance work includes feature articles and editorial illustrations for various trade publications and commissioned tattoo designs. "Cheers!" to a wonderful team of artists and collaborators for bringing this show to life. Viva la buss!

**GARY NEGBAUR (Book/Music/Lyrics)** writes music for theater and film, as well as songs for recording artists. His musical Librarians in Love (co-written with Tony-nominee John Cariani) appeared at the NYC Fringe Festival. He contributed music to the feature film An American Summer. His song, Red Pontiac, was featured on NPR's Car Talk. As a performing pianist/singer, Gary continues to tour across the U.S., Europe and Australia. His recordings include a CD of original music (Let me explain) as well as a critically acclaimed solo album of standards (Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat) and a children's CD (Max's Family Band). Gary's work continues to be informed by the education he received at Harvard University and the Berklee College of Music. Thanks to the entire Wine Lovers team for this wine-derful journey! For more info, visit [www.garynegbaur.com](http://www.garynegbaur.com).

**LIZ MULLER (Musical and Production Supervisor)** is currently a musical director for Norwegian Cruise Lines, and *Wine Lovers The Musical* (dir. Holly-Anne Palmer). Artistic director of PiPE DREAM theatre, Liz has directed, musical directed, and written the lyrics for all of PDT's original shows (*Columbia- the life and death of Rospo D. Oro*, *Briar Rose*, *Macbeth A Musical*, *3 Ghosts*, *The Nutcracker* and *The Mouse King*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, and *The Masque of the Red Death*). Whenever possible, Liz loves to take to the stage! Favorite roles include: Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth A Musical*), Katisha (*The Mikado*), Ava (*Briar Rose*), Olivia (*Twelfth Night*), and Netty in *Columbia*. Also a private vocal coach, Muller works with CollegeConcierge.org, a company which helps young artists reach their performance goals and college dreams. [Pipedreamtheatre.com](http://Pipedreamtheatre.com)

**HOLLY CRUZ (Choreographer)** NY credits: Broadway by the Year- Town Hall; Broadway Jukebox- Birdland; Christmas Review- Rockefeller's Rainbow Room; Triad Theatre. Regional: Theatre Under the Stars- Houston; Seattle's Fifth Avenue Theatre; North Carolina Theatre; Ogunquit Playhouse- Maine; Goodspeed Opera House- CT. Allenberry Playhouse- PA. Cheers and Love to her parents and Eddie!

**JOSHUA PALMER (Production Design)** is a Production Manager and Designer currently working on projects in New York and New Orleans. He is the Graphics Manager for Solomon Group, a leading international event and design company specializing in largescale arena events. Recent credits include work on Super Bowl XLVII and XLVIII , Essence Festival, National World War II Museum build and design, College Pro Football Championship and WDSU/New Orleans.

**CHRIS KATEFF (Video Design)** Designs projections and creates artwork for live theater and dance shows. Off-Broadway: The Road to Qatar (York Theatre), Signs of Life (Marjorie S. Deane Little Theater), Wine Lovers (Triad Theater), Die Mommy Die (New World Stages), Esoterica (DR2 Theater). New York Musical Theater Festival: Platforms (2007), Wild About Harry, Ward 9, Cyclone and the Pig Faced Lady (2008), Andy Warhol Was Right (2009). Off-Broadway assistant design: Judy Garland In Concert, Palace of the End and Walmartopia (Leah Gelpe, designer). Broadway Assistant Design: Ring of Fire, Jersey Boys (Michael Clark, designer). Chris is also an actor and photographer.

**WALTER TRARBACH (Sound Design)** Broadway: The Farnsworth Invention and Cymbeline. Off Broadway credits include: The Tin Pan Alley Rag, Becky Shaw, Measure for Pleasure, Satellites, Farragut North, I Love You Because, Love, Loss, and What I Wore, and Mr. Marmalade. National Tours: Story Time Live! and Madagascar Live! Walter is the Associate Sound Designer of Catch Me If You Can and Assistant Sound Designer of Jersey Boys. He is married to photographer Kimberly Witham.

**NINA SHREIBER (Producer)** Nina answered the call of entrepreneurialism at a young age. Upon graduating from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, she embarked on a European tour of the Rocky Horror Show, where she did the Time-Warp as "Magenta" all across Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Austria, and Italy. Back in the United States, Nina took a job outside the entertainment industry with Student Advantage, the nation's largest student discount program, where Nina she became one of the top five marketing representatives liaising between the company and college campuses nationwide. In 2002, Nina jumped to the other side of the desk and assumed ownership of the East Coast branch of Acme Talent & Literary, where she steered the careers of a diverse list of artists, including John Lloyd Young, who won the 2006 Best Actor Tony Award for his portrayal of "Frankie Vallie" in the Broadway musical JERSEY BOYS. Since 2009, Nina has worked as academic assistant on a number of Italian Renaissance projects, grants, and online courses, whilst also producing theatrical shows and still managing the creative careers of a dozen A-list New York artists. She lives in the Hudson Valley.



## 'Wine Lovers' musical to play on Norwegian Getaway

Larry Bleiberg, Special for USA TODAY 1:55 p.m. EST December 23, 2013



(Photo: Norwegian Cruise Line)

Cruisers can expect a nourishing and intoxicating theatrical experience with *Wine Lovers: The Musical*, to be offered on the new Norwegian Getaway.

The interactive show combines musical comedy with a wine tasting and lunch. It follows the story of two mismatched wine class students, a painter and a business woman, who fall in love. During the performance, the audience tastes six wines inspired by the show. They also learn a bit about whites, reds and screw tops.

The show's wine selections include varietals such as Estancia Pinot Grigio, Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay, Beringer Founders Estate Pinot Noir and North & South, Norwegian's proprietary Red Blend from California.

The musical is directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero, whose Broadway credits include *Jersey Boys* and Billy Crystal's *700 Sundays*, and features a score written by wine expert Michael Green and award-winning jazz composer Gary Negbaur.

The show runs \$25 per person and will be offered twice per cruise. It's also offered on the Norwegian Pearl.

Following inaugural events in Europe, New York and Miami, the Norwegian Getaway will sail seven-day Eastern Caribbean cruises departing every Saturday from Miami starting Feb. 8. For more information visit [getaway.ncl.com](http://getaway.ncl.com).



## NORWEGIAN GETAWAY TO FEATURE WINE LOVERS THE MUSICAL



*Miami's Ultimate Ship to feature the world's only wine tasting musical*

**MIAMI – December 11, 2013** – Norwegian Getaway, Norwegian Cruise Line's newest ship setting sail in January, will feature a new lunchtime entertainment experience for guests, WINE LOVERS THE MUSICAL. This interactive show combines musical theatre and comedy with a six flight wine tasting and lunch, and will be yet another unique addition to the largest ship to homeport in Miami year-round.

Guests attending the show will experience a wine tasting unlike other, as they sample six different wines over lunch and laugh hysterically. WINE LOVERS THE MUSICAL tells the story of two mismatched students attending a wine class led by an effervescent teacher and their journey of falling in love. The wine selections include varietals such as Estancia Pinot Grigio, Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chardonnay, Beringer Founders Estate Pinot Noir and North & South, Norwegian's proprietary Red Blend from California.

The musical is directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero, whose past directing credits include Jersey Boys and the touring cast of Bring It On – The Musical, and features a score written by wine expert Michael Green and Gary Negbaur, an award winning composer, jazz pianist and international recording artist. The show previously enjoyed Sold Out runs in New York City and New Orleans and is currently available on Norwegian Pearl. The cost of the experience is \$25 per person and will be offered twice per cruise in the Illusionarium Theatre.

WINE LOVERS THE MUSICAL is another opportunity for guests onboard Norwegian Cruise Line to learn more about and taste new wines. Norwegian recently announced a new partnership with the world-renowned Michael Mondavi Family to enhance the line's wine selection fleet-wide to include an incredible variety of wines specially-selected by Michael, together with his son Rob Jr and daughter Dina, to showcase the family's rich history.

Following inaugural events in Europe, New York and Miami, Norwegian Getaway will sail seven-day Eastern Caribbean cruises departing every Saturday from Miami beginning on February 8, 2014. To book a cruise or learn more about Norwegian Getaway, visit [www.getaway.ncl.com](http://www.getaway.ncl.com).





**NYCruiseGal1982**

My husband and I went on the Pearl and loved it - the show is really upbeat and fun, so we went and saw it again on the Getaway a few weeks ago. The lunch is really good, the wines are fantastic and this cast was hilarious and really engaging throughout - it's the perfect way to spend an afternoon, we even stayed afterwards and talked with the cast and drank more...yes...a seventh glass of wine after the show! 😊😊😊

**Pacclady**

We had a blast at Wine Lovers The Musical! The show, the food, the wine, everything was fantastic. We had good conversations with the couple we were seated in a booth with so this made it even more enjoyable.

**TracyE**

When you arrive at your table, each place setting has six glasses of wine (3 white, 3 red). Plus, we got a glass of prosecco with dessert. The show was a mix of songs and semi-educational skits about wine and I thought it was very funny

**Cruise14u**

I was on the Pearl when they were first trying it out, and I'd love to see it again – it was a great way to spend the afternoon and one of the highlights of our cruise.

**jkny323**

Great show saw it on the Getaway on a sea day well worth it! I loved the leading actor he was hilarious and I loved it when he came over and teased me!

**TracyE**

When you arrive at your table, each place setting has six glasses of wine (3 white, 3 red). Plus, we got a glass of prosecco with dessert. The show was a mix of songs and semi-educational skits about wine and I thought it was very funny.

**nadeki**

...we enjoyed the entertainment of it and laughed ALOT!! I would definitely see the show again on another cruise





## ***Wine Lovers: The Musical, Universal Preservation Hall, Saratoga, Review***

**August 12, 2011**

With its clever concept, fun songs and six tasting-sized glasses of wine, ***Wine Lovers: The Musical*** provides not only a fitting intro to the world of wine, but also a highly entertaining and comical diversion to your evening out. The show emphasizes the fascination and romantic side of wine as something to appreciate and savor; and though in many ways it's more indicative of a wine tasting concept than a full-fledged song and dance musical, it does contain enough of a romantic storyline and a hearty dose of comedy to keep your interest piqued throughout. It's also easily the most fun wine tasting class we've ever been to, and we also walked out learning quite a bit about wine. *Wine Lovers* is currently in production at **Universal Preservation Hall** in **Saratoga** through August 21, 2011.

Upon arrival, the audience is seated at tables set with glasses of wine and told not to drink until instructed. A humorous video on the history of wine follows—produced, directed, edited, written by and starring the debonair Charles Thompson (**Jamie Wax**), which establishes the comical tone of the show, as well as Charles Thompson as the class's eccentric wine instructor. As the show becomes more interactive and the audience finds themselves as actual participants in the class, the focus of the play shifts to bringing together Thompson's two onstage students: Katherine (**Kristy Cates**) and Brian (**Brian McElroy**).

Initially, Katherine and Brian butt heads, opposites as they are (Katherine's a polished high-powered corporate exec; Brian's an edgy graphic artist), yet through the course of the evening they gradually develop an interest in each other; the storyline is of course predictable, but it's also charming, evolving as it does in the style of a 1950s Hollywood musical.

And then there are the songs. Full of jubilant wordplay and energetic numbers, the songs, written by wine expert **Michael Green** along with **Gary Negbaur**, are easily reminiscent of Gilbert and Sullivan; the standout production numbers for us were those on White Zinfandel and Screw-top bottles.

The cast under the direction of **Holly-Anne Ruggiero**, is terrific, yet Wax, without question steals the show. At first exuding a prim snobbery as he elaborates on the basics of wine, his comical quirks develop into flat out zaniness and slapstick by show's end. Wax's random interactions and asides with members of the audience (he often critiqued them on their glass holding technique...always by the stem, not the bowl of the glass) were followed by bouts of abundant laughter.

The incorporation of various wines at intervals throughout the show gives insight to the different varieties of grapes, colors and the etiquette of wine tasting, as well as giving humorous jabs to a practice that can at times be considered a tad stuffy. Audience members are instructed to taste from their glasses at specific points in the show.

The wines for this run of the show include: Villa Pozzi Pinot Grigio (Sicily, 2010), Nobilo Icon Sauvignon Blanc (New Zealand, 2010), Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais-Villages (France, 2009), Montevina Cabernet Sauvignon (California, 2006) and Marquis de le Tour Blanc Brut (France). The Duboeuf and Montevina were, in our opinion, the most interesting of the bunch, as both are extremely rich and aromatic with creamy, smoky aromas. – **Dave Bower** and **Monica Sirignano** are Publishers of The Free George.

# DWIGHT THE WINE DOCTOR

## **WINE LOVERS, THE WINE TASTING MUSICAL CABARET GOES SOMMELIER**

Wednesday, June 2, 2010  
by Dwight Casimere

In New Orleans, especially in the French Quarter, wine and food are not only the 'national pastime,' they're a passion. They not only enjoy them 24/7, they write musicals about them. Wine Lovers, the first ever wine tasting musical returned to New Orleans for a limited engagement at its theatrical home, Le Petit Theatre, Muriel's Cabaret on historic Jackson Square. Held in conjunction with the 2010 New Orleans Wine and Food Experience, the play incorporates elements of musical theatre with an actual wine tasting experienced by the audience and led by a singing sommelier.

The interactive show is a collaboration of internationally acclaimed wine writer Michael Green and local New Orleans singer/songwriter Gary Negbaur and is directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero, who has worked on the Tony Award-winning New York production of Jersey Boys.

Audience members are immediately brought into the action and storyline by participating in a 'wine tasting' led by the show's narrator and lead singer, Jamie Wax. They are seated at tables containing an array of red and white wines in numbered glasses and are asked by the narrator/singer to participate in a wine class led by the mythical sommelier, Charles Thompson. Thompson's sole mission in life is to rhapsodize about the joys of drinking wine and to pass his enthusiasm and expertise on to others. He gloms on to a pair of mismatched would-be lovers, Brian, an idealistic painter(P.J. McKinnie), and Katherine(Jennifer Schemke), a know-it-all, no nonsense businesswoman. The two are about as compatible as a rip roaring Zinfandel and a delicate Souffle!

Over the course of 70 minutes of singing and dancing, Thompson attempts to spark some chemistry between the two while singing the joys of drinking Chardonnay, Cabernet, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Merlot.

"The original concept came out of the inherent theatricality of a wine class, and the reasons why people attend such a class," Green, a long time participant and seminar panelist of the New Orleans Wine & Food Experience said of the musical. "Wine is such a romantic beverage that turning a wine tasting into a musical love story just felt natural."

The score, a collaboration of Green and Negbaur, with book by Travis Kramer, skewers wine snobs and tired conventions. There's even a number dedicated to the controversy over the use of screw caps in wine bottling.

The wines are provided by Muriel's Jackson Square restaurant owners Rick and Denise Gratia and include a selection of Barossa Valley Semillon, 2006 (\$13.99 retail), by legendary Australian winemaker Peter Lehmann, who Dwight The Wine Doctor had the pleasure of visiting at his estate in the Barossa last year and additional wines, including Hess Select Sauvignon Blanc, Lake County, California 2008 (\$13.99 retail) and Poema Cava Brut(\$11.98 retail), an intriguing Spanish sparkler. The tasting/musical also included Muriel's own private label, Jackson Square Merlot, Chalk Hill 2007(\$38), Napa Valley Chardonnay, 2009(\$38) and Napa Valley Cabernet 2007(\$38), all available at the restaurant on their wine list, which offers over 300 bottles from around the world.

"Theatre people love to have a drink, particularly a glass of wine, either before or after a show or at intermission," director Holly-Anne Ruggiero said of the concept. "Its great to be able to combine those two elements into a single experience."

Drinking the selection of highly approachable wines and listening to the performers go through their paces was a perfect way to spend an afternoon. As one who loves music and who also loves good wine, it was a match made in heaven!

*\*Dwight Casimere is one of the world's premiere connoisseurs and wine and food writers and reviewers, based in Chicago.*

## **WINE LOVERS The Musical Opens in New Orleans**

May 19, 9:05 PM •

New Orleans Performing Arts Examiner: Alan Smason



"Wine Lovers" cast members (from left) are P. J. McKinnie, Jennifer Schemke and Jamie Wax.

It is a natural pairing. Put six glasses of fine wine together with a musical "class" about the joys of tasting wine and you've got some idea of what "Wine Lovers" is all about. Attendees sit at tables of four seeing, swirling, smelling, sipping, swishing, swallowing or spitting the various varieties of wines covered in this course "taught" by the renowned Charles Thompson (Jamie Wax). Think of it as a unique offering. Both wine connoisseurs and neophytes of wine tastings can glean a lot about wine in a relatively short period (approximately 70 minutes) through the very fast patter songs and humorous ditties that make up the first few songs.

Somewhere around the third glass of wine, the two class attendees on stage Brian (P. J. McKinnie) and Katherine (Jennifer Schemke) are falling in love with wine and each other. It's a very cute study in contrasts: Brian is the plain, rugged guy who is lonely and looking for companionship, while Katherine is the self-assured career woman, who is looking to make more closings by ordering the right kind of wines. Slowly, they begin to realize that there is more to sample on their tongues than the bouquet or body in the wine.

Wax's portrayal of Charles Thompson is spot on. He is delightfully playful with both the actors and the audience and hams it up as often as he plays it straight on stage. While McKinnie and Schemke are on stage alone, the audience naturally becomes interested in their budding relationship. Yet, when Wax is onstage, he sets the tempo for what action will occur and makes the most of the comedic elements contained within. Producer and director Holly-Anne Ruggiero first became familiar with "Wine Lovers" in 2007 and 2008, when she directed the production in New York.

The clever scenic design by Joshua Palmer and lighting by Matthew Foucheaux is worthy of mention. Especially compelling are the video bits on the large screen that seconds as a virtual wine rack. Producers Ruggiero, Gary Solomon, Jr. , Jonathan Foucheaux and the creator of this show, Michael Green, are holding this presentation at the Muriel's Cabaret Stage at Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré. The Solomon Group and Ruggiero are providing major backing for the show and plan on taking the show on the road, presenting it at other U.S. venues over the course of the next year including several international dates.

For performance times, check out the Le Petit [website](#) or call 504-522-2081. Tickets are \$59 each, and the first five performances (after previews are over on May 26) will be considered part of the New Orleans Food and Wine Experience, the annual festival that showcases food and spirits. Another great pairing.



SHARE THE GEORGE!

## ***Wine Lovers: The Musical*, Universal Preservation Hall, Saratoga**

**CLICK HERE TO READ OUR [REVIEW OF WINE LOVERS, THE MUSICAL](#).**

Now here's a show that will definitely get you into the spirit. ***Wine Lovers: The Musical*** will be coming to Saratoga Springs this August. *Wine Lovers: The Musical* is not only a show, it's also the world's first interactive wine tasting musical. Six different wines will be served to the audience seated at round banquet tables each night during its two week run at the Universal Preservation Hall, beginning August 9, 2011.

The show, which has held sold-out runs in New York and New Orleans, stars Kristy Castes, (who previously performed in *Wicked* on Broadway), as know-it-all businesswoman Katherine Reese. She is joined by a charming painter Brian Scott, played by Bryan McElroy who has also performed in the Chicago run of *Jersey Boys*. The two meet at a wine class led by teacher and wine connoisseur Charles Thompson, played by Jaime Wax. Sparks fly between the unlikely duo, as they attempt to demystify wine.

"Wine Lovers is the perfect hybrid of music, laughter and libation. I have yet to see anyone walk out of this show without a huge smile on their face, music in their heart, and wine on the brain! We are thrilled to bring this one of a kind show back to the East Coast during the 2011 Saratoga racing season!" says director and lead producer Holly-Anne Ruggiero, whose directing credits include Assistant Director of *Jersey Boys* on Broadway.

Michael Green, who served as *Gourmet Magazine's* exclusive Wines and Spirits Consultant for nineteen years, created the show after noting the "inherent theatricality" of a wine class. The romantic appeal of wine led easily to turning a wine tasting into a musical love story, Green explains. He wrote the score along with jazz pianist Gary Negbaur. Choreography is by Holly Cruz whose past credits include *Seussical* and *Cats* on Broadway.

Tickets are \$59 and can be purchased through Brown Paper Tickets online. The show runs August 9-14 and 16-21 at 7pm. Visit [www.wineloversthemusical.com](http://www.wineloversthemusical.com) for more information.

—Stacey Stump is an Assistant Editor for The Free George.

# The Ledger

## Interactive Wine Tasting Musical Makes Florida Debut

By **Matt Reinstetle** THE LEDGER *Published: Thursday, November 10, 2011 at 12:01 a.m.*

When you think of a wine tasting, your mind might imagine elegant and sophisticated but now you can also think entertaining.

Holly-Anne Ruggiero, director and producer of "Wine Lovers: The Musical," works in an environment where learning about wine doesn't have to be like a proper classroom but more like a Broadway show. Before working on this show, Ruggiero knew some things about wine but that knowledge has grown exponentially.

"I find myself, when I go out, I'm teaching other people about it," Ruggiero said. "I really have a greater appreciation for it. It's something that's also really important in our show that we talk about a lot."

"It's not only the tasting process but the experience."

"Wine Lovers: The Musical" is making its first appearance in Florida at The Lakeland Center from Friday through Sunday. "Wine Lovers" combines a five to six-glass wine tasting event with a theater show. The 70-minute play itself is about a wine tasting class. So as the performers learn the proper steps to doing a wine tasting, so will the audience.

The plot of the show revolves around two mismatched students who learn about wine and love while attending a wine class.

During the show, the wine teacher, comedian Jamie Wax, will break the "fourth wall" and talk to the crowd to get their reactions to the wine as well as teaching the performers.

"I think it's cool because I think people feel like they're a part of (the show) but at the same time they're not put on the spot, and it is educational," said Kristy Cates, who plays Katharine.

During the performance, the audience will learn six steps to wine tasting: See, swirl, smell, sip, swish and spit. Each show stop is unique because the wines are different. Each show features wines from the region.

Days leading up to the show, the cast will all get to do their own tasting of the wines so they know too what the audience is experiencing.

The show was created in 2006 by Michael Green, Gourmet Magazine's wines and spirits consultant for 19 years. The show has been making on-and-off runs ever since. Ruggiero, who has worked on the Broadway production of "Jersey Boys," was brought in in 2007 to bring more of a Broadway feel to the event instead of it being a wine tasting with a play going on in the background.

That too can be said about the actors. Cates was on the original cast of "Wicked", Brian McElroy was on "Jersey Boys" and Wax has a one-man comedy show.

As the popularity of wine and wine bars has increased in recent years, the show's audience has become more diverse. Each show contains an eclectic mix of wine aficionados and newbies. Ruggiero said they've performed the show in front of wine sommeliers, and even they will come out learning something new about pairings for situations they've never considered.

The time to consume wine and the people who consume it are changing. It's no longer a drink only meant for the most special of occasions. The cast of "Wine Lovers" has seen the stereotypes fade as wine interest continues to grow.

"It's something that has long since been considered sort of sophisticated," Cates said.

"I think our show makes it much more accessible to the people who don't know as much but at the same time you're tasting five different wines that I think those who are aficionados will appreciate."

Matt Reinstetle can be reached at 802-7533 or [matt.reinstetle@theledger.com](mailto:matt.reinstetle@theledger.com)



# BRONXVILLE

DAILY  
VOICE

## From Bronxville Women's Club to Cruise Theater by [Daily Voice Staff](#) 07/06/12



Liz Muller on board the Norwegian Cruise Lines' The Pearl in Glacier Bay, Alaska.

BRONXVILLE, N.Y. – Some people might find wine tastings boring, but the fun is amped when the drink's descriptions are sung on a cruise.

Liz Muller, a 15-year theater veteran and member of the [Bronxville Women's Club](#), recently served as the musical director on the [Norwegian Cruise Lines'](#) ship, The Pearl. On June 17, she departed from Seattle, Wash., and made the more than 1,500-mile trip to Juneau before returning on June 24. The musical "[Wine Lovers](#)," directed by [Holly-Anne Ruggiero](#), accompanied a wine tasting. The songs spoke about six different wines as audiences drank them, telling the crowd where the grapes were from and what dish it was best paired with.

"Audiences go crazy for it," Muller said. "They think it's the greatest thing because they're learning. And it's not as stuffy as some wine tastings are because it's fun. It's a really clever, new show. It's super cute."

Muller's favorite part about being on the ship was "getting to see all of the backstage stuff" in the ship's theater. Muller spent time with the technical crew as the musical was being performed. Seeing the innards of the ship was a great experience, she said, because even as a musical director, it is not something that everyone gets to see.

"I'm lucky," she continued. "I've been involved with theater forever. I've never done anything else. I went to school for theater, I acted professionally, and I've been directing and writing for years."

Muller is a director, producer, lyricist and actor at "[PiPE DREAM theater](#)" and participates in many of the Bronxville Women's Club's theater productions. Aside from Bronxville theater, Muller said that she was thrilled to have the opportunity to direct aboard a cruise and visit a new part of America.

"Alaska is beautiful," she said. "When you go on a cruise, you typically think to the Caribbean, but Alaska is really beautiful. And this time of year, it's light all the time. The mountains are gorgeous, the glaciers are gorgeous. Everything's really pretty."

And Muller was not going to pass up the opportunity to go swimming with the Ketchikan Mountains as a backdrop. While the musical's crew did not get much down time, they jumped into the pool when the cruise ship was empty and docked in Alaska.

They splashed around in the water and, soon, their childhood spirit came out as Muller and the choreographer had the urge to use the two-story, yellow, twisty slide. As soon as they cascaded into the water, the handful of senior citizens who they shared the pool with climbed to the top of the slide, joining in the fun. "That might be my favorite memory of the cruise," Muller said, giggling. "These people were in their 60s. It was hilarious. These older, bald guys just going down the twisty slide, laughing – it was great. You don't see that every day."



**PLAYBILL.COM**

**New Musical *Wine Lovers*, With Kristy Cates, Bryan McElroy, Jamie Wax, Begins Tour Aug. 9**

By *Andrew Gans*

09 Aug 2011



*Wine Lovers, The Wine Tasting Musical*, in which audiences drink six glasses of wine during the 70-minute musical, kicks off its national tour with a two-week run in Saratoga Springs, NY, at the Universal Preservation Hall.

Directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero, performances are scheduled for Aug. 9-21. The cast comprises Kristy Cates (*Wicked*), Bryan McElroy (*Jersey Boys*) and Jamie Wax (*Treme*) as wine teacher Charles Thompson.

The musical features a score by international wine expert Michael Green and jazz pianist Gary Negbaur and book by Travis Kramer with additional contributions by Green and Negbaur.

*Wine Lovers*, according to press notes, "tells the story of lovable painter Brian Scott and know-it-all business woman Katherine Reese, two mismatched students, attending a wine class led by an effervescent teacher, Charles Thompson, whose goal in life is to take the mystery out of wine. Over the course of 70 minutes, Brian, Katherine and the audience learn all about reds, whites, screw caps, Zinfandels...and a little bit about love."

The production also features musical direction by Gary Negbaur and choreography by Holly Cruz.

To learn more and to purchase tickets, go to [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com) or [www.wineloversthemusical.com](http://www.wineloversthemusical.com). Tickets are \$59, which includes the six tastings of wines. For Group Sales of ten or more, email [groups@wineloversthemusical.com](mailto:groups@wineloversthemusical.com) To purchase tickets for the Lakeland, FL, engagement, go to [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or [www.wineloversthemusical.com](http://www.wineloversthemusical.com)

# The Times-Picayune

Published: May 10, 2010

By Todd Price

## *'WINE LOVERS' AT LE PETIT BLENDS MUSIC AND WINE*



The story is old. Boy meets girl. They share six glasses of wine. And boy and girl fall in love. At “Wine Lovers,” a musical that begins a run at **Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre** on May 18, the romance is set to rhythm and the audience gets to sip along with the cast.

“Theater people love a good drink, whether it’s before or after the show,” said Holly-Anne Ruggiero, the show’s New York-based director. “To be able to combine those two things? I thought it was a great idea.”

When the public enters the Muriel’s Cabaret Theatre at Le Petit, they’ll find tables set with glasses of wines from the California vineyard Hess and the cellar of Muriel’s restaurant. The audience came for a play, but they’re getting a class. The teacher is Charles Thompson, played by Jamie Wax. He explains the basics of wine and wanders occasionally into the audience, asking their opinions or critiquing how they grip their glasses.

“We take pauses for the audience to appreciate what the actors are saying,” said Ruggiero. “You’ll hear the audience say, for example, ‘oh yeah, it really does taste like cherries.’”

Over the course of the play, two of the “students,” played by P.J. McKinnie and Jennifer Schemke, learn to appreciate each other as well as reds and whites.

The wine writer Michael Green created the show and debuted it at **NOWFE** in 2006. He then teamed up with Ruggiero, who has worked on the New York production of “Jersey Boys” and Billy Crystal’s “700 Sundays.” She turned Green’s two-hour work, with music by jazz pianist Gary Negbaur and book by Travis Kramer, into a snappy 70-minute musical.

A wine tasting musical presents extra challenges for the director and actors. When the wines are changed, Green supplies new descriptions and the script must be updated. Having a cheerfully inebriated audience, though, also has its advantages.

“By the time we bring out the champagne, people are toasting everybody,” she said. “You can’t get people to leave the theater at the end of the show, because everybody sits there and wants to talk about the wines.”

Ruggiero now divides her time between New York and New Orleans. She directed “Steel Magnolias” at Le Petit, collaborated with the New Orleans Klezmer All-Stars and is working to bring Broadway-bound shows to New Orleans for tryouts.

Green and Ruggiero have considered other drinks that might benefit from a musical treatment. “Michael Green does beer tastings in the summer,” said Ruggiero, “and we’ve talked to a company in Dublin about doing a beer tasting musical. I don’t think, though, that you could do a liquor tasting musical. People would just be too drunk.”



## **New Musical *Wine Lovers* Extends Run in New Orleans; Tour to Launch in August**

**By Andrew Gans**  
**03 Jun 2010**

*Wine Lovers*, the new wine-tasting musical that is currently playing Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré's Muriel's Cabaret Theatre, has extended its run at the New Orleans venue through June 20.

A national tour of the production will launch in Florida in August; additional dates are expected. Casting for the tour will be announced shortly — the New Orleans cast includes Jamie Wax, P.J. McKinnie and Jennifer Schemke.

*Wine Lovers* features a score by international wine expert Michael Green and jazz pianist Gary Negbaur and book by Travis Kramer with additional contributions by Green and Negbaur. Holly-Anne Ruggiero directs and produces, and Holly Cruz choreographs.

The new musical, according to press notes, "tells the story of lovable painter Brian Scott and know-it-all business woman Katherine Reese, two mismatched students, attending a wine class led by an effervescent teacher, Charles Thompson, whose goal in life is to take the mystery out of wine. Over the course of 70 minutes, Brian, Katherine and the audience learn all about reds, whites, screw caps, Zinfandels...and a little bit about love."

During the play, audience members enjoy a tasting of six wines along with the cast.

Muriel's Cabaret Theatre is located in Le Petit Theatre at 616 St. Peter Street in New Orleans. Tickets are \$59, which includes the six tastings of wines. To learn more and to purchase tickets, go to [www.lepetittheatre.com](http://www.lepetittheatre.com) or [www.wineloversthemusical.com](http://www.wineloversthemusical.com).





## NEW ORLEANS' *WINE LOVERS* EXTENDS RUN THROUGH JUNE 20<sup>th</sup>!

WINE LOVERS, the wine-tasting musical, previously scheduled to run through June 13 at Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré's Muriel's Cabaret Theatre in New Orleans, will now run through June 20, according to the theatre's official website. Over the course of the play, audience members will enjoy a tasting of six delightful wines along with the cast.

"No one knows music, wine or food like New Orleans. The way in which this community is able to share a meal, hoist a glass, and channel soul through song is incredible. WINE LOVERS is the perfect hybrid of these passions, and is sure to bring New Orleanians together for a wonderful evening out, doing what they do best - celebrate!" says WINE LOVERS Director and Producer Holly-Anne Ruggiero.

WINE LOVERS tells the story of painter Brian Scott and businesswoman Katherine Reese, two mismatched students, attending a wine class led by an effervescent teacher, Charles Thompson, whose goal in life is to take the mystery out of wine. Over the course of 70 minutes, Brian, Katherine and the audience learn all about reds, whites, screw caps, Zinfandels...and a little bit about love.

"The original concept came out of the inherent theatricality of a wine class, and the reasons why people attend such a class," says Michael Green, the show's creator and a long-time participant and seminar panelist of the New Orleans Wine and Food Experience. "Wine is such an inherently romantic beverage that turning a wine tasting into a musical love story just felt natural."

Hailed as a "great evening out" by the New York Post, WINE LOVERS "has something for everyone... beginners and wine snobs alike! - You'll be drunk with love over this unique, witty show!" (DrVino.com).

WINE LOVERS features a score written by international wine expert Michael Green and jazz pianist Gary Negbaur and book by Travis Kramer with additional contributions by Green and Negbaur. Presented by Holly-Anne Ruggiero (Broadway: Jersey Boys, Billy Crystal's 700 Sundays) who also directs the show, and New Orleans-based Solomon Group. WINE LOVERS is choreographed by Holly Cruz (Broadway: Seussical, CATS), stars Jamie Wax, P.J. McKinnie and Jennifer Schemke and features wines from Muriel's Jackson Square's own vineyard.

Muriel's Cabaret Theatre is located in Le Petit Theatre at 616 St. Peter Street New Orleans, LA 70116; 504.522.2087. To learn more and to purchase tickets, go to [www.lepetittheatre.com](http://www.lepetittheatre.com). Tickets are \$59, which includes the 6 tastings of wines. Le Petit Théâtre du Vieux Carré, approaching its 95th season, continues its long history as a cultural icon in the New Orleans theatre and performing arts community. A launching place for young talent, a stalwart for local talent and a return stage for those who have gone on to further careers, Le Petit features a full season of traditional and new musical productions.

# THE NEW ORLEANS MENU DAILY

Eating And Drinking, Out And In

By Tom Fitzmorris

Five-Star Edition

No Advertising

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

## Wine Lovers, The First Wine-Tasting Play

The theatre is ever changing. Opening tonight at Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carre (a.k.a. The Little Theatre) is **Wine Lovers**, an unusual musical that catches my attention because it concerns wine, too. It's a love story about a soft-spoken painter and a hard-nosed businesswoman. They meet at a wine appreciation class, and then. . . well, by that point something else is going on. Not only are they tasting actual wines on stage, but so is the audience in the seats. Six wines will be poured, accompanied by commentary from a wine instructor who straddles the divide between play and reality. In other words, you see a play and you taste some wine--during the play! It's written by Michael Green, who has traveled the country putting on wine events for years. He's a frequent visitor to New Orleans. Opening night is tonight at 8:30 p.m. It runs through June 13, with a mix of matinee and evening performances. Tickets are \$62 (they include all the wines). More information and tickets can be had at [www.lepetittheatre.com](http://www.lepetittheatre.com). *Muriel's Cabaret Stage at Le Petit Theatre. French Quarter: 616 St. Peter (diagonally across from Jackson Square). 504-522-2081.*

\*Holly-Anne Ruggiero, Director; Michael Green, Writer, and Jamie Wax, Star of *WINE LOVERS*, appeared on Mr. Fitzmorris' radio show twice to discuss the show and it's New Orleans run, during the week of the New Orleans Wine and Food Experience.

### BIOGRAPHY:

\*Tom Fitzmorris is the leading wine and food critic in writer in New Orleans. His program, The Tom Fitzmorris Show, airs for three hours a day, six days a week, on WWL (1350 AM) and WWL (105.3 FM). "I'm not sure of that much radio time spent on food will work," he says. "It's only been on the air since 1988."

Tom writes and publishes the New Orleans Menu, a newsletter published every weekday online at [NOMenu.Com](http://NOMenu.Com). It covers the whole New Orleans food scene: restaurant reviews, recipes, top-ten lists, a calendar of local food events, a daily food almanac, and his Dining Diary. "It's what's now called a blog, but I've written it since decades before that word was invented," he says.

He's the author of sixteen restaurant guides, four cookbooks, and a memoir. The most recent include the fifth edition of "The Unofficial Guide to New Orleans" (Menasha Ridge Press, 2008) and "Tom Fitzmorris's New Orleans Food: 250 of the City's Best Recipes for Cooking at Home" (Stewart, Tabori and Chang, Second Edition, 2010). The memoir--which focuses on the reaction and recovery of the restaurant scene in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, as well as other major turning points in the city's culinary past--is "Hungry Town" (Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 2010).

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# COUNTRY ROADS

ADVENTURES CLOSE TO HOME

Le Petit Théâtre presents *Wine Lovers*, the world's first wine tasting musical. That's right, audience members enjoy a tasting of six wines during a musical praising the joys of wine and love. Due to popular demand, the show has extended its run at the French Quarter Theatre through to Sunday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.

*Wine Lovers* features a score written by international wine expert Michael Green and jazz pianist Gary Negbaur. Directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero and choreographed by Holly Cruz, this interactive experience stars Jamie Wax, P.J. McKinnie and Jennifer Schemke and features wines from Muriel's Jackson Square's own vineyard. May 18—June 20. Showtimes are 8:30 pm on Thursday—Saturday; 5 pm Sunday. \$59 includes six glasses of wine. (504) 522-2081 or [www.lepetittheatre.com](http://www.lepetittheatre.com).

## GOOD LIVER NOLA.COM

**May 26, 2010...8:00 am**

The annual New Orleans Wine and Food Experience gets under way today.—You know, the past ten years of my life could be categorized as a “New Orleans wine and food experience.”—Anyway, the “experience” is a non-profit festival in its nineteenth year, and one of the most prestigious of its kind. It continues through the weekend. Tonight at 7 are myriad wine dinners at notable restaurants throughout the city. Each dinner is accompanied by offerings from a different winery. The meals are all-inclusive and run between \$75-\$125 a head. Some of them are sold out.

Before dinner, however, do check out *Wine Lovers: a Musical*. Apparently, it's some kind of romantic comedy about a couple of yuppies people falling in love at a wine tasting. **But, here's the kicker: this show is interactive, and the price of admission includes six glasses of wine. Yes, six!** The play is in conjunction with the festival, but is continuing its run at Le Petit Theatre past the weekend.





MAY 24, 2010

## *Wine Lovers, the Musical*

BY WILL COVIELLO

**Comedy sets with two-drink minimums are for lightweights. The musical *Wine Lovers* comes with a wine-tasting six-pack.** Jamie Wax, P.J. McKinnie and Jennifer Schemke star in the musical comedy about love and wine. Performances are in conjunction with the New Orleans Wine & Food Experience ([www.nowfe.com](http://www.nowfe.com)) and run May 25-30, June 3-6 and June 10-13; show times vary, visit [www.lepetittheatre.com](http://www.lepetittheatre.com) for details. Tickets \$62.



### **PUBLICITY: NON-CLIPS – RADIO AND APPEARANCES**

MAY 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	THE WINE SHOW with Tim McNally Holly-Anne Ruggiero and Jamie Wax discuss the show LIVE
May 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	WSMB Radio – The Food Show with Tom Fitzmoris Holly-Anne Ruggiero and Jamie Wax discuss the show LIVE
May 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2010	WTUL – Stage and Screen Appearance Holly-Anne Ruggiero and Jamie Wax discuss the show LIVE
May 27 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	WSMB Radio – The Food Show with Tom Fitzmoris Michael Green and Holly-Anne Ruggiero discuss the show LIVE
May 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	NOWFE: Super Dome Appearance Gary Negbaur, Holly-Anne Ruggiero and Cast present from the show
June 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	Margarita Bergen's New Orleans Living Round Table Appearance Holly-Anne Ruggiero and Cast present pieces from the show
July Issue	St. Charles Avenue (Society Editor, Diane Sustendahl) – Covered Opening Night
July Issue	New Orleans Living Magazine – Managing Editor, Cheryl Lemoine



## **CORK GOES BROADWAY**

Amorim Cork America has supplied 5000 corks for the world's first wine tasting musical, the off-Broadway production 'Wine Lovers – The Musical'.

"At first we thought the request was very strange," said general manager Daryl Eklund. "When it was explained that the corks would be integral to the set design and part of the theme of wine and romance, how could we say no."

'Wine Lovers – The Musical' is a unique interactive experience that allows audiences to taste six wines while learning about the joy of wine and love.

The play revolves around two mismatched students and their journey of discovery at a wine class.

"Using natural cork as a background added greatly to the play," said Julian Brizzi, the show's general manager. "When you think of romance, history, and the ritual of wine, natural cork is one of the first things that comes to mind."

Amorim supplied 5000 corks for the set of 'Wine Lovers – The Musical'.



Bark to Bottle, Issue #23, June 2008: Amorim

## EXPLORE DANCE REVIEW: [www.exploredance.com](http://www.exploredance.com)

By Robert Abrams

I thought Wine Lovers, a musical where the audience not only learns about wine but also gets to taste some excellent vintages, was a superb show, and so did Captain Janeway of Star Trek Voyager. Kate Mulgrew was in the audience the night I saw the show, and she gave the show a standing ovation at the final curtain call, but more on that later.

The Triad Theatre is an intimate venue with risers to help with the sight lines. Wine Lovers transformed the whole space, audience and stage included, into a bistro where a wine class was taking place. The audience area was packed fairly tightly with small tables packed fairly tightly with ten glasses of wine for two people each. The set on stage was an extension of the audience area, just with more room. The walls were hung with pictures of grapes and wine.

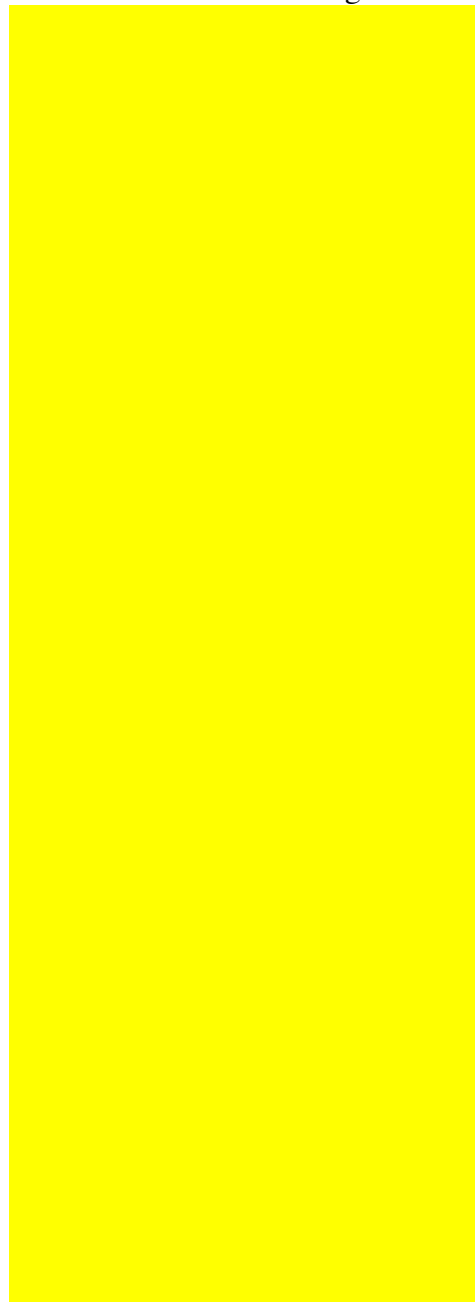
There are plenty of shows where you can sit at a table and drink (ExploreDance.com uses the Spanish term Tablao to refer to all shows of this sort), but I have never seen a show that was also a wine tasting. I thought that it was a good concept well executed. On some level the show was a paean to wine, and so one could argue that it was a skill, but if you believe in your product there is nothing wrong with being a skill. Someone who already knows that they can't stand wine and just wants a musical might not like this show, but other than that I think that people will find they are getting either a quality musical with six glasses of good wine thrown in as a bonus or six glasses of quality wine with a good musical thrown in as a bonus. Normally, one would get only one or the other for the \$65 ticket price, not both. The only way Wine Lovers could have given better value was if they had given away a set of steak knives with each ticket purchase.

The characters had depth. The music, by Gary Negbaur and Michael Green, fit in a range of styles, with some reminiscent of Gilbert and Sullivan in terms of very fast lyrics and others echoing West Side Story in terms of memorable notes that float away. Tuck Milligan, Jessica Phillips and Eric Rubbe all had articulate voices, which was fortunate because the lyrics were intelligently written, such as "enough of ordering by the glass" to describe the desire to fall in love. The actors also had excellent comic timing. The show was directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero who did a fantastic job steering through the piece.

The choreography, by Holly Cruz, was small to fit a small stage, but it served its purpose of making the motion flow. The choreography included a very nice grapevine, no pun intended. There was tap dancing accompanied by wine glass and pencil percussion in the Screw Cap number. The Spin The Bottle number had a little Swing dancing. Again, there wasn't much dancing, but what was there was good with clean technique. The dancing enhanced the impact of each number. My notes indicate that Ms. Mulgrew was clapping enthusiastically at the end of the Spin the Bottle number. I thought that the Spin The Bottle song might have Westie-Hopper potential, but I would need to listen to it again to be sure. There was an entire musical number that discussed the merits of Sherry, a wine from Spain. Appropriately, the number incorporated some Flamenco. While there was nothing wrong with the Flamenco as danced, if the creators of Wine Lovers were looking for ways to improve an already excellent show, this is one number I would take another look at. I thought that the cast could have taken their Flamenco further. A few lessons could give the dancing in the number even more impact. There is another dance related problem with the Sherry number. In addition to the Flamenco, the number uses some Argentine Tango. The Tango is there because the number needs some partner dance type interaction. While it is true that Tango is a dance developed and danced largely by people who speak Spanish, it is not a dance from Spain. In a lesser show, this would be okay, but Wine Lovers' lyrics are so intelligent that unless the number made reference to Argentina, which it doesn't, the Tango looks out of place. Fortunately, there is a partner dance from Spain that has some stylistic similarities to Tango and which is also closer to Flamenco: Paso Doble. I think if Paso Doble were substituted for the Tango in the Sherry number, the number would work better. Not that the show should get rid of the Argentine Tango choreography by any means: it should just be put into a new number that discusses Argentine wines.

Between the music and the book, by Travis Kramer, Gary Negbaur and Michael Green, the show provided quite a bit of useful information while simultaneously being very amusing. For instance, the process of making wine involves a reaction between the sugar on the inside of the grapes and the yeast on the outside of the grapes. You should hold wine glasses by the stem of the glass, not the bowl of the glass. The show gave interesting conceptual approaches to pairing wine with food, such as light versus heavy, and similarity versus contrast. One of the challenges of being an editor is that people end up expecting you to review everything. I like wine, but I wouldn't claim to be an expert on it (which may be a good thing because it helps me avoid compulsions to buy \$500 bottles of wine). The audience got to drink six wines at key moments as the show progressed. The first, a 2006 Ca' Donini Pinot Grigio from Veneto, Italy was very pleasant with a light and fruity taste. The second wine, a 2007 Los Vascos Sauvignon Blanc from Casablanca, Chile was stronger than the first wine. The third wine was a 2006 Simon Hackett Chardonnay from Barossa Valley, Australia. It was very buttery. I thought it was an excellent Chardonnay. The fourth wine was a 2005 Louis Jadot Moulin-A-Vent "Chateau des Jacques" from Beaujolais, France. It had strong fumes and a rich tannin taste. The fifth wine was a 2005 Frances Coppola "Diamond Series" Zinfandel from California. It had excellent aroma and was very smooth. The final wine of the night was a Cava Cordon Negro Brut sparkling wine by Friexenet from Penedes, Spain that was very refreshing.

And since the creators of Wine Lovers did such a good job with a wine tasting musical, I am hoping they try their hands at a chocolate tasting musical.



# PLAYBILL®

Serving theatre since 1884

## Milligan, Rubbe and Phillips Are Wine Lovers Beginning Dec. 1

By Andrew Gans

December 1, 2007

Wine Lovers, billed as "the wine-tasting musical," makes its debut at the Triad Theater Dec. 1.

From Dec. 1-3 and Dec. 8-10, theatregoers have the chance to enjoy six different wines while watching the Manhattan premiere of the new musical. Holly-Anne Ruggiero directs the production, which stars Kinsey's Tuck Milligan, Blue Man Group's Eric Rubbe and The Scarlet Pimpernel's Jessica Phillips. Show time is 7 PM.

Wine Lovers features a score by composer-jazz pianist Gary Negbaur and wine expert Michael Green and a book by Travis Kramer. The musical, according to press notes, "tells the story of two mismatched students at a wine class led by an effervescent teacher and their journey of discovery."

Co-creator Green said in a statement, "The original concept came out of the inherent theatricality of a wine class, and the reasons why people attend a class." Negbaur added, "Wine is such an inherently romantic beverage that turning a wine tasting into a musical love story just felt natural."

The Triad Theatre is located in Manhattan at 158 West 72nd Street. For more information or to purchase \$65 tickets, visit [www.wineloversthemusical.com](http://www.wineloversthemusical.com). Attendees must be 21 or over.





## **CURTAINS AND CORKS**

**November 30, 2007**

Trying to decide which play to see during the holiday season can drive you to drink, but Triad Theater's "Wine Lovers" has oenophiles and theatergoers covered. **Possibly the first-ever "wine-tasting musical," this show pairs an onstage performance** - by two wine-tasting students and their teacher - with an audience that quietly samples the same six wines as the actors, but from the comfort of their seats. The limited run starts tomorrow night and continues with performances Sunday, Monday and Dec. 8-10 at 7 p.m. 158 W. 72nd St.; (212) 362-2590. Tickets are \$65 at [wineloversthemusical](http://wineloversthemusical.com).



**Issue Date: November 1, 2007, Posted On: 11/8/2007**

## **How to Make a Wine Glass Sing**

**By Kara Newman**

While “interactive” musicals like Tony n’ Tina’s Wedding have been around for some time, now wine is taking on a starring role in a new production.

Wine Lovers, a new wine-tasting musical from Late Harvest productions opening at New York’s Triad Theater on December 1st, features a score written by wine expert Michael Green and composer Gary Negbaur.

“The original concept for Wine Lovers came out of the inherent theatricality of wine classes and the fascinating reasons why people are driven to attend a class in the first place,” says Green.

The play tells a love story about two mismatched students who meet in a wine education class. Audience members sample 6 wines along with the on-stage class.

Although the production originally premiered in New Orleans in May 2006, Green says that the play since has been significantly reworked and features an entirely new cast of three—the two lovers and their “effervescent” teacher (who ebullient wine educator Green insists is not an autobiographical character).

While the specific wines have not yet been selected, varietals and flavor profiles will include an aromatic, unsoaked Sauvignon Blanc; an oaky, warm-climate Chardonnay; a light, high-acid red wine such as Beaujolais or Pinot Noir; a full-bodied red such as Zinfandel or Cabernet; and will finish off with a festive sparkler, such as Cava.

“This is not about aggressively promoting a specific brand of wine,” Green explains. “We didn’t want to feel this was a reality show with obscene product placement. But at a wine tasting class, you would know the wine and the region and who produced it as well.”

# Wine Spectator

LEARN MORE, DRINK BETTER

In recent years, we've seen Broadway musicals based on an Abba song, a canned pork product, and some singers from the state of New Jersey, so why not a musical about wine tasting? In early December, *Wine Lovers*, dubbed "the world's first wine-tasting musical," will make its New York debut in a limited run off-Broadway (which makes it immune to the ongoing strike that's darkened many theaters). The show, which Unfiltered caught a dress rehearsal of earlier this week, tells the story of two students in a wine class who meet and—surprise!—fall in love. The show also touches on such topics as screw caps, the history of wine and the layman's fears about the beverage, and includes a six-wine tasting for all audience members as well as those onstage. Michael Green, who began writing the musical's score several years ago on *Valentine's Day* (and eventually pulled in collaborator Gary Negbaur, a composer and jazz pianist), said of his inspiration, "I think there's such an inherent theatricality in the whole food-and-wine landscape that to bring the worlds of wine and theater together is just an intuitive thing." Should *Wine Lovers* be met with success, Unfiltered might just come up with its own wine-based musical. Working titles include "A Bottling Line," "Damn Brettanomyces," and "The Best Little Crush Facility in Napa."





**DR.YINO.COM**

## **SIDEWAYS, THE MUSICAL?**

Wine has conquered the silver screen with *Sideways* and two forthcoming wine movies. Now our favorite beverage turns its sights on Broadway (well, off-off Broadway). Michael Green, Gourmet wine contributor, is the force behind the interactive production that encourages the audience to “see, swirl, smell, sip, and savor **WINE LOVERS** — a romance in six glasses.” On their web site, Green says that it’s a send-up of the “theatricality” of wine education—wait, he doesn’t mean my forthcoming class, does he?

From what we hear, the musical is a must-see, so get yourself over to the Triad Theatre on 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and hoist a glass before this Off Broadway run ends on January 22<sup>nd</sup>!

## **WINE LOVERS**

Conceived by Michael Green

Book by Michael Green, Travis Kramer and Gary Negbaur

Lyrics by Michael Green and Gary Negbaur

Music by Gary Negbaur

Directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero

Choreography by Holly Cruz

## **FIRST WINE TASTING MUSICAL PREMIERES IN NYC**

A unique, interactive concept of incorporating wine tasting with a musical is being introduced to audiences in New York, December 1 at the Triad Theatre.

"Wine Lovers" tells the story of two mismatched students attending a wine class led by an effervescent teacher and their journey of discovery. During the show, audience members enjoy six delightful wines along with the class, and everyone learns a little about wine... and love.

"Wine Lovers" features a score written by Michael Green and Gary Negbaur, an award winning composer and jazz pianist and the book is by writer Travis Kramer (It's Karate, Kid! The Musical). The show stars Tuck Milligan (Kinsey, The Kentucky Cycle, Chappelle's Show) and is directed by Holly-Anne Ruggiero, (Jersey Boys, 700 Sundays).





## WINE, THE MUSICAL

Michael Green is Gourmet Magazine's wine and spirits consultant. He's also appeared on a variety of Food Network shows. He's now done something truly new and different - written a musical about wine. Well, wine and love. It premieres in New York City in early December. I'll let him explain:

As many of you may know, for the last few years I have been working on a unique concept - the first wine tasting musical. Yes, a wine tasting musical!

WINE LOVERS tells the story of two mismatched students attending a wine class led by an effervescent teacher and their journey of discovery. During the show, audience members enjoy six delightful wines along with the class, and everyone learns a little about wine... and love.

The show will have an initial run beginning December 1st at the Triad Theatre. Tickets can be purchased through [www.wineloversthemusical.com](http://www.wineloversthemusical.com).

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