

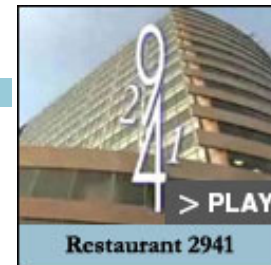
# THE LIST

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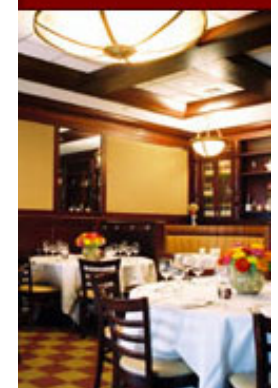
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**Laurent Guinand** is from Lyon, the gastronomy capital of France, tucked between Burgundy and Northern Rhone wine regions. He came to the world of wine in the late 1980s through the online world of information technology as an IT intern for Sopexa -- the French wine and food promotion board. In 1991, he was sent to Sopexa New York, and started to promote French wines in the US, just as the French Paradox aired on *60 Minutes*. His work included serious training of his nose and pallet at multiple professional wine events.

After two years, he moved on to banking to finance food and wine companies in the US and later to management consulting. In 1996, Laurent started to design and conduct creative wine tasting events in Boston for a number of universities and wine clubs. This was mostly a hobby. But the passion for the industry seems to always bring him back to wine and food, assisting the maitre d' at **Petrossian** in NYC, participating in wine and food dot coms in Boston and completing his Ph.D. thesis in economics on food economics in the U.S.

Laurent moved to DC in 2000. As a partner in a consulting firm, he started to develop winery accounts. As the demand for wine events was also growing, he decided to create **GiraMondo Associates LLC** in 2004. In 2006, it became his main occupation with two divisions focusing on different wine customers:

- **GiraMondo Wine Adventures** that designs, organizes and conducts public and private wine tasting seminars in the U.S., as well as wine tours



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- **GiraMondo Wine Ventures** that provides strategic consulting, mergers and acquisition and business development services to wineries, wine companies and investment funds in the wine business.

Laurent has conducted well over 300 wine tasting seminars for wines from France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Greece, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel, Chile, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Georgia, Mexico and of course the United States.

Laurent also consulted for American and European wineries with regard to their marketing strategy, international business development and winery brokerage in such countries as the US, China, Argentina, France, etc.

Laurent holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Paris XIII. He is also a graduate of the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy at Tufts University and of the Ross School of Business from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. He is currently writing a book on Wine Economics and is a member of the Society of Wine Educators and the American Society of Wine Economists.

When not traveling for the consulting business, you can find Laurent trying wines and food on the ever improved DC restaurant scene, thinking about his next dream project: A wine bar in the DC area.

#### Laurent Guinand

**GiraMondo Associates, LLC**

**Why I started GiraMondo Wine Adventures:**

I had to come to the U.S. to understand the great diversity of wines being made outside of France. The U.S. market is a treat for people who truly want to discover wine and its secrets. Nowhere else in the world can you experience such a diversity of wines on the shelves and on restaurant's wine lists.

As I was promoting the French wines in New York in the early 90's, I realized that there were other wines in the wine stores. I started to try and enjoy them. In the mid 90s, individuals and organizations asked me to organize wine tasting events and wine classes, since they knew I had worked in the wine industry. Because of my background in management consulting, I was used to communicating in group setting, using visuals and business communication techniques. I have been intrigued and then encouraged by the curious mind of the American people and their thirst for knowledge. It has really helped me focus and develop interesting themes and presentations.

As I consulted over the years for wineries, wine regions and foreign governments, I also started to include my own learning in my wine classes: comments and insights on the choices and decisions made by viticulturists and wine makers, for example. I usually explain both economic and gustative impact of these decisions on the wine.



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In addition, I never forget that tasting and consuming wine is, first and foremost, a social experience. People want to learn about wine, because they want to share their findings with like-minded friends and colleagues or for family occasions. They want to understand wine, so that they can find interesting pairing for the food they are cooking or ordering at a restaurant. They also want to understand the culture and traditions of the people crafting the wines. And with globalization, we now have the chance to taste wines coming from all corners of the world, which is very exciting.

I personally taste on average of between 80 and 100 wines per week and write my own notes on what would be the most appealing wines for wine enthusiasts. I purposely include a very wide pallet of wines from the top Bordeaux chateaux or Super Tuscans, to little known organic California wineries and up and coming varietals such as saperavi from the Republic of Georgia, Torrontes from Argentina or Malagousia from Greece. And I bring these wines to my clientele.

With **GiraMondo Wine Adventures**, I aim to become a guide for wine adventurers, i.e. individuals who are exploring foods and wines and are interested in discovering other cultures. The adventure can start here in D.C. and continue on the ground in different wine regions. I design, organize and conduct public and private corporate wine events, personal coaching sessions and wine tours with three principles in mind:

- **Innovative educational and communication tools:** We provide innovative tools derived from strategy consulting that help participants master their sensory skills and truly savor the experience. At the end of one of our wine tasting, even beginners are usually able to differentiate and evaluate the flavor, texture and aromas of the wine tasted.
- **Theme-based wine tasting:** in addition to the tasting experience, we also provide theme-based presentations that are tailored to a group's interest and tastes. We can provide the research and the presentation, and/or we can partner with other public speakers to deliver the presentation.
- **Unpretentious, yet professional attitude:** so that everyone can enjoy the wine tasting experience, from the beginner to the most enthusiastic. I never take people for granted.

My four main services include:

- **Public wine events**, a mix of wine classes/tastings linked to cultural presentations. For example, the Wines of Diplomacy series that I present either at embassies or at the Meridian International Center aims at blending wines and international affairs. We often have ambassadors, sometimes ministers or prime ministers, as co-presenters. These are perfect forums to learn about wines and about culture. And I always serve food at the end of the tasting!
- **Private events** that can range from a simple Champagne reception to more elaborate formal tastings of high end wines. I have conducted private events in offices, country clubs, restaurants, on boats or on planes all over the world.

- **Wine tours** -I currently have five tours on sale in France and Italy. I have upcoming tours in Spain and I am currently working on a tour in Argentina.
- **Wine coaching** includes personal coaching sessions/classes, as well as assistance in building your cellar or selling your wine collection.

I believe that creativity has brought a lot of good things to the wine industry, allowing winemakers to devise new and interesting wines. To follow their example, I try my best to bring a hefty dose of creativity in my own work.

#### **Best wine deals right now?**

I am very excited by wines coming from Southern Italy and Central Spain. Their quality has improved tremendously, and they deliver powerful flavors and aromas. I consider them a great crossroads between Old and New World wines. Varietals such as Primitivo from Puglia, or Nero D'avola from Sicilia, or Tempranillo-based blends from Vinos de Madrid and La Mancha.

#### **What Am I drinking at home?**

There are two houses that I particularly enjoy for most of their wines, and I buy by the case: Argiolas, the winery from Sardinia has wonderful wines. Cline Cellars of Sonoma has one of the best values for the price (especially the viognier and the red zinfandel).

#### **My OMG wine?**

I am a Pauillac lover. Chateau Lafite-Rothschild in particular. In the good years, I am also very found of Northern Rhone. The best wine I have ever had was probably a 1959 Cote Roties.



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