



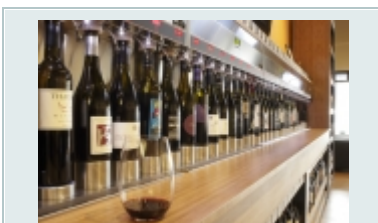
## Cuisine

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### Buy wine to provide water

*Paso Robles wine-bar owner says net proceeds fund wells in third-world countries*

BY KATHY MARCKS HARDESTY



**WINE UPON WINE**

*Nearly 50 Paso Robles wines are available by the glass at Paso Wine Centre, including artisan brands with very limited production.*

PHOTO BY STEVE E. MILLER

Have you discovered the Paso Wine Centre that opened on Park Street near McLintocks Saloon last summer? This exclusive wine shop and lounge features 48 Paso Robles wines by the glass and at least that many more available by the bottle. Even better, they offer wines from Paso's artisan producers who make miniscule amounts of wines that are difficult to find. I was impressed to find that despite the rarity of their wines, Paso Wine Centre sells them at fair market prices. The story of its founder Ryan Broersma, however, is extraordinary.

Like me, you may have thought (wrongly) that this place was just another tasting room in downtown Paso Robles. I first heard about it last fall and planned to cover it. I was in no hurry but only because I didn't realize there's more to this wine tasting room than meets the eye. I had no clue that this contemporary wine shop and lounge uses 100 percent of its net proceeds to provide clean drinking water for impoverished countries around the world. Had I known that, I would have been there to cover it immediately.

The Paso Wine Centre is the original concept of Broersma, a young and talented entrepreneur who sells rock climbing gear and clothing online. When I finally took proper notice of his noble cause, selling wine to provide safe water for undeveloped countries, I was moved. Broersma's website, [wineforwells.org](http://wineforwells.org), explains: "Our mission is to provide clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene education to those in need around the world."

On his Twitter page, [wineforwater](http://wineforwater), Broersma recently provided a link to watch a heart-breaking video of a teenage girl named Joan in Nairobi, Kenya. The 16-year-old lives among 60,000 homeless Kenyan children on the streets, trying to survive the violence in a place where girls are repeatedly raped. Yet this inspirational young woman prides herself on not becoming a victim of her situation. I wept while watching the tragedy of her life and the many other girls and boys like her.

Broersma, a self-described world traveler, visited many undeveloped countries like Kenya while he was in college and after he graduated. The compassionate man said: "I always told myself I wanted to help and do something to make a difference." Two years ago, he found that his work wasn't fulfilling and he began looking back at his travels: "The funny thing is, I didn't know what to do: fight AIDS, malaria, or hunger. I started looking around on the Internet and discovered something I could not believe: one billion people don't have access to water and it's so critical." That's how he came to create the Paso Wine Centre to help fund the charity he founded and named Wine for Wells.

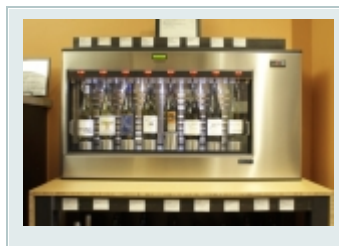


PHOTO BY STEVE E. MILLER

The wineforwells.org website explains over a billion people in third world countries lack access to clean drinking water or sanitation systems. Most of them are children who die from dehydration. Broersma explained: "People without access to water drink from mud puddles that animals also drink from; they are highly-polluted. Children under five are dying because of it." The photos on his website illustrate just how horrendous those puddles are and yet human beings are forced to drink from them. In full disclosure, it's quite distressful to view. Each year, 1.8 billion people die from preventable diseases caused by unsafe drinking water; 90 percent are children under five.

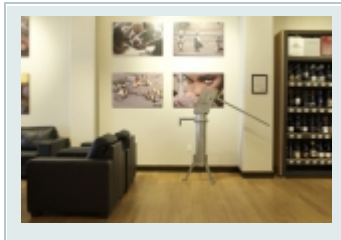


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"Surprisingly, just \$20 can provide clean drinking water to one person for 20 years. One hundred percent of public donations go directly to clean drinking water projects. Please visit wineforwell.org for more information or to get involved," Broersma asks. Wine for Wells has already completed 11 wells in undeveloped countries and has the funding for another five or six wells that will be built soon. Everything they sell at Paso Wine Centre, and why would any wine collector want to miss some of these rare wines, helps this cause.

Even if they didn't support this project, most wine lovers would want to find the Paso Wine Centre. The contemporary wine shop and lounge features large, comfortable black sofas and chairs with low tables where you can enjoy wine with a group of friends or meet new people who share your love of fine wines. **The wall of wines in the Enomatic dispensing machines is equally impressive. The temperature-controlled machine keeps excess air out of the bottle. This allows an open bottle to last much longer than one simply re-corked and placed in the refrigerator where it oxidizes and loses its character.**

The tasting room features 48 premium wines exclusively from Paso Robles, which includes: Alban, Booker, L'Aventure, Saxum and Terry Hoage. While Broersma buys from J & L Wine Distributing, who carries the best brands in SLO County, he also buys directly from small wineries. When visiting the Paso Wine Centre, you simply pre-purchase a "debit-like card" and the Enomatic dispenses the wine of your choice by a one-ounce pour, all of which are appropriately priced from \$1.25 to \$5 each. You can push the button for a taste or add as many additional ounces as you want for a glass of wine; you pay by the ounce. Or you can purchase a bottle of wine from any of a hundred bottlings offered from various Paso producers to enjoy there, with no corkage fee or cover charge. Music and Wi-Fi are provided as a courtesy to their customers.

"Over half of the brands we carry at Paso Wine Centre have no tasting room in Paso Robles so this is the only place where you can taste them," Broersma noted. "People think that the wineries give the wine to us but they can't; that's illegal. What the wineries can do is donate the wines they pour at our charity events. A good number of the wineries have come to us and said, 'We want to support what you're doing,' like Justin Smith of Saxum who has been very generous."

In undeveloped countries, it's usually the girls who are designated to get water for the family, even if it's two miles away, Broersma pointed out: "Some of the young girls, who usually don't get the opportunity to get an education, have to walk two miles both ways to get the water, and some do that three times a day. When we provide the villages with water, girls can go to school and the woman can raise chickens to sell the eggs or plant gardens to sell the vegetables. It's not just about providing drinking water, it's about things like farming."

Visit the Paso Wine Centre frequently and you'll be fulfilled knowing every single purchase helps those in dire need get the life sustaining water every human being deserves. Δ

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#### Check it out

*The Paso Wine Centre is located at 1240 Park St. in Paso Robles. It's open daily. Call 239-9156 and see [Pasowines.com](http://Pasowines.com)*