



WINE ENTHUSIAST[®]

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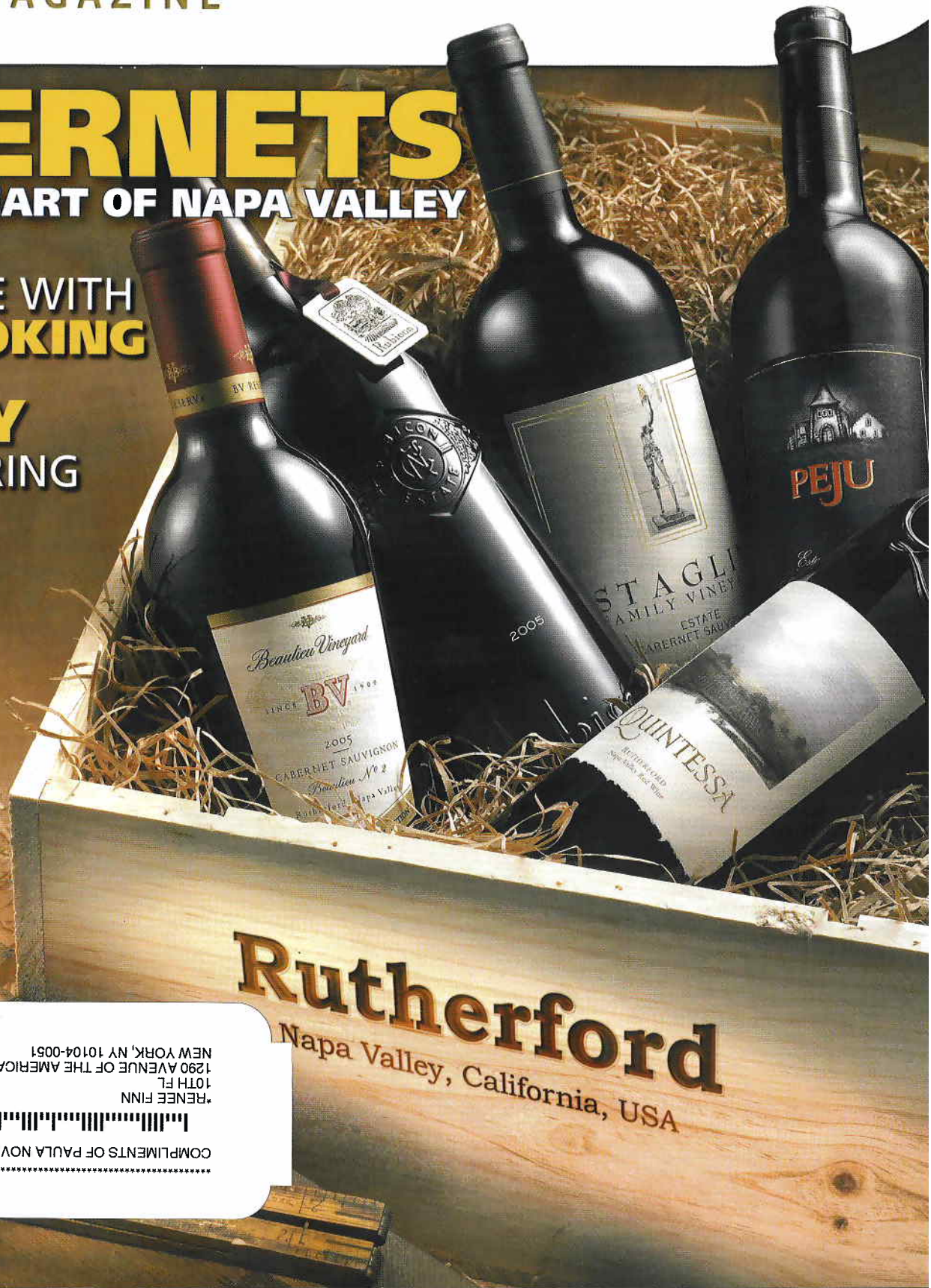
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Q&A WITH Jennifer Simonetti-Bryan MASTER OF WINE

The groundbreaking expert discusses her a-ha wine moment, her passion for wine and how Tae Kwon Do helped her kick butt on the MW exams.

On September 2008, Jennifer Simonetti-Bryan became the fourth woman, and the 26th person, in the U.S. to receive the Master of

Wine (MW) certification from the U.K.-based Institute of Masters of Wine.

Jennifer is National Director of Product Education & Communication at Rémy Cointreau USA, where she is responsible for all communication and training for distributor staff, buyers and consumers in the U.S. *Wine Enthusiast* sat down with her recently to discuss her own journey into the world of wine.

Wine Enthusiast: How did you discover wine?

Simonetti-Bryan: I was working for a bank in London. At a lunch meeting one day, we were served a white Sancerre with herb-crusted salmon. I noticed how the wine cut through the fattiness of the fish and cleansed the palate. It was a revelation: someone actually chose the wine for the food. So, I started taking a wine class and reading books on wine.

WE: What happened after you returned to the U.S.?

S-B: I took Kevin Zraly's *Windows on the World* wine class [in New York] and started looking for a position in wine. My first wine job was at a small wine store in the West Village. Subsequently, I was hired by importer Kobrand to work in their marketing group. Then on to Rémy Cointreau to be Champagne and wine educator, my dream job.

WE: What is the value of an MW?

S-B: The wine field has become much more competitive, and employers are looking for certifications. An MW is one of the few credentials; it shows you know your stuff.

WE: What was your path to the MW?

S-B: I first earned the diploma from the Wine and Spirits Education Trust and the Society of Wine Educators' CWE (Certified Wine Educator) and CSW (Certified Specialist of Wine). I started studying for the MW in 2002. Getting the MW is like working for a PhD. For three years, I studied six hours every day while working full-time. I



tasted thousands of wines to build my taste memory. I even practiced penmanship (many sections of the exam are still handwritten) because I knew that if the judges couldn't read my comments, they would disregard them.

WE: What is one of the most important things you learned from your MW studies?

S-B: I learned that I was doing all the work and study for me. Not to advance in a job or for the glory of the certification, but to satisfy my desire to learn and my passion for wine.

WE: You are a Brown Belt in Tae Kwon Do and studied Tai Chi. Did these disciplines contribute anything to your study for the MW?

S-B: I learned discipline and focus: how to get hit, how to fall and bounce back. In the MW exam, you

are always getting "hit."

WE: Has receiving the MW changed how you view wine?

S-B: Now I can simply enjoy drinking wine again. There was a phase in my study when it was just a means to the end. The focus was on "how can I dissect this wine" not on "what do I like." Now, wine is the "end."
—PATRICIA SAVOIE

WANT TO BE AN MW? SIMONETTI-BRYAN'S TIPS ON HOW TO JOIN THE ENOLOGICAL ELITE

- Focus on classic wines—spend up to 80% of your time on 20% of wines.
- Taste with other people for different perspectives. It also helps disseminate costs. Develop a system for quickly evaluating wines.
- You will need help. Reach out to people in the industry. Most are more than willing to help.
- You don't have to get everything right. It's about points. If you write with authority and describe your thought process, you will get points for that.
- Leave your ego at the door. You should be ready to pick up and start again. Only one person ever has passed both sections on the first try.