

Wine and dine divine: a birthday celebration at Divino Enoteca

There's something magical about celebrating your birthday with your best friend, especially when it involves exploring Edinburgh's vibrant food scene.

After 25 years of my bestie's visits to the capital, we've developed quite the routine of eating and drinking our way through the city's ever-evolving restaurant landscape. While we have our tried-and-true favourites, I'm always eager to introduce her to new gems – and this time, it was Divino Enoteca's turn to shine.

Surprisingly, despite being a long-time fan of Tony Crolla's hospitality empire (his Vittoria on Brunswick Street was our go-to spot when her kids were young), I'd never taken her to Divino.

Nestled in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town, this Italian restaurant and wine bar proved to be the perfect choice for my birthday celebration, now under the capable hands of the third generation – Leandro and Alberto Crolla.



From the moment we stepped into the warmly lit, rustic wine cellar, we were enveloped by good vibes and genuine hospitality. Alberto Jr greeted us with the same charm and attention to detail that's clearly a family trait and our waitress Harriet looked after us with the same charm and exemplary service. But what really caught my attention was their new state-of-the-art Enomatic® system.



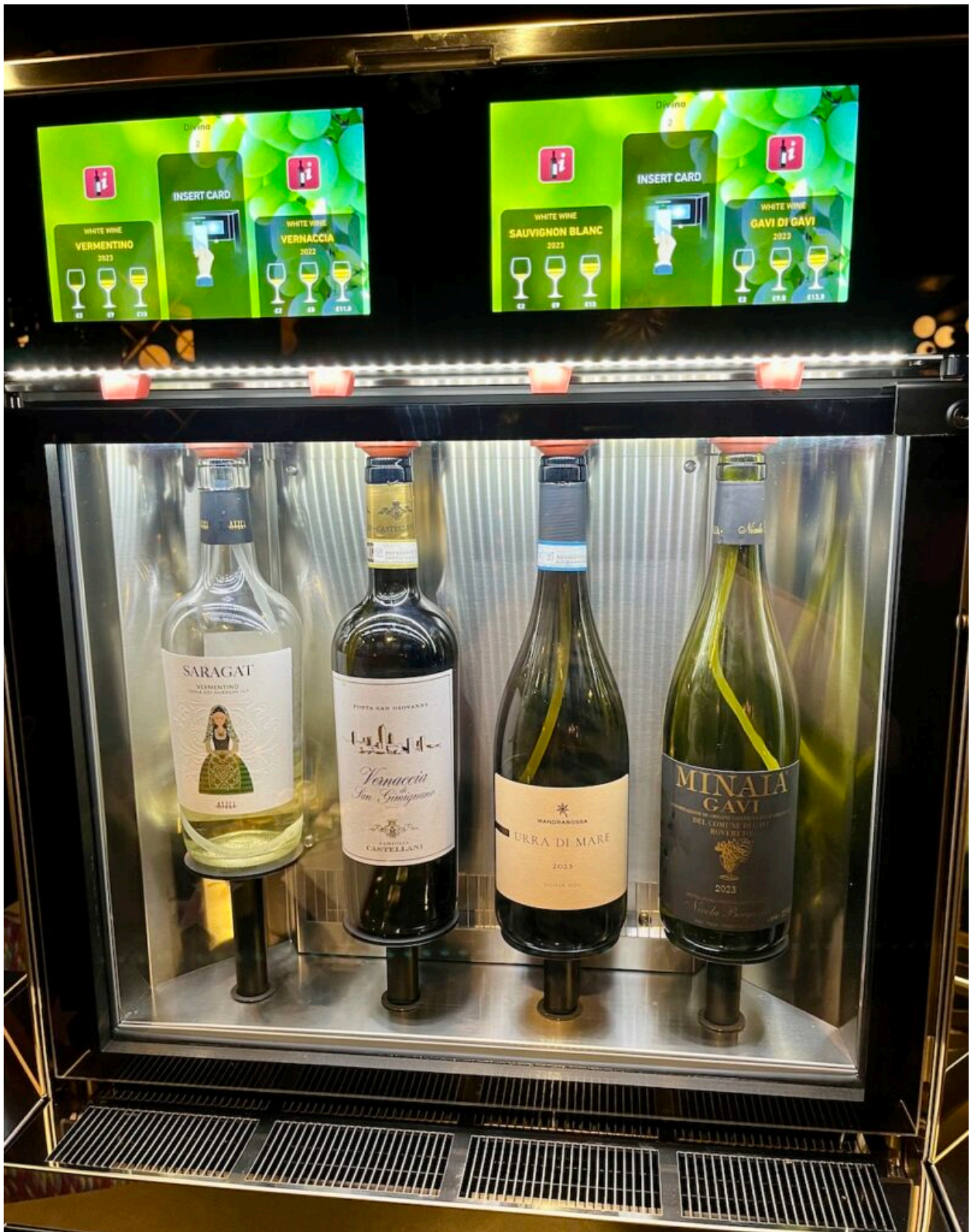
They've always had an amazing wine section anyway, on display around the restaurant, but this system is a wine lover's dream that lets you sample rare and fine wines by the glass while preserving the taste, aroma, and quality in every pour. It also lets customers sample premium wines in smaller pours before committing to a full glass, making the experience more engaging and approachable. And it's also great if your dining partners have different wine preferences to you.



The Enomatics® offers 16 wines available by the glass in three pour sizes – 175ml, 125ml, and a tasting glass of 25ml. Divino also use a Coravin – a revolutionary wine preservation system that lets you pour wine without removing the cork – to offer an additional eight wines by the glass at an exceptional value.







After a minor hiccup with my friend's initial Gavi pour (quickly remedied with a fresh glass), we got straight onto the menu. The Antipasto Divino was a feast for the eyes and palate – a generous platter of Salame Felino, thick-cut

mortadella, and spicy spreadable 'nduja, accompanied by three Italian cheeses and a vibrant Sicilian aubergine caponata. The bruschetta that followed was a beautiful composition of colour-contrasting cherry tomatoes crowned with rocket and almond pesto.



For mains, my friend's choice of Ravioli Dello Chef was a revelation. Soft parcels of creamy cheese-filled ravioli topped with sausage, with a creamy cabbage sauce took us both to another planet. Don't let the description of "creamy

cabbage sauce" fool you – it was absolutely sensational. On the recommendation of our wonderful waitress, Harriet, she chose a side of the baby spinach leaves sauteed with raisins, toasted pinenuts and Parmesan that was wolfed down and was a perfect accompaniment.



Meanwhile, I couldn't resist the Guancia Al Merlot (I'm a sucker for beef cheek), and oh my, what a choice! The meat, slowly braised in Merlot with warm spices, fell apart at the touch of my fork. Paired with the creamiest rosemary and

nutmeg mash, wild mushrooms, and balsamic Barettane onions, it was the kind of dish I dream about on cold January nights.

Despite being thoroughly satisfied, we couldn't resist dessert. While Divino's Tiramisu is legendary, I opted for the Tortino Fondente – a towering dark chocolate fondant that released an aromatic chocolate river when cut. The crispy outer sponge gave way to a warm, oozing centre that had me swooning (though I could only manage half, given their generous portions).



For those looking to experience Divino's wine expertise, their new "Eno Experience" at £35 offers a loaded card for the enomatic dispensers plus a complimentary antipasto board. They're also hosting free wine tastings on February 2nd and 16th, focusing on Italian blends paired with Chef Andrea Calistro's canapés. I've already booked for the 2nd – so may see you there.



The recently launched monthly four-course tasting menus (£65, with optional wine pairings for £35) showcase regional Italian cuisine. February's menu promises to transport diners to

Northeast Italy with dishes like merlot and radicchio risotto and confit duck leg.

After 25 years of dining adventures with my bestie in Edinburgh, Divino Enoteca has earned its place among our top spots. Between the innovative wine system, exceptional cuisine, and warm hospitality, it's truly one of Scotland's finest destinations for any celebration – birthday or otherwise. Just make sure to bring your appetite – and maybe plan for a taxi home.

[Divino Enoteca](#), 5 Merchant Street, Edinburgh EH1 2QD