

BEVERAGE MEDIA'S

• 2016 •

BARTENDERS TO WATCH

As bartending continues to grow as a career and attract the attention of aspirational achievers, the standards on display in the many and varied competitions held throughout the year have improved as well. A trip to a distillery or a hefty check are great prizes, but today, bartenders are just as keen for the accolades that an intense, multi-day competition can bring them.

Now in its seventh year internationally and fifth including U.S. participants, the lengthy test of skills produced in collaboration with the United States Bartenders' Guild,

USBG World Class Sponsored by Diageo, is a global training program and internationally recognized competition that aims to elevate the craft of the bartender and build careers in the drink industry.

The international nature of the competition and its rigorous process are why this year, Beverage Media decided that our annual survey of the field of men and women who stand behind the bar, our "Bartenders to Watch," should focus on those competitors who made it through multiple regional heats to contend earlier this year in World Class North American finals in Washington, DC.

TEXT BY JACK ROBERTIELLO

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This year's World Class North American finals were held at the W Washington's intimate Root Cellar Whiskey Bar, in the lower level of the hotel's Mediterranean-inspired restaurant Pinea. Local ryes line the brick archways of the bar, signaling the bar's whiskey focus, but guests may also opt for barrel-aged cocktails and superb wines. Meanwhile, the hotel's rooftop lounge, POV, serves a balanced menu of classic and seasonal cocktails.

The prize? The right to represent the continent in the global finals, for the first time to be held in the U.S., (Miami specifically) in the last week in September.

Two years ago, the U.S. entrant, Charles Joly, won the competition, and this year, the mantle of America's bartending hero is borne by Andrew Meltzer, assistant manager of 15 Romolo, one of San Francisco's better-known cocktail watering holes.

"I'm so excited to be named the U.S. Best Bartender of the Year; it's something I've been working towards for quite some time. This competition has given me so much—excellent knowledge, skills and industry camaraderie that will have such valuable impact on my career," says Meltzer.

While Meltzer moves onto the finals, other contestants, some to whom have notched their third straight finals, have lots to offer as well. With backgrounds that might otherwise have pointed them toward careers in law, medicine, baseball or firefighting, these 15 bartenders represent a cross-section of where bartending is today in America.

As for World Class, the program is a six month education tour leading up to five Regional competitions and one North American Final; it drew thousands of applicants, with 75 finalists selected to compete regionally. With judges including past winners Joly, Tyson Buhler, Jeff Bell and Ricky Gomez, and

bartenders and educators including Tony Abou-Ganim, Steve Olson, Julie Reiner, Anu Apte Elford, Jacques Bezuidenhout, and USBG National President David Nepove, the battle for the annual crown of "World's Best" continues to grow in significance. Another reason these following 15 bartenders belong on the 2016 list of the ones to watch. ■

01

ANDREW MELTZER

CITY: SAN FRANCISCO, CA

BAR: 15 ROMOLO

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

My bar back, Simon, also bartends at a famous dive bar. He is very well trained and focuses on many more details than his patrons expect. I love watching him work and making awesome cocktails at a place that is known only for martinis.

Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

I owe so many thanks to Ian Adams and Aaron Gregory Smith, my two managers at 15 Romolo, for their endless support and guidance. They have taught me so much about being hospitable, running a good business, and passing on the torch of mentorship.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

My best friend's dad is a psychic and when I was a kid he said that I would be an actor.

What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?

I regularly see an acupuncturist and I get a massage. Add to that some yoga and lots of long walks, so I manage my stress pretty well. But nothing compares to an afternoon at Banya, the Russian bathhouse. If you're really needing a detox, they'll beat you with juniper and oak branches before throwing you in the cold plunge; that's what I call relaxation!

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

My favorite three drinks are the Daiquiri (with agricole white rum), the Manhattan (50/50, rye whiskey, on the rocks), and the Americano. My favorite spirit to mix with is whiskey because there are so many different styles, flavors and opportunities for great cocktails.



Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

Live music fuels me outside of work. I can't get creative without hearing some improvisational jazz or jams; I can't get limber without a good dance; and I definitely can't shake my tins to a nice rhythm without hearing a good beat to set my tempo.

02

JUSTIN WARE

CITY: HOUSTON, TX

BAR: JOHNNY'S GOLD BRICK

What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high level competition as World Class?

Balancing my preparation time with running the bar. Being general manager of a bar is a more than a full time position, and having to balance the immense amount of practice, research and development that it took to feel prepared for World Class was very strenuous.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

I had the opportunity to stage at Anvil, which was a humbling experience that led to being part of the opening staff at Julep. These, to me, were great achievements and huge steps in my career.

**Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?**

Bobby Heugel, Alba Huerta and everyone in their group. Everyone involved with that group has such a drive and passion for the industry it's infectious.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

I would most likely be working in a restaurant kitchen. I started with aspira-

tions to become a chef and had a brief stint as a prep cook and line cook. I still would like to get back in a kitchen and make restaurant-quality food.

Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

Graduating from Texas A&M in 2012. I am one of the first people in my family to get a four-year college degree. It was an incredible achievement for me because I have dyslexia and as a child people had low expectations for me. At some point I decided I would show everyone wrong

What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue a career behind the bar?

Start small and stay humble. Learn, master and then perfect the presentation of the classics. Walk before you can start to run. No one ever knows everything and no one is the absolute best; there is always someone you can learn from or learn with. Be sure also to taste EVERYTHING—things that are delicious and new and things that are not so good.

03

CHRIS CARDONE

CITY: NEW YORK CITY, NY

BAR: I SODI

What makes you a good bartender?

I try to always remember that the time guests spend at my bar is extremely valuable to them. I try to make sure that everyone who sits in front of me leaves happier than when they entered in any way that I possibly can.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

I'm not sure I have a "proudest moment." I can honestly say that I'm grateful for every single day that I get to do what I love to do for a living, without compromising my integrity or personal beliefs.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

Miserable. In all seriousness, I wouldn't trade what I do for anything else in the world. However, if the New York Rangers need a backup goalie, I'm available.

What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?

I have two kids, five and three years old. Bartending in an extremely high volume

restaurant in NYC is my method of decompression.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Every single day I remind myself to be eternally grateful for this moment. "Life is available only in the present moment. If you abandon the present moment you cannot live the moments of your daily life deeply." ~ Thich Nhat Hanh

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

I truly enjoy agave spirits. Agave dances a beautiful dance between art, passion, religion and chaos. Everything about agave from its growth, to the production, to the product makes it pretty remarkable stuff.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue a career behind the bar?

Be yourself. Be passionate. Work really hard. Always bring an empty cup. Be humble. Never stop trying to learn. Always try to be better than yesterday. There is more than one right way to do anything. But most importantly: Be a bartender, not a brand.



04

BLAKE JONES

CITY: ORLANDO, FL

BAR: THE COURTESY BAR

What makes you a good bartender?

My ability to talk to anyone as if I've known them for years. I grew up as an only child so having to make friends was a tough and challenging task. It taught me social skills, though, so being in this platform only takes it a step further. That and my attention to detail, because it's certainly not my ability to remember people's names.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

My first is when I moved on to the national finals for World Class. It was such a challenging year for me—I married my wife and got to do a lot of awesome things in the business, however I lost some really close friends and had some big upsets. So

moving on to nationals really gave me the boost I needed.

Secondly would be my wife winning her first bar competition. She's been bartending for many years but just started to get into this side of the business and I helped her with technique and spirit training in the beginning. So to see her do so well, and to see how she used the training and took it a step further, makes me super happy.

Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

The men who helped train me to be where I am today, Patrick Bolster and Jeff Knott, helped and taught me almost everything to get started behind the bar, and I am forever grateful for their patience, knowledge and compassion. Also Sean Kenyon, whom I met a couple years back. In the few hours we worked together I learned so much from him. We stayed in contact and he still gives me life lessons all the time. Whether he knows it or not, he's been a huge part of my career.

**Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?**

Getting a photograph published for the first time. That was a great feeling. A moment of accomplishment that is indescribable for me, for sure.

05

LAURA NEWMAN

CITY: NEW YORK CITY, NY

BAR: MOTHER OF PEARL

What has been most challenging for you about competing in World Class?

Focusing and channeling all of my ideas into something clear and concise. I've been referring to competing in World Class as "bartender figure skating." On one hand, you want to wow the judges with something that's high-concept and totally new to them (like a quadruple axel), but at the same time you want to be 90% sure you'll nail it (more along the lines of a triple axel).

What makes you a good bartender?

On a technical level, I'm a great bartender because I am extremely fast. It can be so frustrating to go to other bars and see

them create cocktails without a sense of urgency. The number one thing that guests care about is getting their drinks quickly. A sense of urgency is something that is very difficult to teach, and it warms my heart to see a bartender knocking out a round of drinks in record time.

Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

Sother Teague has been hugely influential on me both as a bartender and as a person. I don't like saying that he's my mentor, because we've never actually worked together behind the bar, but beyond being one of my dearest friends, he's supported and encouraged me since the day I started bartending in New York City. He's influenced every career decision I've made.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

I'd probably be practicing law in some form. I'm very analytical, enjoy being locked in libraries doing research for days at a time and am probably the most stubborn and argumentative person I know.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

I am a huge fan of wine, Sherry and vermouth—not only because of how dramatically they can transform cocktails, but because they're also delicious on their own. As a certified sommelier, I like to think that every time I drink these things I'm practicing and increasing the breadth of my knowledge. But I also just really enjoy drinking these things because of how delicious they are.



06

JOSHUA GONZALES

CITY: INDIANAPOLIS, IN

BAR: THUNDERBIRD

What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high-level competition as World Class?

Having been to World Class nationals before, the thing to remember is that you are really competing against yourself. You succeed or fail on your own merit. It's all about the time you put in before you step in front of the judges. There is no room for error.

What makes you a good bartender?

I think I'm pretty good but I'm always trying to become a better bartender. Like all trades, bartending is a never ending series of learning lessons and opportunities to improve your skills. We never stop learning.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

Opening my own bar, Thunderbird. It was the most difficult thing I've ever done.

Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

I was fortunate enough to have Angus Winchester mentor me over the last year. He's been incredibly important in helping me develop as an owner/operator. It's amazing what you can accomplish when you admit all the things you don't know. Angus and his team helped me learn this lesson.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

Running political campaigns.

What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?

Spending time with my dog and watching pro wrestling.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

In 10 years I hope each of my current bartenders is operating their own joints,

and I'm pulling Sunday night guest shifts behind their bars.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

Bonded bourbon is about the only thing I sip on. It's 100 proof perfection.

Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

Rescuing my pit bull from the humane society. Seeing her growth over the past year has been very rewarding.



07

ZACH LYNCH

CITY: JACKSONVILLE, FL

BAR: ICE PLANT

What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high level competition as World Class?

The most challenging part of this competition has been trying not to overthink certain challenges, to over-complicate them but still keep them clever. I definitely know where the bar is set for years to come now after seeing the amazing group in the finals.

What makes you a good bartender?

I really love serving people and chatting them up. I would hope we all know balanced drinks, and great knowledge is available for most who want to learn, but you really can't teach loving to serve guests and making friends.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

The two years I have been a part of the World Class competition have definitely been a high point, but the proudest moment so far has been seeing how far the team and program at the Ice Plant have come since I was able to start it.

What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?

A laid back day with the wife and son is always a great decompression. I can get off of work at 3:00 or 4:00am but when Thatcher and the wife wake up at 7:00 I'm stoked to hang out.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Hopefully running a really fun bar program or preaching the good word of hospitality and good spirits.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

I really love the versatility of gin in cocktails and the complexity of the genre as a whole. There have been so many new styles of gin that I never get sick of trying new ones.

Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

Getting to watch my son grow up has been unbelievable. It was a whole new chapter in life that I'm loving.





08

EGOR POLONSKIY

CITY: CHICAGO, IL

BAR: UNTITLED SUPPER CLUB

What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high level competition as World Class?

The most challenging part was finding time to prepare for it and balance it with my regular work schedule. I manage and bartend at one of the busiest bars in Chicago and normally work 50-60 hours a week, and preparation for World Class probably added another 20-25 hours to the work schedule.

What makes you a good bartender?

Knowing the products behind the bar, being hospitable and knowing what is going on in the world, city and my neighborhood.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

Gin. So many great drinks are made with it. Really a lot of flavor to build around. Even if a person says that he doesn't like gin, I rarely believe it. Most likely, that person never had an Aviation or Bee's Knees or Southside or Negroni.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

When I heard the word "mentor" from one of my bartenders.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

I studied to be IT engineer and IT marketing specialist. It Did not work out, obviously. Never considered any other option after.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I basically don't know what is going to happen next month even. Opportunities come fast and most times are unexpected.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?

Do not ever stop working on yourself. Read more. Taste and taste and taste; train your palate. Learn to make really basic drinks really well. Live a healthy lifestyle.

09

KAMURAN MATARACI

CITY: DENVER, CO

BAR: HOP ALLEY

What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high level competition as World Class?

Everything. It's designed to challenge you in every way possible, and it lives up to that expectation. Being around the other competitors all day constantly reminds you of the high level everyone is executing at. They're 14 of the most creative, disciplined and eloquent bartenders in the nation. Also, finding a headspace where I can talk to the judges like they're guests at my home bar, and shed the nervous awkwardness, is a challenge I was underprepared for.

What makes you a good bartender?

The bartenders I believe are "good," are the ones that hold court. They know something about every one of their guests. They

hold simultaneous conversations, with different people and groups at the bar. They move fast, but gracefully. They smile a lot. They speak and listen at all the right times. Maybe I'm in the minority, but my metric for assessing a "good bartender" has little to do with drinks or spirit knowledge. I'm far more impressed by a bartender who can cut off an over-intoxicated guest with such grace, the guest wishes to shake their hand on their way out.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

Catching and batting third for the Oakland Athletics. Probably a few starts at first base. Gotta protect the knees as I get older.

What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?

Letting my dog take me on a late walk when the streets are asleep. Listening to the silence is very calming.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

Sherry or Low-ABV? That's what we're supposed to say, right?



Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

The moment when bread comes out of the toaster perfectly warm and crispy.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?

Listen, ask questions and be passionate about hospitality. Spirit knowledge and drink making will never be more important than one's ability to gracefully take care of their guests.

10

GIANCARLO AVERSA

CITY: DETROIT, MI

BAR: THE LAST WORD

What makes you a good bartender?

Engaging and pleasing my guests is my first order of business. I do a lot to educate myself on my methods and techniques of preparing cocktails and spirits. And I love learning about cocktails and spirits—how they're made and their histories.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

I'm very proud to have been involved in the World Class Program for three years in a row, of reaching the National Finals two times, and I am especially proud to represent my town of Ann Arbor, my chapter of the USBG (Greater Detroit)



and my state of Michigan in the cocktail industry.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

Pursuing a career in music. I'm in a band called The Pherotones, the house band at The Last Word with a weekly spot. I play piano, and I guess you could say we are a jazz band, but not in the traditional sense—we like to explore pop music, jazz and play fantasies on themes. In the same

night you could hear Duke Ellington, Cyndi Lauper, Franz Liszt and the Mario 2 theme song.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

My go-to cocktails are either a classic rum Daiquiri with a rhum agricole, or a Hanky Panky with Tanqueray No. Ten. A classic single malt, an overproof bourbon or rye, a rich and smoky mezcal or a finely produced absinthe. It's hard to choose with so many great options, but any of these would make me very happy. P.S. I also love a cold can of Hamm's.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?

Make sure you like people and late nights. I try to remind people that it is a service industry that we are in. As a bartender your first priority should be to serve your guest. Knowledge, flair and great cocktails are integral to top level bartending, and longevity in the field. But I feel that a person stepping behind the bar should only do so if they truly like serving and making people happy.

11

JASON SNOPKOSKI

CITY: DENVER, CO

BAR: AVANTI FOOD & BEVERAGE

What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high-level competition as World Class?

The biggest challenge has been to find brainstorming, planning, preparation and practice time. Running Avanti Food and Beverage, a high-volume program in Denver, plus maintaining a very active advisory role for Mécha and Mezón in Connecticut leaves minimal time. No matter how important the opportunity, it ultimately had to play second fiddle to my roles where the livelihoods of dozens of employees and the experiences of thousands of guests were at stake.

What makes you a good bartender?

Empathy, positivity, awareness and vision. The ability to connect the dots between people and things. Curiosity and the desire to learn everything.

Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

In the bar world I absolutely, positively would not be where I am today without Andy Seymour.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

I tend to drink a lot of wine, Sherry and vermouth of all kinds, and gravitate toward niche categories of spirits like pisco, mezcal, agricole rum, brandy and amari.

Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

A few years ago my wife and I had a small, magical wedding in Puerto Rico followed by a simple barbeque back in



Connecticut with our friends and family. That was a monumental summer which set the tone for how we've lived our lives together since.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?

So many young bartenders put too much emphasis on learning cocktail recipes. Make understanding and practicing the art of hospitality your primary objective.

1 2

ERIC BENNETT

CITY: BIRMINGHAM, AL

BAR: CARRIGAN'S PUBLIC HOUSE

**What makes you a good bartender?**

On the hospitality side, I want to be a great host to every guest that walks into my bar. That means being attentive to their needs, making them feel at home, and personally and genuinely connecting to each guest. From the production side, it's learning new techniques, employing interesting flavor combinations, and creating cocktails that resonate for those that drink them.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

My proudest moment probably came after the first cocktail competition I won. I look back on that experience now and I am grateful to have even been included, considering how inexperienced I was. What made that moment great was that my parents were there—they were there supporting me and were able to see that what I was doing was worthwhile and

meaningful and that I could make “this bartending thing” a profession.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

I started working in a bar in college to help keep me afloat. I was in school as a biological chemistry major and wanted to be a gynecologic oncologist. So maybe I'd still be on that path. I am also very much interested in how people's minds work, so maybe I'd be pursuing something in the psychology field.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?

My first question is always, do you like to serve? Are you willing to put other people's wants and needs well ahead of your own well-being? Can you deal with people at their worst and still stay at your best? If so, then maybe being behind the bar is for you. You never really know until you actually do it—this profession is still very much trial by fire.

1 3

BRIAN MEANS

CITY: SAN FRANCISCO, CA

BAR: DIRTY HABIT

**What has been most challenging for you about competing in such a high-level competition as World Class?**

Knowing that you're competing against some of the best bartenders out there can be quite intimidating. Thinking of new flavor combinations for cocktails and presentation methods has always been a challenge for me.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

It probably has to be watching the bar I currently work in get built from the ground up, and watching it open and be successful.

Who have been your role models, in life and in the bar world, and why?

In the bar world would have to be Kevin

Diedrich, Brian MacGregor, Jacques Beuzidenhout, Jen Ackrill, Jon Gasparini and Greg Lindgren, Jenn Colliau, David Nepove, Jim Meehan, John Gertsen, Julio Bermejo, Ken Luciano, Steven Liles, Martin Cate, Andy Seymour, Neyah White, Lulu Martinez, Jeff Morgenthaler and Brooke Arthur. All of the above have contributed so much to our industry, whether with their cocktails, bars, management, financial tools or knowledge. I strive to continually learn from all of them.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

A firefighter.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

I love beer... a good Kolsch on a hot day is awesome. Or Milk Stout... all day.

What advice would you give to anyone looking to pursue career behind the bar?

Learn as much as you can whether it's reading old cocktail books or new ones, but pay attention to those around you. Put your head down, work hard, be humble. We are extremely fortunate to do what we do. We get to make drinks and entertain for a living, travel the world and meet some amazing human beings. Be grateful.

1 4

NAOMI LEVY

CITY: BOSTON, MA

BAR: EASTERN STANDARD

What makes you a good bartender?

Making a delicious, well-balanced drink is just a small portion of what being a good bartender is all about. The rest is about being engaging, attentive and most importantly caring. I am genuinely invested in each of my guests having a wonderful time. The bar is my home and when you come into my home it is important to me that you feel taken care of whether you are trying my newest creation or just having a glass of water.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

I was the first person in my family to make



a career out of working in restaurants and bars. My little brother is now the second. I helped him get a bar backing job in college and he has worked his way up to bartender in one of the most renowned bars in DC. This year, he watched me compete in World Class. I found out how he was gushing to someone I know about watching me compete and how impressed he was. Nothing could make me prouder than making him proud.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

Event planning or perhaps teaching.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I would love to have built a successful business by then and would like to be traveling a lot. Perhaps I'm the host of my own travel show? I think what is so wonderful about this business is the seemingly limitless possibilities when it comes to how you build your path.

Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

I have so many favorite moments from my travels: whether it is learning to Tango in a Milonga in Buenos Aires, watching Flamenco in the south of Spain, being invited to stay with a Priestess in Austria, or spending a night in a treehouse with my sister in Thailand. It is usually the meals or drinks I have shared with friends and family during those experiences that help make them so memorable.

1 5

JORGE VARGAS-BAQUEDANO

CITY: SAN JOSE, CA

BAR: JACK ROSE LIBATION HOUSE

What makes you a good bartender?

Besides making great drinks, I focus on hospitality and creating an experience for the guest. I want the guest to leave happy whether they just had one drink or we were able to have a conversation over dinner.

What's your proudest moment in the hospitality business?

My proudest moment was when I developed my style of shaking. I like to add a Latino flair when I shake, a little like dancing salsa. It makes shaking entertaining for the guest.

If you weren't tending bar, you'd be...?

Science is another one of my passions,

and if I weren't tending bar I would be a biologist working in National Parks around the country. Before I discovered tending bar, I went to school for zoology.

What's your favorite method of decompressing after a week behind the bar?

Either watching a great movie relaxing at home or going to the casino and playing in a poker tournament.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

In ten years, I will have hopefully made an impact on my local bartending community and will be enjoying being a dad to my first child due this August.

What drink or spirit is your go-to, and why?

My go-to spirit is gin because I like the different botanicals found in the different brands. It poses a challenge for a bartender to understand the different brands and the cocktails that highlight them. My favorite drink is a Gin and Tonic because you can taste all the botanicals and it is refreshing any day of the year.

Outside of food, beverage and hospitality, what's your favorite moment?

My favorite moment was becoming a United States citizen earlier this year. Being a Peruvian native, it was an especially proud moment for my wife and me.

