

THE HUMANS OF WINE VOICES*

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WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

John Jackson

WHERE ARE YOU BASED?

I'm based in Dallas, Texas.

TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOURSELF!

I work as a full-time attorney handling intellectual property and data privacy matters, but also devote substantial time to my passion for wine. I became interested in wine after a visit to Napa Valley, and have become progressively more interested in wine ever since. For example, I started pursuing WSET certification to learn more about wine. I obtained the WSET level 1-3 awards in wine and am currently about half way finished with my WSET level four diploma. In addition, I have personally visited hundreds of winemakers in 38 wine producing regions around the world.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE IN THE WINE BUSINESS RIGHT NOW?

Currently, I run my AttorneySomm page on Instagram which focuses exclusively on wine-related topics. Among other things, I conduct live sessions with wine producers and write about numerous topics relating to wine, including wine reviews, wine pairings, and wine travel.

I'm also the United States representative for Sips Around the Globe (SATG). SATG is a collaboration between 12 wine experts/enthusiasts each from a different around the world. We have a combined reach of more than 100,000 followers on Instagram. We work closely with wineries, especially smaller wineries, to help them with their social media marketing campaigns.

In addition, I am a freelance journalist who writes about wine. For example, last November one of my articles on sparkling red wine appeared in Forbes. More recently, an article advising business people how to effectively order wines at restaurants was published in Texas Lawyer.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR ROLE IN THE WINE BUSINESS CHANGE IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

For the near term, I expect that I will continue to expand my presence as a journalist and in social media while I continue to pursue my WSET diploma.

DID YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EMERGENCY LOCK DOWN TO FOCUS ON YOUR WINE EDUCATION? IF YES, WHAT DID YOU DO?

Yes, I'm currently pursuing my WSET level 4 diploma. While the courses were postponed due to COVID, I have been able to complete the unit which requires a research paper during the break. This research paper is on natural wine.

In addition, I started conducting Instagram live sessions with wineries on my Instagram account. I generally conduct these 1-hour sessions every other week. So far, I have done virtual tastings with Chateau Lagrange, Vina Vik, Champagne Pommery, Charles Heidsieck and Rare Champagne. These virtual tastings have been well received and I have several more good sessions on the horizon. I do think these sessions will become more popular going forward since they are an easy, inexpensive way for producers to reach a large audience.

DO YOU THINK ON LINE TASTINGS AND MASTER CLASSES ARE GOING TO SET NEW TRENDS?

Yes, I expect that on-line tastings and classes will continue to gain popularity. Even though people will go back to in-person classes, there are now many more people who are comfortable taking classes on-line. In addition, there are many more people/providers who are offering on-line classes and tastings. For example, my virtual tastings with wine producers are very popular now and I receive very positive feedback.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE PROMOTION OF WINE GO FURTHER?

With the pandemic, it will become increasingly difficult for wineries to sell wine at the cellar door through tourists and visitors. Even when all wineries are allowed to re-open, they will not be able to accommodate as many visitors as before. For that reason, social media will become an increasingly important means to promote wine.

WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING AT THE MOMENT?

My favorites are always Northern Rhone red wine (especially Cote Rotie) and Champagne. I drink Champagne all year long and not just for celebrations. It is incredibly food friendly! In addition, recently I have been drinking German Riesling (e.g., Spatlese). The residual sugar helps to offset the heat in spicy foods like Mexican and Asian cuisine.

DID YOU DISCOVER SOME NEW WINES YOU WOULD SUGGEST?

Yes, I'm a big fan of Assyrtiko. It is a bone dry white wine with substantial minerality and acidity from Santorini, Greece. It pairs extraordinarily well with seafood and is a great, reasonably-priced option for summer.

DID YOU DRINK LOCAL OR IMPORTED WINES?

Both. I drink all types of wine from all over the world. While I have my favorites, I'm a big fan of pairing local wines with local foods. So when I travel, I always make sure to try the local wines. For example, while visiting Greece, I really enjoyed Assyrtiko with seafood.



WHAT ARE THE VALUES THAT HAVE BECOME MORE IMPORTANT AT THIS TIME?

During these difficult times, it is important for people to stay positive and to be persistent. Everyone will face challenges, but it is important not to give up and to fight through the challenges. It is these challenges that build character and make you a better, stronger person in the future. Those who quit at the first sign of adversity will not do well.

ONE THING FROM THIS COVID TIME YOU WOULD BRING WITH YOU AND ONE YOU WOULD LEAVE.

One thing from COVID that I would take with me is my virtual networking skills. In the past, most of my networking was done in person at wine tastings and wine dinners. Since the quarantine, however, I have had to adapt and learn how to continue those efforts virtually. As a result, I have made a number of valuable connections and met many new friends through social media and other on-line channels. These connections I expect to continue long into the future.

However, the one thing that I would like to leave is the restrictions on travel and in-person tastings. Traveling to wine regions and visiting with winemakers has always been one of my favorite activities and I cannot wait to get back to doing that. In addition, the in-person tastings and dinners are invaluable experiences and provide the opportunity to taste wines with the perfect food pairings. There is also a camaraderie that comes from in-person tastings and dinners that cannot be replicated on-line.

