

Wine Spectator

[Daniel Boulud's Le Pavillon Debuts in New York](#)

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Named for New York's mid-century French dining destination, the new seafood restaurant opens with a 650-wine list in an extravagant space. Plus, Grand Award winner Canlis hires its first female executive chef, and more restaurant news



The rest of Boulud's executive chef team at Le Pavillon includes Will Nacev and Michael Balboni. (Thomas Schauer)

Chef Daniel Boulud opens his highly anticipated, sprawling new seafood restaurant in Midtown Manhattan's One Vanderbilt skyscraper this week. Le Pavillon debuts with a limited number of dinner reservations May 20, followed by a full opening on May 28. The restaurant takes its name from the New York destination that's widely credited for putting French cuisine on the national stage during its run from 1941 to 1966. "Le Pavillon was synonymous with French dining in New York in the '40s, '50s and '60s," Boulud told *Wine Spectator*. "Bringing back that name here to New York was very important."

The cuisine focuses on seafood and vegetables, with an emphasis on seasonal and local ingredients. Menu items include roasted beets with sesame, poached halibut and baked lobster with purple potatoes.

Daniel Johnnes, wine director for Boulud's Dinex Group, built the wine list to complement the delicate nature of the menu. His 650 picks comprise a plethora of seafood-friendly wines such as Chablis and Champagne, but that's rounded out by a range of selections to ensure guests can find what they're looking for—even if that's a powerful Cabernet Sauvignon with fillet of sole. “We don't like to lecture people and limit them in what's available,” Johnnes said. “We want them to have a broad spectrum to choose from.”

“That's really the DNA of many of my wine lists,” Boulud said. “It has always been a strong balance of French and American wines, but also others.”



Le Pavillon's seafood cuisine is dependent on seasonal ingredients and local sourcing. (Thomas Schauer)

Thanks to the duo's longtime industry relationships (plus some extra time to develop the wine program during pandemic shutdowns), the opening list features numerous deep verticals and top names like the Loire Valley's François Cotat and Burgundy's Raveneau. Johnnes balances those offerings with lesser-known growers to reflect what he sees as a more curious and value-driven community of wine drinkers. “The dining public today wants to learn, they want to discover, and they want the wine to deliver what they're expecting with that dollar amount in mind,” he said. “My goal is to give wines that overdeliver.”

It's all presented in the multistory dining room set inside the skyscraper, boasting city views through massive windows and adorned with live greenery. “The space is quite special,” Boulud said. “I think it really symbolizes the reopening of New York City.”

Johnnes echoes this enthusiasm, especially after a particularly challenging period for the industry. “In a way it's a rebirth,” he said. “It's spring, so we see the flowers and trees blooming, and our hospitality industry blooming again also—we are excited beyond belief.”