

DINING OUT

DENVER & BOULDER

Charcuterie Magic

How to build the best charcuterie board and drink pairings, from the experts



Charcuterie board built by Urban Farmer Denver Cheese Steward, Michele West. (Photo courtesy of Urban Farmer Denver)

Ah, **charcuterie**. Foodies have come to love the romance behind this word that can evoke picnics as much as the expertly prepared boards by chefs from our favorite gastropubs. **'Tis the season for wowing your friends and family with the best spread** from now 'til New Year's, and then again, we know it's always an appropriate time for meat, cheese, and drink pairings.

We at DiningOut decided to take our favorite route toward creating the perfect charcuterie pairing—**asking the experts in the field**. We had the pleasure of sitting down with masterminds from **three food establishments** who offered a most palatable and thoughtful insight on one of the most crowd-pleasing pastimes of a shared spread.

Monica Dubar has been leading the wine scene in Denver lately, and is **ELWAY'S Downtown very own in-house sommelier**. We went "behind the bottle" with Dubar **earlier this year**—and since, she won an employee "Shark Tank" contest that brought a wine preservation system to the restaurant allowing guests to taste high profile wines at lesser costs and portions. The **Le Cruvinet system** was unveiled just in time for the holidays, and Dubar has some stories to pour.

The **Blueprint Sauvignon Blanc by Lail Vineyards** is on tap, and also makes for a reasonably priced wine to shop and take home. "This is a wine I could drink every day," says Dubar. Here, you won't find the grassy characteristics of a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, but rather, the tropical fruits and zesty citrus flavors made in the warm climate of the Rutherford valley just north of Napa. This wine sits close to Dubar's heart, as she traced the family lineage of Robin Lail who made the vineyard legacy her own, even seeing the vines that produced the first grapes.

"Blueprint cleanses the palate," Dubar says, "and makes for a lighter nuance of pairing. The key to pairing wine with food is to match flavor profiles. This is a light, young wine. You want to **pair light, young wines with young, mild cheeses**, like brie for example." Similarly, Dubar takes the **Brunello di Montalcino by Gaja** on tap and pairs with a **sharp cheddar**. "It's a big wine with rich, earthy notes, and no one flavor dominates another."

