

# A Journey Through Identity, Place, and Power: The Art Inside The Bottle



It is a fusion of Art, Wine and Food. This extraordinary blend might not immediately come to mind when planning a wine and culinary event, yet consider that chefs and vintners are artists in their own right, their crafts intertwined like brushstrokes on canvas. This harmonious interplay took center stage as we stepped into a world of heightened senses, where the North Carolina Museum of Art, Vitis House and Catering Works converged to create an unforgettable experience - the "Art Inside The Bottle" event.

As we stepped into the North Carolina Museum of Art, the air buzzed with anticipation. Despite my academic background in business and technology, my heart has always been devoted to the arts. Memories of my college days, where I delved into humanities and artistic styles, have left an enduring imprint.

Fast forward to a warm Thursday evening, where we again found ourselves within the museum's embrace. This time, it was for an event that promised the marriage of wine and food elegance with the beauty of art. "The Art Inside The Bottle," a series birthed from the collaboration between the ingenious minds at the museum, wine educator Doreen Colondres of Vitis House, and the creative force behind Catering Works, promised an exploration beyond the ordinary.

Entering the museum, we were graciously handed a glass of Baron de Seillac Brut NV flutes from Provence, France. Amidst a backdrop of mingling guests, we had the privilege of briefly exchanging pleasantries with Doreen, our beacon into the world of wines for the evening.

The veil of uncertainty shrouded our expectations. Were we to dissect artworks, engage in a curated tour, or delve into the confluence of art, wine and cuisine through thoughtfully paired experiences? As the evening unfolded, we soon learned we would explore how art, wine and gastronomy could harmoniously intertwine to stimulate all senses. The overarching theme, "Identity, Place, and Power," wove through the artworks we would soon be introduced to and the wines awaiting our appreciation.

The evening commenced with warm introductions and welcomes, followed by the stage gracefully ceded to Doreen, our wine guide for the night. With masterful expertise, she unveiled each wine's history, tradition and winemaking process while illuminating the rationale behind its pairing with the dishes presented by Catering Works.



Woven between the wine revelations, Maya Brooks, the assistant curator of contemporary art, took us on a captivating journey through the People's Collection. She artfully delved into the themes of Identity, Place, and Power through art. Brooks concentrated on Black artists and the LGBTQ community, showcasing artists like Zanele Muholi, Alison Saar, Nick Cave (the American sculptor, not the Australian singer) and Vaughn Spann.

Our culinary voyage was a splendid array of:



## COURSE #1:

*Plato de Queso Espanol* – A symphony of Spanish cheeses, whipped membrillo, marcona almonds, paired with Szigeti Adele Blanc de Blanc 2018 from Burgenland, Austria, and Zanele Muholi's artwork. The Blanc de Blanc, a 100 percent Chardonnay made using the traditional method, serenaded our palates with notes of yeast, butter, and citrus, harmonizing with the Spanish cheeses.

Maya Brooks introduced us to Zanele Muholi's captivating artwork, "Amanda Mapuma, Vredehoek, Cape Town, 2011," which forms part of the Faces and Phases series. To delve into this piece, visit [NCMALearn](#).



## COURSE #2:

*Monkfish Medallions* – Leek-wrapped monkfish with parsnip puree and beet chips, paired with Pfeffingen Dry Scheurebe 2021 from Pfalz, Germany, and Alison Saar's artwork "Tippy Toes." The Scheurebe grape's enchanting blend of citrus, honey, and marmalade danced in unison with the monkfish's flavors. Brooks explained Alison Saar's artwork "Tippy Toes," a portrayal of Black female identity's intricate nuances and contrasts of vulnerability, strength, and femininity. To explore further, visit [NCMALearn](#).



### COURSE #3:

*Wildflower Ravioli* - Artichoke & goat cheese-stuffed ravioli with spring peas, micro sorrel, sun daisy flowers and gin butter, accompanied by Giannitessari Rebellis 2020 from Veneto, Italy. This orange wine, made from a German grape, enraptured us with its play of flavors. While the artwork slipped our note-taking grasp, the pairing was our quick favorite.



### COURSE #4:

*Lamb Ragout* - Slow-cooked lamb shank with mint pistachio pesto, sautéed fennel and celeriac, paired with La Rioja Alta Alberdi Reserva 2018 from Rioja, Spain. This 100



percent Tempranillo wine unfolded a palate of pepper, leather, and tobacco, splendidly complementing the dish.

Amidst this, Nick Cave's vibrant "Soundsuit" sculpture series offered a whimsical artistic dimension. Cave is an American sculptor, dancer and performance artist. His Soundsuit sculpture series is bright and whimsical.

Our next wine, the Chateau Relais de la Poste 2017 from Cotes de Bourg, France, is 100 percent Malbec with more tannins than Rioja at 14 percent ABV. This wine also paired quite well with the lamb ragout.

The last piece of art was Vaughn Spann's "Carolina Blues (Marked Man)", 2021. This work's bright hues conflict with its underlying theme of personal preservation and racial injustice. The piece connects the experiences of people victimized by racial profiling.



## **COURSE #5**

*Honey Chevre Dome* – A creamy, tangy mousse with a light honey flavor, paired with Santa Julia Tardio 2021 from Mendoza, Argentina. The late harvest dessert wine, adorned with hints of honey, peach and pineapple, brought an exquisite finale. The signature white grape of Argentina held us in its delightful embrace.



In the tapestry of this wine-infused art journey, the theme of "Identity, Place, and Power" occasionally slipped from our focus. A desire lingered to pair South African art with wines from the region, further enhancing the thematic tapestry, which may have resonated with us a little more.

However, a profound realization settled in as the evening drew to a close. When we raise our glasses to celebrate life's beauty, we also salute the hidden artistry within the bottle. Winemakers, like painters, infuse each pour with creativity and history, forging an ever-evolving journey of the senses.

Just as an artist signs their canvas, a winemaker signs theirs with every sip we savor. In this shared journey lay the story of creativity, history, and the perpetual evolution of our senses.



Jen is the co-founder of the website [Trianglearoundtown](https://www.trianglearoundtown.com), co-editor and writer for [Trianglearoundtown](https://www.trianglearoundtown.com)'s digital publication, *Screw It Wine*, and co-owner of a wine and beer bottleshop. She is WSET Level 1 certified with aspirations to continue with Level 2 and Cicerone Level 1. She also serves on the American Wine Society local chapter board as Member-At-Large alongside her husband and partner-in-crime, Dathan, in 2023. With a passion for cats, wine, writing, and navigating life as a "middle-aged" cat parent, more personal stories and experiences will be in store for 2023.

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