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Molly Abraham

Wine wonderland Cellar 59 has small plates, plenty of pours and more



Small plates at Cellar 59 include Red Combination Platter, cheese, lightly baked phyllo pockets, desserts and an assortment of olives. (Ricardo Thomas / The Detroit News)

Right around the corner from the movie complex at the Mall at Partridge Creek in Clinton Township, passers-by, if not stopped in their tracks by the little gem of a wine bar that recently joined the mall lineup, have at least had their eyes caught by Cellar 59, which moved in Labor Day weekend. With its French doors thrown open, chandeliers twinkling with black crystal prisms, its marble-topped bar shielded by antique northern Michigan barn beams and its wine system offering 40 premium wines by the glass, it's a show-stopper. I can imagine some of those moviegoers secretly wishing the projector would break, so they could escape to Cellar 59.

From the look of the place, you might expect it to be the product of a corporation. No; it is family run by two sisters and their husbands, inspired by a wine bar they visited in Winter Park, Fla.. **Sterling Heights based Roncelli, Inc. served as the Design-Builder for the wine bar**, partnering with Ron & Roman Architects located in Birmingham.

The premise at Cellar 59 is simple: Wine may be had in pours from a ½-ounce taste, a 3-ounce half-glass to a 6-ounce full glass in graceful Riedel stemware, to full bottles, all accompanied by a menu of prettily served small plates, most of them shareable. The Wine Emotion wine preservation system allows high-quality wines, not often offered in small portions, to be served, in a price range of \$5 to \$22 per glass. But the 40 wines in the beautiful Italian-made system aren't the only pours. There are at least another 60 available by the glass. There are also eight Michigan beers on tap.

The 55 seats are equally varied, from café tables and chairs to perches at the bar, at a handsome wood communal table and even a couple of cushy armchairs atop an Oriental rug. Those who don't imbibe have choices, too, from coffee, tea and lemonade to an array of **soft drinks**.

The menu is just right.

The "white combination platter" is designed to accompany white wines, and it includes Gorgonzola and Gouda cheeses, sliced pear and arugula **salad** topped with a sprinkling of pancetta, and of course there's no law that says you must drink a white wine with it. The slightly heartier "red combination platter," an antipasto mix of green and black olives with red peppers and little cubes of soft white cheese, soppressata (dry Italian salami), sharp cheddar and toasted bread brushed with olive oil, is designed to team well with red wine.

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Both platters are shareable, as is the artisanal bread plate with pesto spread and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar, and twists of filo dough wrapped around Brie cheese, pear and almonds that are delicious little morsels to be consumed in one bite.

Slightly more substantial dishes include beer-battered baked **fries** with Parmesan and chives, slider-style ham and cheese sandwiches on pretzel buns served in multiples of three and accompanied by a little pot of honey mustard, and romaine salad topped with grilled chicken and shaved Parmesan in Caesar dressing, all freshly prepared in the tiny kitchen behind the scenes.

The family of proprietors, with one or more always on hand, are just as devoted to the quality of the fare as they are to the wines, and that also goes for the many details around the room, from the delicate stemware to the black linen napkins and white china.

Toni Talbot and Tami Kedziorek and their respective husbands, Dennis and Dan, have a real hit on their hands with their civilized little wine bar and small plates restaurant.

Cellar 59

The Mall at Partridge Creek,
17420 Hall Road, Clinton Township

GRADE: 4 stars (out of 4)

Call: (586) 228-0010

Hours: 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Mon.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-midnight Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sun.

Prices: Small plates \$5.99-\$14.99

Credit cards: All major

Liquor: Wine, beer and top shelf brandy, cognac, Scotch and Bourbon

Noise level: Low

Parking: Partridge Creek lots

Wheelchair access: No barriers

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