



FOUR FOR FOUR! EMBER RESTAURANT AT WE-KO-PA CASINO RESORT RECEIVES WINE SPECTATOR “BEST OF AWARD OF EXCELLENCE” ONCE AGAIN

For the fourth year in a row, the fine dining establishment’s wine library has been recognized by the world’s leading authority on wine, thanks to Advanced Certified Sommelier Dennis Payne’s thoughtful curation of an extensive and unique collection

FORT McDOWELL, Ariz. – June 26, 2024 – For the fourth consecutive year in a row, [Ember](#) – the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort’s innovative fine dining restaurant – has been bestowed *Wine Spectator*’s highly coveted “Best of Award of Excellence.” It is one of only 15 restaurants in Arizona to receive this award.

According to Wine Spectator, this prestigious “2 Glass” designation recognizes wine lists that “display excellent breadth across multiple winegrowing regions and/or significant vertical depth of top producers, along with superior presentation. Typically offering 350 or more selections, these restaurants are destinations for serious wine lovers, showing a deep commitment to wine, both in the cellar and throughout their service team.”

Ember has received the “Best of Award of Excellence” ever since the restaurant opened in October 2020.

“Over the past four years, Dennis has curated an elevated wine culture that has made the restaurant a ‘must-go-to’ dining establishment for people celebrating special occasions or just looking for a delicious meal with a thoughtful wine pairing,” said Zac Gallo, executive director of food and beverage for the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort. “Ember has truly become a culinary destination for local residents as well as visitors to the area, and this success can be attributed in large part to our extensive wine and spirits library as well as our popular wine dinners and bourbon tastings.”

Ember’s wine program continues to be recognized by wine critics and guests as one of the very best lists in Arizona. Over the past year, Payne has expanded the wine list in several areas that target collectors and also appeal to the loyal guests who dine frequently at the award-winning restaurant.

“Ember currently boasts ten verticals (double the vertical selections from the previous year), ranging from amazing 4th Growth Bordeaux wines to Historical Blends from Napa Valley,” added Payne. “Our list now features 800 selections from 30 countries, focusing on each country’s top wine-producing regions and most highly acclaimed vineyards, and more than 60 ports and dessert wines from seven countries. Property Executive Chef Richard Pelz’ inventive menus continue to inspire our wine library acquisitions and pairings, and we look forward to further broadening our guests’ palates with new vintages.”

In addition, Ember has a special page in their 38-page wine list titled “The Century Club,” dedicated to the world’s top 100-point wines. Curated for fine wine collectors, this list contains 36 critically acclaimed wines spanning more than two decades that have scored a perfect 100 points. No other wine list in Arizona offers so many 100-point wines.

Throughout the year, Ember offers wine dinners that showcase family-owned estate wineries like Albert Bichot and Frias Family Vineyards and give them a unique way to share these limited wines with a discerning, wine-loving audience. Ember has five wine dinners and two bourbon dinners slated for 2024, and Payne plans to continue to expand this program with highly acclaimed producers from around the globe.

Upcoming five-course dinners with five wine pairings will feature Napa Valley’s Peter Franus Wines (October 30, with Peter Franus himself as a guest speaker) and Spain’s Juan Gil (December 4). All by-reservation-only events begin at 7 pm, and cost \$225 per person (plus tax and gratuity).

For more information on Ember, visit www.wekopacasinoresort.com/dining/ember.

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About Ember

A destination dining experience at the We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort run by Property Executive Chef Richard Pelz, Ember features the highest quality USDA Prime and Angus Wagyu beef, game and seafood from around the world, carefully prepared over a custom wood burning grill. Signature items include their Ujih Hot Stone appetizer, Seafood Tower, 32-ounce Tomahawk Steak, Braised Buffalo Short Rib, and Chocolate Truffle Torte.

The energetic dining space overlooks the all-scratch kitchen with views of the culinary team, and seasonal outdoor dining by the fireplace is also available. A separate piano lounge with live entertainment five nights a week adds to the dynamic vibe.