

## Company Information

**URL of Release**

<http://www.nataliemaclean.com/mobilematch/>

**Category**

Mobile Application, Widget

**Tags**

Wine and Food Pairing, Mobile Application, Wine Widget

**Model**

Subscription

**Company URL**

[www.nataliemaclean.com](http://www.nataliemaclean.com)

**Key Mgmt Team**

Natalie MacLean, Founder & Writer

**Funding**

Not disclosed

**2008 Revenue**

Not disclosed

**Total customers**

Not disclosed

**Founded**

Not disclosed

**Key Partners**

Not disclosed

## Nat Decants Food & Drink Matcher: a Mobile Application & Widget

### Analysis Summary

#### Neutral to Positive

Natalie MacLean is a trusted name and celebrated writer for the wine community. The introduction of her tool is, in her own words, a simple extension of services for her fans and readers answering the question she has received time and time again, “What wine would go with x?” Her jump into a mobile platform is crucial in educating consumers and broadening the reach of different varietals. Although not a tool that directly connects consumers to sales, Natalie’s personal touch and trusted opinion would undoubtedly influence the purchasing behavior of her audience if enhanced.

#### Market Impact: LOW

While a great application for wine neophytes and foodies, the lack of an online conversion mechanism makes its market impact low. Specifically, the wine-pairing tool suggests varietals to hundreds of dishes but doesn’t easily offer brand names or where to find. An excellent tool to broaden purchasing choices but not significant to increasing sales. The key importance of this tool however, lies within access to information necessary for making purchasing decisions of Natalie’s loyal and trusting audience.

User Interface	Consumer Value	Winery Value	Innovation	Team	Company Viability*
					

\*VinTank rates all start-up companies 1 out of 5 possible points for company viability.

## VinTank Position

### VinTank Position: Neutral to Positive

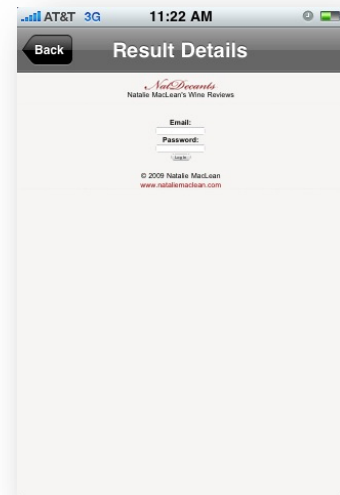
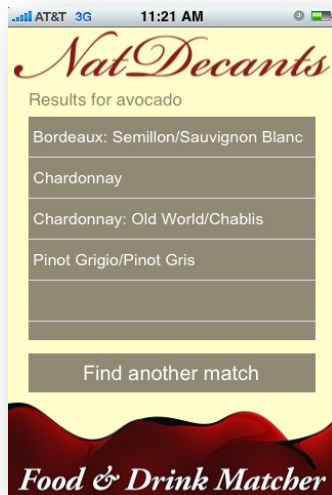
Over 380,000 wine pairings and no algorithm to automate the selection. Natalie MacLean uses her experiential judgment to hand pick every one of her food and drink suggestions in her mobile application and widget. As she explains “I’m still very old fashioned. I like to make human decision the last factor and still think you need the human touch.” And this attention to detail, creative oversight and personal touch that Natalie has infused in the application is not only impressive but should impart significant influence on both her loyal readers and new users.

Opening up a larger philosophical discussion, one in which we don’t have a clear and definitive stance, is understanding the delta between wine and food pairing applications made through algorithm and those made through a subjective use of an individual’s opinion (especially a trained and regarded professional). On the one hand, a pairing made through an algorithm imparts objective industry standards on what flavor profiles of food go best with what flavor profiles of wine. Of course it will miss a few, but the median and standard remain the same. On the other hand however, an individual’s opinion carries a sentient and more relatable, albeit more subjective, tone that a user might find easier to identify with. Some food decisions also cannot yet be made by algorithms alone, as the gestalt of the recipe is different than the sum of its parts. Natalie’s readers trust her and even though they understand her tasting notes are based solely on her palate and opinion, they have confidence she made the right decision. We have yet to determine if an algorithm has the capacity to get close but understanding that wine itself is subjective by many factors and despite being technophiles, we do find Natalie’s approach to be refreshing.

The application experience starts with users selecting either a beverage (as she also includes non-alcoholic options) or a food category and dependent on the first choice, the user receives either a menu item or a generic wine suggestion respectively based on Natalie’s deciding. But currently this is where the application’s value stops. For example, she suggests you pair Sauvignon Blanc with your Avocado Mousse but doesn’t specify which Sauvignon Blanc to choose. Yet we know, as her prolific tasting notes show on her website, that she has her preferences. The missing notes on the varietal, regional differences or specific brands are the major disconnect in her application. It is key, in our opinion, for her to maximize her value to users by expanding on the suggested pairing description instantly, without the necessity of multiple click throughs.

The additional click paths\* make it cumbersome on a mobile device and less effective, if at all, with conversion. It should be noted that we understand Natalie is not in the business of selling wine, so her vision for the device was never that. However, we believe providing tasting notes with the pairing would be an additional benefit for the user as well as promoting Natalie’s favored wines.

Similar to Hello Vino, the application's UI is incredibly basic but easy to maneuver, lacking the structure for the most valuable opportunity. Examples follow:



An upgrade to the mobile UI would make the tasting notes more accessible and useful to the user.

### Positives:

- 🌟 Incredible integrity of pairing suggestions from Natalie MacLean's experiential judgment
- 🌟 A wide variety of food dishes with over 292 grapes, wines and blends
- 🌟 Affordable for those not already subscribed to Natalie's newsletter and tasting notes

### Concerns:

- 🌟 No search option for either food or beverage category
- 🌟 Generic wine suggestions with difficult navigation to tasting notes
- 🌟 An extra expense with little value for those already subscribing to Natalie's newsletter and tasting notes
- 🌟 Opening "Checking for Updates" screen highly susceptible to crashing and long wait times
- 🌟 Simple UI

## Winery Recommendations

No interaction necessary other than providing well developed product content and images through Cruvee\* or directly to Natalie.

*\*For purposes of disclosure Cruvee is a VinTank client*

## Nat Decants Food & Drink Matcher Application Recommendations

- 🌟 Enhance UI (including font choice)
- 🌟 Make content available to current newsletter subscribers
- 🌟 Release two versions: Lite and Pro with the extended value
- 🌟 Simplify and highlight navigation to Tasting Notes, for Pro users
- 🌟 Incorporate Tasting Notes with pairing suggestion, for Pro users