

WINE SPECTATOR's -35th Annual- NEW YORK WINE EXPERIENCE

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Core Strength: Wines from Ancient Vines

For Matt Kramer, age equals resilience



Matt Kramer treated attendees to three very different wines with a common thread: very old vines.

Christine Dalton

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Matt Kramer, Wine Spectator's "iconoclast and passionate advocate for all things terroir," is not afraid to give bold advice. "If you want a single insurance policy for buying something completely blind," he confided to the Wine Experience audience, "if a wine is from 80-year-old vines, go for it."

Old vines learn to resist extreme change. They do not respond to exceptional temperatures and rains, or drought, as young vines do. Instead, these vines develop strength and resilience deep in their cores, the key, Kramer explained, to producing wines with midpalate density: "The midpalate is where the action is."

To demonstrate his point, Kramer first poured Louis Jadot Puligny-Montrachet Clos de la Garenne Domaine Duc de Magenta 2012, made from 80-year-old vines, which he believes to be the oldest Chardonnay vines in Puligny-Montrachet. A white Burgundy with a notable texture, "it shows you in a single sip what midpalate density and old vines can deliver."

From Spain's "treasure trove of old vines," came his next wine, Bodegas y Viñedos Raúl Pérez Mencía Bierzo La Vizcaína La Vitoriana 2013. The 80-year-old vines discovered by an up-and-coming producer yielded a red with a beautiful texture, textbook core strength and midpalate density.

Finally, **Kramer turned to Argentina's bounty of old Malbec sites to pour Bodega Mendel Malbec Mendoza Finca Remota 2011. Made by winemaker Roberto De La Mota in "some godforsaken location," the wine comes from vines planted in 1947, and showed beautiful, refined tannins and luxuriousness.**

Kramer concluded by encouraging guests to seek out complex wines from his beloved old vines. "There's dimensionality here," he mused, "There's a universe inside these wines."