

VITICULTURAL *VIEWPOINT*

William Harris began his career working in restaurant kitchens, but today his focus is solely on wine. Recently appointed wine director at Virginia's The Inn at Little Washington some 70 miles (113 km) outside Washington, D.C., Harris oversees a cellar of more than 2,400 selections at the 24-room Relais & Chateaux property.

What do you see as the biggest recent wine trends, and how have they impacted stemware?

One burgeoning trend is the inclusion of a Coravin-driven specialty wine-by-the-glass program, which allows restaurants to offer wine by the glass at quality levels historically reserved for bottle-only sales. Restaurants that use Coravin systems are upgrading glassware for this use.

What significant recent changes in wine stemware have you observed?

In the last few years, Zalto wine glasses have really taken the industry by storm. While you won't see many of these glasses in restaurants, many somms and wine directors use Zaltos personally. Feather light in the hand with a shape that seems to bring out the kinetic side of wine, they are also lead-free and dishwasher-safe.

What advice can you offer about choosing the best possible stemware while still maintaining cost efficiency?

At a very basic level, ensure you are using a glass with a flat-rimmed versus a rolled-rim lip; that the size of the bowl is large enough to allow for the wine's aromatics to be enjoyed; that the shape of the glasses offered is appropriate to the wines you sell; and that the glass feels well balanced and elegant in one's hand.

Beyond that, stemware cost efficiency is maintained by creating processes that control breakage. These processes allow your budgeted monies to be spent on fine glassware instead of replacement of lesser-quality glassware.



William Harris

CHEERS TO *BEER*

Not surprisingly, beer takes center stage at Miller Time Pub & Grill, a Marcus Hotels & Resorts concept with outlets at The Cornhusker, A Marriott Hotel in Lincoln, Nebraska, as well as Hilton Milwaukee City Center. The restaurant serves more than 50 varieties of beer and more than 20 draft beer options, but perhaps its most eye-catching choice is the boot-shaped "beer boot" glass. "We have them specially made and shipped to us from Germany," says Ed Carrella, Marcus' corporate director of restaurants. "We try to incorporate the boot in many different ways — we even give out a free sample of our featured beer in a mini boot to every guest that walks in the door."

While the boot may stand out, Miller Time Pub & Grill is committed to using a variety of glasses for its bevy of brews. "It's crucial to have the right glassware when your concept is about beer," Carrella confirms. "If you have a stout or a porter that requires a certain amount of aeration in the glass, the flavor profile will change."

Jason Lapin, partner at Las Vegas-based consultancy Blau + Associates, agrees that glassware significantly affects the flavor profile of certain beers, but he points out that the glassware decision depends on the level of an outlet's beer program. "The problem with beer is, how much real estate do you want to invest storing glassware behind the bar?" he notes. "Smart operators are picking a couple different all-purpose glasses they can serve different styles of beer in and still get a little nuance without investing in a huge platform that's inconsistent and tough to maintain."



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