

# College Open House Showcase



## City Tech students create wine blends at Red Hook Winery

**O**n Oct. 26, a group of hospitality management students, enrolled in the "Wines of the New World" course at City Tech, boarded a bus to Red Hook Winery in Brooklyn. The trip was supported by a grant from the Julia Child Foundation, and the students went to learn how to blend wines that could ultimately be served at the Janet Lefler Dining Room, the hospitality management department's learning laboratory at City Tech. The "Wines of the New World" course is taught by professor Roger Dagorn, who is one of only 230 master sommeliers in the world, and professor Karen Goodlad, a certified specialist in wine.

Six pairs of students were charged with matching their wine blends to a dish that would be served in the Janet

Lefler Dining Room. The type of meat or fish, the seasonings and the sauces all had to be taken into consideration so that the wines complemented the food served. Christopher Nicholson, Red Hook Winery's resident winemaker, started the students off with a few points about creating a blend. "The most important thing is taste," he said, before continuing to talk about the particular characteristics of wine. "This is a good practical exercise for the students. It's based on sensation, and I really want them to know that."

Once they carefully mixed a blend to put forward, each team presented it to Nicholson, who walked them through a blind tasting of the wines they had created. The winning wines were a red named, "Dark Aroma," created by

Lynce Millen and Ameera Mcganey, and a white named "V&V," created by Victoria Mustacchio and Veronica Kirschner. Red Hook Winery will produce just a few cases of the selected student wine blends for the Janet Lefler Dining Room, which will be served in fall of 2017. This opportunity is a truly unique learning experience for both the students creating the wine and those serving it.

Red Hook Winery began crushing grapes in 2008 when owner Mark Snyder, a Brooklyn native, convinced friends and Napa cult winemakers Abe Schoener and Robert Foley to get on board. Their goal was to work with a liked region, New York, and make it beloved. Today, the smell of fermenting grapes permeates the air inside their space in Liberty Warehouse on historic

Pier 41. Their small, hand-crafted operation works with as many as 15 different New York vineyards producing up to 26 wines per vintage in Brooklyn. Splitting each lot of grapes in half for each winemaker to experiment, they continue, as they say, "to discover what New York means in liquid form, letting the juice tell the story." Their partnership with City Tech allows the winery to pass along some of their discoveries to a future generation of would-be winemakers.

"This project makes thinking more visible to our students," said Goodlad. "They need to turn the theoretical information they learned into practice, and this helps them get over a lot of hurdles of understanding how winemaking works."