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BRAND MAN: 3 BADGE BEVERAGE'S AUGUST SEBASTIANI

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August Sebastiani's last name might sound familiar if one happens to know a thing or two about wine.

He is, in fact, a fourth-generation member of one of California's founding wine families. And being born into the Sebastiani name made a career in the wine business a no-brainer. After college, he joined his dad and brother at Don Sebastiani & Sons, developing a enology, mixology and zymology portfolio that is now known as 3 Badge Kirk and Sweeney Rum and Quechol Sotol. He and his wife, Allison, live with their four kids in Sonoma

Amber Turpin: How did you get into this work?

August Sebastiani: I'm blessed to have been born into it. For all the good and the bad, it's always been around. Obviously, the focus started with wine. We branched into spirits about a decade ago and have been so pleased with that experience that we're looking to expand there.

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Did you ever have an “aha” moment with a certain beverage? If so, tell us about it.

The “aha” moment came with spirits, in particular. My wife and I happened to be out to drinks with a group of friends and learned a thing or two as we began ordering. One ordered, “I’ll have a glass of whatever sauvignon blanc you have available by the glass.” And another said, “Do you have an IPA...? Whatever you’ve got sounds great, thanks.” Then there was a run on mixed cocktails, and they were calling specific brands in their drinks: “Grey Goose and soda.” “Hendricks martini, and a 7 and 7.” And the realization came. After a career trading in wine brand equity, it was spirits brand equity that carried more weight. People are considerably more loyal to spirits brands than they are to any wine or any beer.

What is your favorite thing to drink at home?

Sake is my drink of choice. Cold, filtered, dry sakes are surprisingly versatile and complex. It’s really fun also to enjoy a beverage without analyzing it professionally.

Where do you like to go out for a drink?

My wife and I often find ourselves at a wine bar a few blocks from our house. Great spot that has a TV for sports games and shares a kitchen with an amazing Italian restaurant next door.

If you were stuck on a desert island, what would you want to be drinking (besides fresh water)?

Uncle Val’s Botanical Gin, Gehricke Rosé and sake.

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