

# Golf Connoisseur

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## CONNOISSEUR'S CLUB

PERSONAL ASSETS

### Bottega del Vino Glassware

WHEN SOMMELIER MATTHEW BRICKER pours a bottle of 2002 Tua Rita at Bacco Ristorante, one of Detroit's finest restaurants, not a drop of the inky red wine touches leaded crystal, long the standard in fine stemware. "Leaded crystal shows off the wine, but it's incredibly mortal," Bricker explains. "If you look at it wrong, it will shatter, and when crystal shatters, it's into a million little pieces, not just one or two."

So Bricker serves his precious vintages in the handmade crystal of Bottega del Vino. Noted Italian wine guru and restaurateur Severino Barzon created this line of stemware for the same reasons Bricker sought it out: He wanted crystal that was durable yet elegant, functional yet pristine—a glass thin enough to release the aromas of fine wine yet withstand regular use.

Barzon worked with Venetian glass blowers for five years to perfect a crystal he deemed suitable for the more than 3,000 wines served at his Verona restaurant (not coincidentally also named Bottega del Vino). What they created were the first fine lead-free wine glasses. Instead of leaded crystal—the favorite for centuries because of how it reflects light and makes wine look translucent—they used optical crystal, the kind of glass found in telescopes, which exhibits the same radiance as leaded glass.

Each Bottega del Vino goblet is blown by hand, using a single piece of glass; since the stem is not separate from the bulb, it will not break when gently twisted. The resulting goblets are seamless and light, well-balanced and strong, and available in a variety of shapes and sizes.

The glasses caught the attention of Chicago businessman Robert Hall, who began importing them four years ago. They're available at select retailers nationwide, from \$20 to \$50 apiece. They're even sold in a few restaurants, so after Bricker pours into a Bottega del Vino, some of his customers buy the glass to go. 888.335.8466, 312.829.6750; [www.bottegedelvinoCrystal.com](http://www.bottegedelvinoCrystal.com). —Jeanette Hurt