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Rock Star Winemaker Charles Smith on How to Have a Good Time in Seattle

Written by Calder Quinn · January 19, 2016



Seattle winemaker Charles Smith

Everybody was Kung Fu drinking.

"Rock star" and "winemaker" are rarely used in the same breath (unless you're [Fergie](#)) but Seattle's Charles Smith certainly looks the part: all-black outfits, dark shades, and a head of hair that wouldn't be out of place on stage at a Mötley Crüe concert. Smith has the street cred to back the style: He's one of the best vintners America has seen in years—[Wine Enthusiast named him the 2014 "Winemaker of the Year"](#), thanks to hits like Kung Fu Girl Riesling and the Velvet Devil Merlot. (Bonus: He actually used to manage rock bands in Europe back in the '90s.) Smith recently opened [Charles Smith Wines Jet City](#), the largest urban winery on the West Coast, in the heart of Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood, a rehabbed warehouse district that draws craft brew fiends

and wine lovers alike. We caught up with Smith to learn about his favorite places in Seattle for a great glass of wine, a nice dinner out, and a relaxing mani/pedi. Even tough guys need a mani/pedi.

Tell me about Georgetown: Why did you choose it as the location for Jet City? Why is it a great place to visit?

When I decided to move the winery to [Seattle](#), it was because I wanted to bring wine to the people, instead of making them travel for it. To me, Georgetown was the obvious choice. Georgetown was the first neighborhood in Seattle and has a long history of industry and manufacturing. As Seattle has grown, Georgetown has retained those industrial roots. The neighborhood still feels gritty, like the Seattle I knew years ago. When I saw the building, I knew it was right. It looks onto the main runways of Boeing Field and has a full view of Mount Rainier. It doesn't get more Northwest than that.

Favorite place for a glass of wine?

[Via Tribunali](#). They have a great selection of Italian wines to enjoy with one of their wood-fired Neapolitan pizzas.

Best dive bar for a beer and a good time?

To rub elbows with Georgetown locals, there's no place like the [9 Pound Hammer](#). It's a Georgetown staple and has an awesome beer selection, arcade games, and a great crowd.