

Meet The Urban Grape's Co-Founder TJ Douglas

By Michael McCarthy | May 30, 2024



TJ Douglas, co-owner of The Urban Grape, changes the way DC consumes wine.

TJ Douglas and his wife, Hadley, opened The Urban Grape (dc.theurbangrape.shop) in Shaw earlier this year. The store's proprietary Progressive Scale system organizes wine by its body instead of by varietal or region. The shop, which also thrives in its original location in Boston and has been praised by Food & Wine, the New York Times and Wine Spectator, among others, is like no other in DC. Last year, TJ was a Wine Enthusiast Future 40 winner. Here, he chats about everything from his favorite winemakers to his go-to spot to sip and dine in town.

Best life advice?

One of my first Boston restaurant managers, Jeff Gates, said, 'You can teach someone how to carry a tray, but you can't teach them to smile.' That taught me to seek the people who truly love hospitality and then help them learn the rest.

Two winemakers you love right now?

The winemaker for our new brand, Progressive Wine Company (progressivewineco.com), Aaron Plotter, is bringing our vision to life, and **Derek Baljeu at Sonoma's Knights Bridge Winery (knightsbridgewinery.com)**.

What is your go-to place for a glass of wine in DC?

Our shop is across the street from one of the best wine bars in the country, Maxwell Park (maxwellparkdc.com).

What are your first impressions of DC in three words?

Diverse, hospitality-driven and welcoming

What's your favorite place to dine in DC since arriving?

The bar at Estuary (estuarydc.com) in the Conrad Hotel has been my home away from home for the past five months. Say hi to Nial and his incredible team of bartenders. My wife, Hadley, loves the quiche at Convivial (convivialdc.com)