

# A LITTLE MORE SOUL

## SILVERLAKE WINE BUCKS INDUSTRY TRENDS

writing and photography by JOSHUA LURIE



In less than five years, Silverlake Wine has become a go-to destination, thanks to their eclectic wine selection, thrice-weekly wine tastings and community outreach efforts. A November 2007 expansion allowed the owners to widen their focus to include small-batch liquors and microbrew beers.

George Cossette, Randy Clement and April Langford partnered on Silverlake Wine in February 2004, determined to avoid bottles that people could find at grocery stores or discounters. "We're looking for more artisanal products," says Cossette, "something with a little more soul."

Cossette is Silverlake Wine's resident liquor maven, determined to "find things unique and handmade." For example: single-barrel Scotch whiskeys, where every barrel varies based on the type of wood and year. Cossette pinpointed a Signatory single-malt Scotch whiskey that was distilled at Caperdonich Distillery in 1996, and stressed that availability is limited.

Absinthe is en vogue after over eight decades of prohibition, and Silverlake Wine carries five varieties, including a bottle of "Lucid," sporting menacing yellow cat's eyes. Cossette says there's "mystique" associated with the aperitif, which contains wormwood, anise and fennel. People call absinthe "the green fairy," but Kübler Swiss Absinthe Superieure pours clear.

Monks at the Monastery of la Grande-Chartreuse in Voiron, France, have produced Chartreuse exclusively since 1737. Only two monks know the full recipe and are allowed to macerate and distill the secret recipe of 130 herbs, plants and flowers. They make green and yellow batches, but the most prized bottle is

V.E.P., which is what Silverlake Wine carries. Cossette reveres the liqueur's "ethereal herby flavor."

Batavia-Arrack van Oosten is entirely unlike its anise-flavored Middle Eastern cousin, arak. This variation is distilled from sugar cane and a smidgen of red rice on the island of Java, blended in the Netherlands and bottled in Austria. Cossette describes the flavor as "earthy, a cross between molasses and grappa." It's great in punch and bakers use arak to heighten the flavors and aromas of citrus and chocolate.

Softball-sized bottles of Hudson Baby Bourbon Whiskey were distilled in upstate New York according to pre-Prohibition standards. The shop also sells Fee Brothers bitters, which are available in flavors like peach or grapefruit and ideal for home mixologists.

The top two shelves of the Silverlake Wine fridge feature beer bottles that cost only \$1.75 each, or \$8 for a mix-and-match six-pack. Langford describes Mothership Wit, an organic wheat beer made by New Belgium in Fort Collins, Colorado, as "deeper and darker than Hefeweizen." On a lower shelf, Three Philosophers Belgium Style Blend, produced by Brewery Ommegang in Cooperstown, New York, contains "a little bit of cherry, but it doesn't taste fruity."

Cossette recently acquired and began selling wines from the Georgian Republic. He says, "That's the way you keep it interesting — by not just following the trends."

2395 Glendale Blvd., Silver Lake | 323.662.9024

[www.silverlakewine.com](http://www.silverlakewine.com)