

Now Open: Pourtal Wine Tasting Bar

Enomatic Enjoyment for Westside Winos

[BY ERIC ROSEN](#)

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Portal Wine Tasting Bar

Address: 104 Santa Monica Blvd.

Cross Street: Ocean Ave.

Neighborhood: Santa Monica

Phone: (310) 393-7693

Hours: Mon.-Fri., 4PM-close

Sat.-Sun., 11AM-closing

Type: Wine Bar

The current trend in wine tasting is also the perfect interface for indecisive intoxication and highbrow wine sampling. Wine bars across town have been installing fancy, stainless steel enomatic machines allowing oenophiles cheaply priced pours of various bottles with a pre-paid plastic card in lieu of a tab.

Santa Monica's new [Portal Wine Tasting Bar](#), conceived as a "playground for the

wine curious," is the latest entrant into this category, with four separate enomatic machines from which diners pull one-ounce sips of various vinos ranging in price from about \$2-\$7. All you have to do is pre-load your card with money (careful, it goes fast when you start tasting!) and try whatever you like.

The bar's wood-paneled walls and huge front windows are lined with counters and stools for casual social sipping, as well as a few vibrant red lantern-lit tables for more conventional conversation.

Each month (respectively), Pourtal changes up the tasting theme--a the moment, it's all about three-grape blends and "Pinot Envy" pinot noirs. Later this summer, expect an array of appealing rosés, and some unpronounceable Greek wines that offer a crisp cooler on a muggy evening.

For drinkers who know what they like and never stray, there is a more static wine list from which half-glasses, glasses and bottles can be ordered (and are also available for retail takeout purchase at a deep discount).

Though perhaps not suited to a full-on dinner, the bar does have a selection of little nibbles and larger items for sharing, starting with nuts for \$4, and moving up to little toast points with toppings like artichoke mousse and garlic, as well as a large ever-changing selection of fromages from [Andrew's Cheese Shop](#). There are also flatbread pizzas made from "Full of Life" handcrafted organic dough, plus a few salads and market vegetable plates.