

FAMILY MATTERS

BY ALIA AKKAM

Break out the Scotch and stogies; it's once again time to toast Dad on Father's Day. The beverage alcohol industry is known for nurturing generations of talent, with sons and daughters taking the lead from their successful fathers, and carving out their own distinct paths in the business. In our annual salute to inspiring Dads, this year we're shining the spotlight on Moët Hennessy USA's Jeffrey Pogash, Southern Wine & Spirits' Andy Harman, Allied Beverage Group's Lou DeMarino, and their sons who bring tremendous dynamism and energy to the world of wine & spirits.



JEFFREY POGASH & JONATHAN POGASH

Jeffrey Pogash has good taste. The very first bottle of wine he ever bought was Krug Private Cuvée Champagne, precursor to today's renowned Grande Cuvée. "This is what started me on my journey and got me very excited about food and wine," Jeffrey recalls. "It was a revelation to me since my parents were Martini and Scotch drinkers." Later, when his two children, Jonathan and Jessica, were born, within hours of their births he placed a drop of the same

iconic Champagne on their lips. "I did it more for good luck than any desire to have them enter the business," he notes.

Well, they took the bait anyhow.

Jessica is a freelance writer who has penned articles on wine & spirits, food and travel, while Jonathan is revered among the new generation of mixologists.

"I traveled so much to France growing up, and it was always wine, 24/7. My dad would give me tastes of it and even tasting notes, but it was boring to me; like a museum," Jonathan admits.

Post-college graduation, Jeffrey headed to Paris. What was intended to be a six-month stint learning French before pursuing a graduate degree in philosophy,

turned into a three-year adventure once Jeffrey met his future wife, Jocelyne.

Now a confident gourmand back in his native New Jersey, Jeffrey first ventured into the industry writing about wine, then landed a dream job representing Alsace wines in the U.S., in one of the country's first brand ambassador roles. Jeffrey was there for 17 years before moving over to Schieffelin & Somerset, which eventually became Moët Hennessy USA, and now, 17 years have passed. As director of communications, it is his responsibility to find new and interesting ways to promote the brands in Moët Hennessy's luxury portfolio to the press.

"I remember in the late 1990s when I first started creating cocktails with the brand groups for Schieffelin & Somerset. Only a small group of zealots were interested in cocktails in those days," Jeffrey remembers.

As Jonathan can attest, the bar landscape has changed dramatically, and there's never been a better time in the industry for making and marketing inventive cocktails. This passion would come later to Jonathan, who throughout college, wanted to be an actor. At his father's suggestion, he sought out a bartending job just to make steady money between auditions. First, he became grounded in making classic cocktails with Gary Regan, who was then just launching his Cocktails in the Country workshop; then learned how to infuse vodkas under Steve Olson at the newly developed Russian Tea Room, where he first signed on as a barback.

"I assumed that bartending would be a temporary gig until he found more work as an actor," says Jeff. He was shocked when his son pursued making cocktails over TV commercials.

The rest of Jonathan's resume is filled with top-notch experiences: working underneath Albert Trummer at Town, then one of the hottest restaurants, in the Chambers Hotel; Solo, where his own cocktails first graced a bar menu (and he served Madonna); and Hospitality Holdings, where he became director of cocktail development at World Bar, and

created the cocktail lists at Bookmarks, Madison & Vine and now the much talked-about Empire Room at the Empire State Building.

"My dad taught me how to work hard and pound the pavement," Jonathan points out, "and most importantly how to market myself." Clearly, a drop of Champagne goes a long way.