

Old Towne Orange PLAZA REVIEW

NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Drinks, Eats & More

OC Wine Mart & Deli

Julie Lim has a straightforward goal with **OC Wine Mart & Deli**, which opened its third location in March: “We want to bring the food and wine culture of Napa Valley to Orange County,” she says.

To that end, the retailer stocks more than 500 wines from around the country, especially California. Indeed, OC Wine Mart is one of the few places outside of Napa Valley with top labels such as Cakebread, Caymus Vineyards and Silver Oak available by the glass. Also featured are Paso Robles wineries, including Austin Hope, Daou and Justin.

And on tap, there are up to 35 wines available for sampling at any one time.

“Wine is very personal. A good wine is a wine you like,” Lim says. “With a self-serve wine bar, customers can taste first and take the guesswork out of buying a bottle of wine.”

OC Wine Mart is also among the first to feature self-serve craft beer on tap. Thirty varieties are available, including Stone and local breweries such as the Bruery and Noble Ale Works, plus even more available to purchase.

And since wine and beer always go better with food, deli-style sandwiches and hoagies, artisan cheese and charcuterie platters, flatbreads and pizzas are served. Also available: breakfast burritos from 8 am to 1 pm daily and, on weekends, mimosas for brunch.

Every label at OC Wine Mart is selected by a tasting panel that includes Lim’s husband, Farid Moshir, and sommelier Rick Shiba, who recently arrived after a five-year stint at Total Wine & More in Brea.

“The owners really enjoy socializing with customers to find out how they like everything,” Shiba says. “On the nights when we have live music, you can order food, listen to the live music and enjoy some wine or beer with your friends. It’s the full experience.”



OC Wine Mart & Deli specializes in domestic wines, highlighting selections from the Napa Valley and Paso Robles. “I travel there once or twice a year to reach out to the wine makers and discover new wines,” says Julie Lim, with her husband, Farid Moshir.

With this, their third storefront, the same strategy that previously worked with OC Wine Mart outlets in Aliso Viejo and Yorba Linda was employed. Purchase an old, rundown liquor store, do a major renovation, and then re-open as a place where locals will want to shop and gather for tastings, classes and other events.

Here in Orange, they went into the old Bootlegger Liquor and the adjacent dry cleaners in the nearly forgotten Brickyard Shopping Center. They spent 18

months completing all the necessary permitting and advance work and another six months revitalizing the expanded property. Now it’s the company’s 4,000-square-foot flagship location.

“As an entrepreneur, I saw a need for an upscale, comfortable wine and craft beer shop that’s more welcoming than the regular liquor store,” Lim says. “It was an opportunity to create something out of nothing, and that’s what we’ve done.”

OC Wine Mart & Deli

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