

Maverick

SOUTHERN KITCHENS



PATRICK EMERSON
Wine and Beverage Director

Patrick Emerson has an enviable palate. Raised in England, he grew up exploring the ways wine, spirits and beer made good food and great company even better.

Back when many could scarcely pronounce “terroir,” let alone define it, Patrick Emerson was following his taste buds through Europe and, later, South Africa. An adventurous oenophile, he’d knock on vintners’ doors (as was custom) and secure private tours of their cellars.

While strengthening his wine credentials – today, he’s an Advanced Sommelier of the Court of Master Sommeliers and a Certified Specialist of Wine (CSW) - Patrick was also working as an actor. He swapped a regular role on a South African television series for a shot at New York’s theatre, supplementing the stage with restaurant gigs.

Assigned to the bar one night, he recalls that first drink he mixed in Manhattan was, ironically, a Manhattan. “I had no idea how to make one, but I gave it a shot, and the guest didn’t throw it in my face. So I guess it worked.” He’s practiced plenty since: Patrick has won national cocktail competitions and attention for his Blue Bayou, Charleston Cocktail and others.

Patrick and his wife eventually migrated to LA, then back East to be near family when son Luke arrived. And acting took a hiatus in favor of a full-time career in wine.

It proved a good move. For seven years, Patrick has been directing the wine and spirits program at Maverick. His perspective has merited multiple awards from *Wine Spectator*, and makes him a welcome contributor to several magazines.

He’s also developed quite a fan base. “I see wine as an art; certainly food pairing is an art, rather than a science. And I see a definite intersection between performing and advocating for wine.”



That intersection is clear to anyone who takes a class from Patrick, or attends one of his sure-to-sell-out wine dinners. “There’s no doubt I really enjoy putting on a show. The way I see it, that curtain goes up at 7, and it’s my job to be sure everybody learns a lot while having a good time.”

Patrick will sit for his Master Sommelier test in July 2012. It’s an arduous exam based on memory of grapes, places, viniculture and flavors. That trained palate of his will help. And so, surely, will the support of his cheering fans.