

Brennan's®

It's a Grand Day to be Awarded!

*Brennan's, New Orleans, receives Wine Spectator's Grand Award
with the dedication of Sommelier and Wine Director, Braithe Tidwell, and
the consummate support of Restaurateur and Proprietor, Ralph Brennan*

When Brennan's first received *Wine Spectator's* coveted Grand Award in 1983, it was one of the proudest moments in a long and storied history. When Ralph Brennan and Terry White acquired the iconic French Quarter restaurant, and Brennan's re-emerged in 2014 as one of the most polished dining establishments in all New Orleans, the mindful restoration honoring the city's past, present, and future included an ambitious wine program that would return Brennan's to its original prestige and glory. Everyone at Brennan's is especially pleased and proud that the wine program has once again earned the Grand Award, the highest regard of *Wine Spectator's* judges, during the restaurant's 75th anniversary year in 2021.

Brennan's carefully curated wine list, developed by sommelier and Wine Director Ms. Braithe Tidwell with counsel and support from the owners, now boasts over 14,000 bottles.

In recent years, Brennan's has spent nearly \$1 million on wine, increasing the total selections on the list by 50%, with special attention to boutique producers, verticals and large formats. Although Brennan's is proud to offer a number of older vintages, it is a true 'post-Katrina' cellar, with most of its verticals beginning with the 2004 vintage; the 2010 vintage is missing from many of these verticals due to a lengthy transition of ownership. Brennan's presents a fine line-up of 'blue-chip' California wines that are in keeping with the French and Creole roots of its five-time James Beard-nominated menu from 2015-2019, now under the culinary direction of Executive Chef Ryan Hacker, whose vision also extends to the contemporary cultural influences molding the city's present-day fare. The cellar's greatest strength is its exceptional Burgundies, and a list of Champagnes approaching one hundred offerings. Champagne goes hand-in-hand with the renowned 'Breakfast at Brennan's,' and in six years, 'Bubbles at Brennan's' has also become a beloved institution, featuring a weekly ceremonial sabering in the courtyard and remarkable prices on the flowing Champagne.

What truly exemplifies Brennan's commitment to the highest quality wine service is its investment in staff training. Tidwell began her study of wine and in-depth education practices at Danny Meyer's Union Square Cafe in New York City, achieving Certification from the Court of Master Sommeliers in 2013. She brought her passion for wine knowledge to Brennan's in 2015, and using the impressive list as a centerpiece, she has built a strong culture of staff preparation and teaching, with an emphasis on learning regions and vintages.

In 2015, the re-opening service staff embarked on an intensive 12-week course to prepare for the beginner certification program. The restaurant was closed for two days, during which the instructors trained the entire staff to the specific standards; more than two-thirds of the service team took and passed the certification. These past seven years at Brennan's, Tidwell has mentored many sommeliers to achieve multiple levels of certification, in addition to the ongoing daily beverage training for the entire team.

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The renovations of Brennan's at 417 Royal Street included an extensive overhaul of the historic two-story wine cellar facility to optimize both storage conditions and organization. The 200-year-old brick was tuck-pointed and sealed, and steel beams now reinforce the ceiling through which hay was once tossed to the stables below. Though retaining its rustic appeal, the space has been fitted with new wine racks, lighting, a glass entry vestibule, and a climate-control system backed up by a natural-gas powered generator; a sensor alerts the management to any fluctuation in temperature.

Established in the French Quarter in 1946, the glamorous home for 'Breakfast at Brennan's' has occupied its landmark building on Royal Street since 1956. In the past decade, Brennan's has reclaimed its status as the city's most spirited temple of fine dining and celebrations on every scale.

Today, Brennan's in New Orleans is shining, oh-so-grandly, once again.