

HUDSON VALLEY

WINETM

FALL
2014

A resource guide to the valley's craft beverage industry

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Talking Terroir

Traci L. Suppa

FOR MANY OF THE PEOPLE we meet through this magazine, wine is much more than a beverage. It's a passion. And in this issue's "Talking Terroir" column, it's a common denominator. For both Lenn Thompson and Deborah Brenner, a passion for the world of wine—particularly locally-produced wine—has encouraged them to branch out into new businesses. They are, in similar ways, sharing their enthusiasm and knowledge within their respective circles. It was a pleasure to learn more about their missions.

DEBORAH BRENNER

Women in the wine industry have an enthusiastic supporter in wine consultant, author and speaker Deborah Brenner. After a successful career marketing computer technology, she unleashed her entrepreneurial spirit in 2007 by founding Women of the Vine, which promotes women-owned and operated wineries across the U.S. through tasting events and the MORE Uncorked wine club. Her book, *Women of the Vine, Inside the World of Women Who Make, Taste and Enjoy Wine*, earned a "best new book" designation in the same year by *Wine Spectator*.



Born in the Bronx, Brenner now resides in Tappan, where she is involved in Café Portofino. She hopes to launch the Women of the Vine Wine Alliance this year, which will be open to women in the Hudson Valley's wine industry.

Q: Why do you work so hard to promote wines produced by women?

A: I began my career at the end of the 1980s, and spent the past 20+ years in a very male-dominated field. I knew instinctively that there had to be more behind the barrels of wine than just a professional woman who chose this career path because I knew the struggles, fears, disappointments, and triumphs that I endured in my career and my life.

I was curious if these women were like me, desperately trying to find the balance of work and life, finding my purpose, connecting with others, and struggling to make tough decisions. I wanted to know more.

Q: How are women winemakers different, or unique, in their winemaking practices?

A: The common theme that keeps coming up as I meet more and more wonderful women winemakers is that they truly nurture the land and grapes. They don't want to intervene too much and they want the wine to express the nuances of their region and grape varietal. One winemaker told me that her style was like being a mom. The hardest part is to know when to intervene, and when to step back and let them do their thing.

Q: You recently joined Senator Gillibrand's NY Agriculture Working Group. Why is this initiative important to you?

A: This group mobilizes stakeholders working in the New York agriculture industry to discuss concerns regarding federal policy and programs with the Senator and her staff. I want to support my local farmers.

I believe that if you are a locavore, it means not only eating local food but also pairing with local wine. Not only are you supporting agriculture in New York State, but also our economy, our community and our open spaces. Also, the Hudson Valley's wines happen to be delicious. Our wineries are competing and winning awards against some world class wines. ●