

Jessica Yadegaran

Corkheads

Press Club in San Francisco finally opens

By Jessica Yadegaran

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It's been four months since the soft launch of the new urban tasting room, Press Club, on Yerba Buena Lane in San Francisco. As of Sept. 10, the public can finally enjoy this taste of wine country. And with the cost of gas and harvest in full swing, I can see how a Bart ride over to Union Square is a little more appealing than a trek down Highway 29.

When I attended the grand opening back in April, I was struck by the elegant warmth of the place. It was like a winery night club. Walnut planks filled the main floor and complemented the cork-colored fabric and concrete framework. There were also a lot of overdressed oenophiles (and wanna-be oenophiles). So that certainly helped the vibe. I found the space a bit dark, but that may have been a mood call.

Like most tasting rooms, you can try before you buy. And there's some good stuff to try. Namely, eight of California's top small production wineries where winery employees who are familiar with the brand help guests navigate between vintages and varietals. That's a big plus for me.

The producers are Chateau Montelena, Fritz Winery, Hanna Winery, Landmark Vineyards, Miner Family Vineyards, Mount Eden Vineyards, Pahlmeyer and Saintsbury. Rare library wines are available for purchase in addition to current releases.

Like a winery, guests will also be able to attend release parties and winemaker dinners hosted by the vintners at the Press Club. I'm the first one to admit that it's much easier to attend these dinners on a "school night" when they're in SF. How am I supposed to be in St. Helena by 6 p.m. on Tuesday? You'll also find gourmet food, educational events and — here's the good stuff — direct shipping. No more third party sneakery.

Check it out and let me know your thoughts.