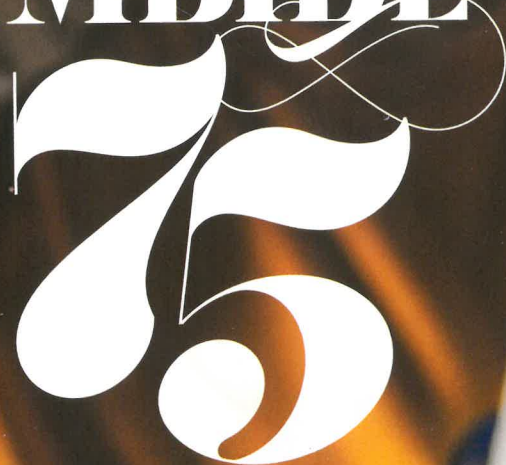


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## Benny Boy Brewing

Benny Boy Brewing's Chelsey Rosetter and Ben Farber spent years working in the beer industry before opening Los Angeles' first combined brewery and cider house last spring. An apprenticeship with Brouwerij de Ranke in Belgium gave Farber the skills to brew cider and beer, and the two found joy in making seasonal trips to Oak Glen to pick up fresh-pressed juice from apple orchards before opening the business. "We love the U.K. culture where beer and cider co-exist, and we want to bring that vibe to LA where there still isn't a huge cider scene," explains Rosetter. Benny Boy Brewing specializes in European-style beer and cider with a California twist, sourcing apples from a local orchard out of Watsonville for dry, clean brews. As a one-time contractor, Farber helped constructors restore a former roofing company to house their 3,200-square-foot space and a 1,200-square-foot cidery, complete with a spacious backyard and an apple tree from the orchard. —KY

## Anthony Zhang

Vinovec co-founder Anthony Zhang's entrepreneurial spirit dates back well before years of legal drinking; the USC dropout founded his first company, EnvoyNow, a food-delivery service for students, at age 18, before creating Know Your VC, a platform to help establish transparency for new entrepreneurs. When Zhang, who always had an interest in wine, recognized the potential of fine wine and whiskey for the investment industry (it outperforms the S&P 500), it was his lightbulb

moment to collect more seriously. However, Zhang explains, "I realized that the current available options were very inaccessible. You either needed to already be very wealthy, or very well-connected in the wine industry, and I was neither." Zhang created Vinovec as a way for first-time wine collectors to benefit from its natural value increase through aging. On the platform, users have the ability to own diverse wine portfolios based on their investment preferences. Vinovec's machine-learning models and resident sommelier select high-performing wines, which are insurance-backed, temperature-controlled, and even available for direct consumption. Over time, as the collections grow, advisors suggest to members ideal times to sell specific wines in their portfolios. With its multi-billion-dollar potential, plus 10,000 customers and counting, Vinovec is not a business that Zhang plans to sell anytime soon. "I want to continue to provide a simple, delightful customer experience and be able to democratize access to this wonderful asset class," he says. "There are still billions of people in the world who don't even know that investing in wine is a thing that you can actually do." —KY

## Grand Fir Brewing

The pandemic cleaved apart some couples and drew others closer. Brewer Whitney Burnside and chef Doug Adams wrote a business plan for Grand Fir, Portland, Oregon's first woman-owned brewery with a female brewmaster. "We had the crazy idea of

combining forces and putting our strengths together," says Burnside, formerly the brewmaster at Portland's 10 Barrel Brewing, while Adams was the chef behind Bullard Tavern and Holler. The duo revamped the former West Coast Grocery brewpub and opened in November with West Coast IPAs, a Czech-style "Texas lager," and culinary-driven sour ales. "I'm excited to have more control with hop selection and dialing in what I need to make my recipes the best," says Burnside, whose beers complement her husband's slow-smoked chicken wings and burgers with torn russet potatoes. Grand Fir focuses on face-to-face service—no QR codes—that helps the staff "highlight our beer's flavor profiles and how they go with those dishes," Burnside says. Kids are welcome too. "We're definitely going to be family friendly." —JMB

## Eric Depradine

Mead is often stereotyped as too sweet, a beverage fit for medieval fairs. But the biggest misperception might be *who* makes mead. "It wasn't just Vikings and early Germanic people," says Eric Depradine, owner of Zydeco Meadery in Wamego, Kansas. "Honey-based fermented drinks are consumed across the planet." With Zydeco, Depradine makes multicultural meads that draw on family traditions. His hibiscus mead is based on a sorrel recipe created by his Trinidadian grandmother, Ena Depradine, while Mass Memories contains cranberry blossom honey and maple syrup from Massachusetts, where he grew up. Through mead, "I'm trying to re-create parts of my childhood," Depradine says. While living

in Louisiana, Depradine and his wife were inspired by the Riesling wines they enjoyed during their Washington honeymoon, and they aspired to open a winery in post-retirement life. After moving to Kansas City for a job with the water department, they instead decided to produce mead—which is classified as a wine—commercially using bountiful sources of honey from Arkansas, Kansas, and Louisiana. After trial and error during his time in Louisiana, Depradine successfully experimented with a mead inspired by the beverage *mauby*, a Caribbean drink incorporating tree bark, and took winemaking classes at Highland Community College in Wamego, Kansas. The college's wine incubator, 456 Wineries, helped him begin commercial production in 2020. "It's the only reason why we're in existence today," says Depradine. Family remains at Zydeco's heart. His son, Zacherie, and daughter, Valentina, help pick apples for mead production, and the family spends weekends selling mead at farmers markets and festivals. "It's become such a routine that we don't even think about it," Depradine says. His grandma also helps from afar. If potential customers can overcome apprehensiveness of Black people selling wine, he says, a sip of hibiscus mead and its origin story regularly spurs sales. "I've told my grandmother and she laughs and says, 'I guess I'm bringing you good luck,'" Depradine says. —JMB