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Retail Wine Shop Assignment- Astor Wine and Spirits

Astor Wine and Spirits is a practical, airy wine store with many varieties of wine, all seemingly hand-chosen to accommodate a more educated wine drinkers’ palate. I had originally visited Warehouse wines and spirits on Astor street until realizing that I was not getting the kind of hospitality that I was supposed to from a real, respected wine shop. This turned out excellently because I was able to see the stark comparison dramatically. Whereas the manager of Warehouse Wines gave me a Mafioso-esque “I’ll allow it”-type gesture, the workers at Astor Wine and Spirits all gave friendly nods until one was excited to help me with my assignment. The two places had a very different ambience, customer service level, selection and clientele.

They both had their wines organized by location, but Warehouse wine only had Spain, Italy and France, and other countries’ wines were just juxtaposed in betwixt them. Astor wine, however, had wines from at least 8 different countries, with France, Italy and Germany having separate subsections. Germany, for instance, was divided into Loire Valley region and Rhone Valley. Sparkling wine was literally just that for Warehouse wine, just a small section of wine, poorly divided by price point. At Astor wine on the contrary, sparkling varieties were divided into Cava, Champagne, American, Italian and French. There were even markers describing the wine from that region, and a map to help the customer see the exact geographical location of the region.

The wine shop worker at Astor wine assured me that the store did not carry too many commercial brands or lower shelf wines, in order to keep a sophisticated selection and an even more sophisticated clientele. There were no mini- bottles and no canned wines (which had begun to creep into the market recently for a very specific kind of wine drinker). Astor Wine has also been modernized and updated for the times. Their entire collection of wine has been uploaded onto their website, and one could potentially order their favorites online and have them delivered to their doorstep. They ship to two-thirds of the country this way, so it sounds like business is booming. I did not see a single drawback for their business model, and after seeing the horrors of Warehouse wines, was a pleasant and refreshing change of pace.