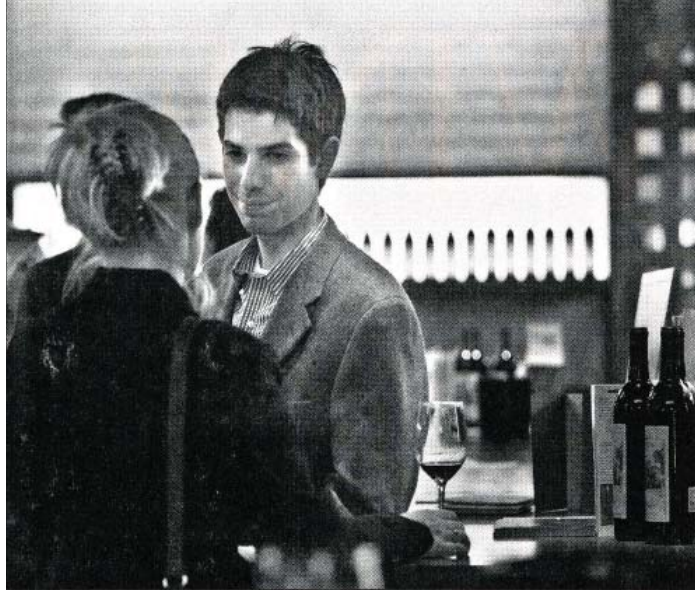


San Francisco Chronicle

THE SIPPING NEWS



DAVID PAUL MORRIS / The Chronicle

Press Club offers individual tastes and flights from eight premium wineries.

FIRST LOOK: Press Club tasting room on Yerba Buena Lane

It's been a long time coming, but Press Club, a new San Francisco tasting room featuring eight premium Northern California wineries, opened on Wednesday.

Founded by Andrew Chun and Jan Wiginton and joined by Millennium Partners of the Four Seasons Hotel, the 9,000-square-foot subterranean venue on Yerba Buena Lane has a tasting area for each winery, a sit-down lounge and a private dining room.

Originally due to open last April, the holdup was about obtaining the necessary alcohol licenses for each winery and for such a large space, says Chun. Baldauf Catton von Eckartsberg Architects, who designed the Ferry Building Marketplace, are responsible for a design that represents the earthy elements of vineyards, with walnut paneling and rough-hewn teak tables, and the industrial components of a winery, with stainless steel accents and concrete floors.

Other than Mount Eden Vineyards of Saratoga, the wineries come from Sonoma and Napa: Chateau Montelena, Miner Family Vineyards,

Fritz Winery, Saintsbury, Hanna Winery Landmark Vineyards and Pahlmeyer.

Enter on Yerba Buena Lane and pick up a "press pass," similar to a hotel card key. Downstairs, you can use the card to order flights (\$10-\$25) or individual tastes (\$2-\$15) from individual wineries.

The lounge offers rotating flights (\$12.25-\$40.50), cheese and wine pairings (\$18.50-\$19.25) and a trio of small bites paired with wines (\$33), such as salt-roasted tiger shrimp with Miner Family's Simpson Vineyard 'iog-nier.

The upstairs retail and check-in area is where you pick up any bottles you order. It's open every day at 11 a.m. for individual bottle sales; prices are the same as if buying directly from the winery.

Press Club, 20 Yerba Buena Lane (near Market), San Francisco; (415) 744-5000; pressclubsf.com. 2-9 p.m. Mon.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Fri.- Sat., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sun.

— Tara Duggan