

TABLE TALK

# SONAPA GRILLE: THE AMERICAN PALATE OF WINE-COUNTRY FLAVORS

story and photos by LEIGH CORT



**T**he flourishing restaurant scene in Northeast Florida makes nightly choices of where to enjoy dinner, happy hour or in-between hours quite a dilemma.

Restaurants are places where you dream of having a fantastic meal with

friends, family or just on your own. They are also destinations where restaurant entrepreneurs can merge their talents and create something incredible.

Welcome to the new SoNapa Grille in Jacksonville Beach that now ranks as my favorite hometown drop-in – where you can either grab a seat at the bar or join friends at a comfy table anywhere in the restaurant.

The name was created by two of the world’s great wine regions – Sonoma Country and Napa Valley. Their wine selections are focused on great California wines that guests can afford – whether choosing an adventurous sampling of multiple wines or ordering a bottle that you drink to the last sip!

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## SONAPA GRILLE

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Founder/creator of SoNapa Grille Adam Barringer draws inspiration from his own personal fondness for California, which is what inspired the first SoNapa Grille to open in New Smyrna Beach in 2006. By 2018, his second location joined the scene in Ormond Beach. Finally, he and partners Joe Bales and Chris Botting landed the third location in Jacksonville Beach. It's easy to find on 3rd Street and even easier to fall in love with the trio of everything they are doing well: contemporary and appealing ambiance, caring and knowledgeable service plus a fabulous menu of deliciousness!

SoNapa Grille touches the senses. It begins when you receive a friendly greeting from the hosts and then perhaps taking a seat at the bar, which is your portal to a relaxed and professional experience.



Savannah McLean

The restaurant gently flows from the popular bar to a comfortable dining room that segues into the open Barrel Room (obviously decorated with attractive California wine barrels). There is a private 14-seat, glassed-in party room (special reservation) especially with holiday entertaining! Earthen tones and classic woods infuse a sense of casual without the usual beachy theme that pervades many of



Adam Barringer and Joe Bales

the area's new eateries. For outdoor and pet-friendly dining, the 30-seat garden is rimmed with foliage, and nightly the white lights project a hint of romance.

The thoughtfully curated menu is committed to reflecting the diverse palates of California wine country

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– flawlessly enhancing the easy-to-read wine list that begins with lighter vintages and ends with more full-bodied selections.

Popular winemakers like Chalk Hill, Rombauer, Caymus and Opus One dot the menu with many of Adam and Joe’s personal favorites. SoMade Cocktails embrace the California lifestyle, too. “When She’s in Napa” combines Tito’s vodka, Ferrari Carano Rose, lemon juice and a dash of blueberry. “The Tusk,” a California restaurant, inspired my favorite with Four Roses Bourbon, maple infused Vermouth, orange bitters and dried cherries!

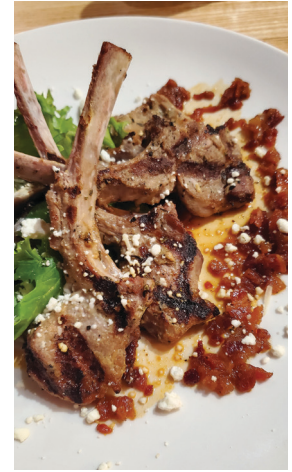
On one visit, I fell hard for the Edamame Potstickers (filled with edamame and cabbage, citrus ginger sauce and wasabi aioli) and Korean BBQ ribs (sesame seeds, green onions and Asian street fries). All of the appetizers are irresistible, but then I



Edamame Potstickers



Korean BBQ Ribs



Lollipop Lambchops

swooned for the Lollipop Lambchops (grilled Dijon-rubbed lamb chops with bacon jam, goat cheese and field greens).

Chef Patrick Brown explores and tries new and exciting combinations, yet there is still a feeling of authentic, conventional flavors.

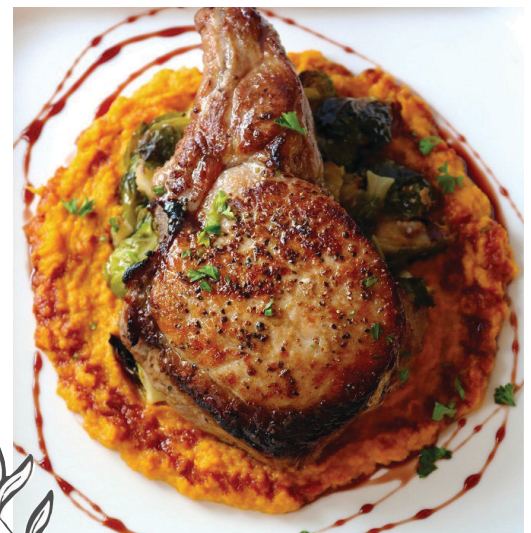
The owners identify customer demand, a crucial first step in every restaurant’s success story. Look around; there’s a happy vibe at SoNapa Grille. It’s obvious that their customers are making wise decisions also based

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