



Capitol Cellars

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On Wine: Four Questions for Marcus Graziano

By Catherine Warmerdam

At Capitol Cellars, his Roseville wine shop, Marcus Graziano turns customers on to great wines. (A second location, in Granite Bay, is scheduled to open in May.) We recently chatted with him about his profession and his passion.



Marcus Graziano

Have you seen a shift in Sacramentans' taste or knowledge about wine during your years in the business? Very much so. They're more educated. A lot of people now are drinking more sophisticated wines, so demand for those has grown. When I first opened Capitol Cellars in 1985, there were very, very few boutique wines available to customers. I would call up a winery and would want some of their wine, and they would say, "Why would I sell wine in Sacramento?"

Are more people looking for value wines these days? In this economy, they certainly are. People who were drinking \$150 bottles now want to pay \$100. People who were drinking \$100 bottles want something for \$50. And those who drank \$50 bottles are now looking for something in the \$25 range.

What is your ideal food-and-wine pairing? One of my favorite pairings has always been sushi and incredible Champagne. Champagne goes so well with sushi, but most people don't realize that. It really allows the flavors of the fish to come out without masking them. A more serious pairing would be a really amazing rack of lamb—I love lamb—with a Pinot Noir.

What do you love most about your job? I love customers. They're wonderful. I enjoy sharing their passion for learning about wine. Our philosophy is that we don't want to tell them what to drink; we want to learn what their tastes are. We developed an accounting program so that I know every bottle every customer has bought in the last 15 years. I can go back and see the types of wines they enjoy. Because, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter what I like—it matters what they like.

<http://www.capitolcellars.com>