



DAILY CHRONICLE

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UNCORKED: SEASONED WINEMAKER ENTERS NEW TERRITORY AND DELIVERS

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August Sebastiani had a concerned tone in his voice.

For the first time in years, the president of 3 Badge Beverage Corp. faced uncertainty. Not with his wine and spirits business. His latest venture into Oregon and Washington, Cedar + Salmon, continued the rich tradition of finding delicious and affordable wines and he was excited about the foray into spirits with a Spanish vermouth, an aged rum, a Mezcal tequila, the prospects of a new spiced rum and the expansion of an IPA and porter beer into new markets.

Instead the worry was over the health of the Golden State Warriors as they embarked on a quest to repeat as NBA champs rife with injury concerns for their star players. Sebastiani has gone straight from an international flight to a deciding game 7, he's watched the NBA Finals in the wee hours of the morning in a hotel room in France, but this year he faces more questions than answers as a fan.

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What there's no question about is Cedar + Salmon: 3 Badge entered new territory and again delivered tasty wines at a great value.

Winemaker spotlight

Confirmation came in blind tastings.

Sebastiani fell for the flavors profile of the wines and 3 Badge was "nimble and entered quickly" to the Willamette Valley for the Cedar + Salmon Pinot Noir 2016 (\$24.99) and Pinot Gris 2016 (\$18.99). While there are a number of Cabernets in the 3 Badge portfolio, the Cedar + Salmon Cabernet Sauvignon 2015 (\$24.99) from the Horse Heaven Hills AVA in Washington is jammier, not as ripe and has different tannins than its California counterparts.

The Cab had black currants, baking spice and dark chocolate flavors on the medium- to full-bodied red with the perfect touch of dry tannins on the finish.

"The Pacific Northwest has become a really hot property," Sebastiani said. "There's subtlety and nuance to every appellation and this is an area that hit our radar early. We are bullish on the prospects of the areas. They aren't new, but we want to expose an even larger number of people to them."

With the Pinot, 3 Badge hit a sweet spot in terms of value. Perfectly paired, and appropriately named, it was a hit with herb and lemon grilled salmon. The silky texture of the wine and its ripe raspberry, wet leaves and herbal notes were made for a Tuesday night salmon dinner.

The Cedar + Salmon Pinot Gris was a fun, flinty white with lemon, a wet stone minerality and white peach flavors. Serve it with shellfish or a salad and it will shine.

In Oregon, Sebastiani found there was an intimate set-up in the Willamette Valley with a different business model than the one Sebastiani has grown familiar with in California. While water is a scarce and valuable resource in California, Oregon has more available. There's a resemblance to what Sebastiani experienced in Sonoma Valley 25 to 30 years ago and he's thrilled to have a part in furthering its audience.

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"We want to build relationships and show growers that we are invested in what they are up to," Sebastiani said. "We offer them a louder megaphone to showcase their wine."

CEDAR + SALMON / PINOT GRIS, PINOT NOIR & CABERNET SAUVIGNON