

DAVID METZ

A PRESIDENTIAL EDUCATION IN WINE

By Doug Mace

David Metz is the Wine Director and Sommelier for The Jefferson Hotel in Washington, D.C. and its affiliated restaurant named, Plume and cocktail bar, Quill. Coming up on one decade with Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, David embraces the new challenge the Jefferson presents with the confidence he exudes.

David served as the sommelier at Bourbon Steak for a majority of his time spent with Four Seasons. Despite his own accomplishments he quickly honored his predecessors when asked how great of a challenge it was to take over the entire beverage program for the Jefferson saying, "I really inherited a candy store. There were two sommeliers there before me who really set the tone and laid the groundwork for what I consider to be a very impressive wine list."

Upon arrival, David immersed himself in the history of our country's third president and one of his favorite indulgences, Madeira; still a revered wine and something that many casual wine drinkers know little about.

Even David admitted the same when asked if he knew enough about the style before taking over the program. "No, and I'm still learning about it. I'm literally reading a book about Madeira right now. I had heard about it and had it, and you hear the stories, but it's a very unique and process driven thing. There's nothing like it in the world. I certainly didn't know nearly enough about it."

Education and training are important to David. Multiple times he referenced learning about something and sharing it with his staff and guests. "Like anything, the more you know, the more you realize you don't know." With a budget over \$2.5 million at Bourbon Steak the wine list provided more options, but not the depth of the list he now cultivates.

Sounding like an excited toddler at a Toy's-R-Us, but with the eloquence of Winston Churchill, David explained the difference in managing these lists and what he's learned to love. "A lot of flashcards have come to life. Grapes like Torrontes I've heard about, but they might



as well be a unicorn." While training for different Sommelier certifications is difficult enough, David seems to think being on the floor and interacting is the best training.

First speaking about Sommelier Certification exams he says, "They want you to be able to talk about wine intelligently." He continued explaining that in restaurants, "You have to know your stuff on different levels than in an upper level sommelier exam because people ask you questions you might not have thought of." This points to a quote from Albert Einstein that reads, "If you can't explain it simply, then you don't know it well enough."

There is nothing simple about running the beverage program for the only Forbes five-star restaurant in Washington D.C. or becoming an Advanced Sommelier well on their way to the Master level. There is, however, a simplicity to the approach of David Metz and the enthusiasm surrounding his experiences. Although he had intended on pursuing the final step of the challenge, for now he will hold off. "If I'm honest, I'm sure I'll end up trying a few times, but for now I want to put all my efforts into The Jefferson."

Whether its sooner or later, David Metz will be testing for his Master level certification, but for now the challenge at hand is putting his fingerprint on the cohesive, and expansive lists for both Plume and Quill at The Jefferson Hotel. ■

What President Would You Most Like to Have a Drink With?

"Not to be trite, but Thomas Jefferson. It would probably be a glass of something good... probably something he might have made or knew a lot about. He was the ambassador to France before he became President so he experienced a lot."

What is Your "White Whale" of a Wine?

"We have a 1720 Madeira on our list. I think it would be really cool to try something that's almost 300 years old."

Who is One Person You Would Most Like to Serve?

"My Grandfather on my Father's side; he's no longer with us. He used to own a wine shop in New York and was really into classical music. If I got to serve him, he would probably tell me something I didn't know about whatever I was pouring for him."