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## Pepper Bridge Winery 'Sustainable Winemaker's Dinner' features vegan chef Miyoko Schinner

Barbara Nombalais Special to the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

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Jean-François Pellet talks to guests at a Pepper Bridge winemaker's dinner  
Courtesy

Pepper Bridge Winery is teaming with renowned vegan chef Miyoko Schinner for a multicourse dinner that will pair plant-based dishes with select Pepper Bridge wines.

The August 19, 2023 dinner will be held at Pepper Bridge Winery, 1704 J B George Road, Walla Walla. The proceeds will benefit Walla Walla Valley Farm to School, a program of the Sustainable Living Center.

“This may be the first vegan winemaker dinner in our area, but with so many of us wanting to reduce our consumption of animal products, I’m confident it won’t be the last,” says Jean-François Pellet, winemaker and co-owner of Pepper Bridge and Amavi wineries.



Chef Miyoko Schinner  
Courtesy

Chef Miyoko Schinner has been at the forefront of veganism since the 1980s. She opened one of San Francisco’s first vegan restaurants, Now and Zen, in 1988 and started an alternative meat company of the same name (she pioneered the first commercially produced vegan turkey).

In the 1990s, Schinner’s experiments culturing and aging nut and oat milk led to her founding Miyoko’s Creamery – the first commercially and culinarily successful company to produce plant-based cheeses and butter.

A “Food & Wine Gamechanger” and inductee of the “Forbes 50 Over 50 List,” Schinner currently hosts a YouTube cooking show, The Vegan Good Life with Miyoko.

“This is how we ate for most of human tradition – most people couldn’t afford meat and dairy,” says Schinner. “My goal is to convince people that a plant based diet is accessible and delicious,” adding, “Let’s make beans sexy again!”

In preparation for the August 19 dinner, Pepper Bridge Winery shipped a selection of its wines to Schinner at her California home. “I live in Napa, and I love these wines. They’ll pair beautifully with the kind of elevated, rustic dishes I plan to make highlighting Walla Walla’s produce.”

“Pairing wine with beef is kind of a no-brainer, but a lot of people are stumped when it comes to, say, a cauliflower puttanesca,” says Andrea Harwood, Pepper Bridge Winery hospitality manager. “Chef Schinner is genius at creating such pairings.”

Plans for the Italian-themed menu include a Tuscan cici pasta with roasted beet sauce and beet greens; carpaccio of zucchini with stone fruit and basil; and a timbale of zucchini, red bell pepper and black garbanzo cacio y pepe. Schinner also plans a vegan version of Ligurian fish stew where she’ll employ mushrooms, sea vegetables and red wine to create an umami-rich dish to complement a 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon.

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“And of course, there will be peak of the season heirloom tomatoes and my homemade cheese,” says Schinner.



Jean-François Pellet  
Greg Lehman, Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

“Schinner really hit a home run with her cheese — which is probably the one thing people miss most when they give up dairy,” says Robin Leventhal, Chef Instructor at the Wine Country Culinary Institute, and a former Top Chef contestant. She will be cooking alongside Schinner, volunteering her time to support the cause.

“You can’t be involved with food and not be paying attention to what is happening with our planet and diet. And have you seen the price of fish and meat lately?” says Leventhal. “There’s good reason people are seeking out plant-based foods, and Schinner is a just a master of that cuisine.”

Also contributing to the event are local farms Dixie Acres, Moonlight Melons, Hayshaker, Chesed, and Miles Away Farms which have offered to supply produce.

All proceeds for the \$225 per person dinner will benefit Sustainable Living Center’s Walla Walla Valley Farm to School program. Erendira Cruz, executive director of the Center, expressed her appreciation: “The opportunity to be associated with Pepper Bridge Winery and this stellar culinary team is a great honor and a huge win for our mutual environmental goals.”

For more information or tickets for the “Sustainable Winemaker’s Dinner” visit the Pepper Bridge Winery website at [www.pepperbridge.com](http://www.pepperbridge.com), or phone (509) 525-6502.