

## Featured Alumna: Carolyn LASSEN, Class of 2013



As the oldest of four sisters, three of whom are Duchesne alumnae and one a current sophomore, **Carolyn LASSEN '13** cherishes the empowering environment of a Sacred Heart education. “I loved the sisterhood aspect,” she says. “It’s about lifting women up,” a principle she brings to her work as head of the wine program at [Husk](#) in Nashville.

When curating the restaurant’s wine list, Carolyn likes to highlight women winemakers and those who are new to winemaking, in addition to multi-generational producers. “There are so many small wineries doing really cool things” that the menu changes frequently. “Maybe too frequently,” she adds with a laugh.

Carolyn’s aim is always to create experiences that are unique and exciting for her guests, just like the wines she chooses for her menu. Her favorite part of the job is “making people’s nights,” a dedication that drives her despite the managerial challenges of balancing business needs with customer satisfaction.

To keep up with the rotating menu, staff education is crucial and a joy for Carolyn. Regular trainings ensure her team can tell the story behind each wine they pour “and give the person buying the wine something special to remember their experience.” Her trainings are often as dynamic and non-traditional as the wines she’s teaching. “I like to dive a little deeper than just basic tasting notes,” she explains. “It’s awesome to see that my passion for talking about wine has inspired the servers to get excited about it too.”

Carolyn’s career began at City Grocery in Oxford, Mississippi, where she worked part-time while studying at Ole Miss. Initially a mechanical engineering major with NASA aspirations

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(inspired by her junior year physics class at Duchesne), Carolyn pivoted when she fell in love with hospitality. The customer interactions, the excitement, and the variety energized her. Though her new path did not explicitly align with her course of study, Carolyn nonetheless felt it important to stay in school and graduate. She chose a math degree for the course credits shared with mechanical engineering and to prove her ability to tackle complex subjects. She graduated in 2017 and remained in Oxford for another few years.

After relocating to Nashville with her now-husband, Carolyn joined Husk in 2019, where she rose through the ranks and took over the wine program in October 2023. She earned her Level 3 Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) certification in March 2023, choosing the WSET over other, similar programs for its scientific approach to wine. “I really enjoy learning the ‘how’ and ‘why’ [behind the wine],” she shares, noting that it speaks to her academic background in math and science.

The fourth and highest level of the WSET is a two-year diploma program, which Carolyn may consider in the future. For now, her energy is channeled into delighting her patrons. This includes organizing events like an upcoming coursed tasting menu with wine pairings in Husk’s private dining room, where she’ll highlight wines from a single vineyard. But whether an intimate tasting or a regular night of service, Carolyn’s motto is the same: “To me, hospitality is going above and beyond. Hospitality is about making every person who walks through your door feel welcomed and special.”