



RACK & RIDDLE

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Rack & Riddle's Director of Winemaking Takes Home 2020 NBBJ Sparkling Winemaker Award

NBBJ Honors Manveer Sandhu at 8th Annual Wine, Spirits and Beer Industry Awards

Healdsburg, Calif. (December 17, 2020) — North Bay Business Journal (NBBJ) virtually hosted its 8th annual Wine, Spirits and Beer Industry Awards on December 8, 2020. [Rack & Riddle Custom Wine Services](#) is honored to announce that its Director of Winemaking, [Manveer Sandhu](#), is the 2020 Sparkling Winemaker award recipient. This year, NBBJ initiated the new “Winemaker — Sparkling Wine” category, which will now be an annual award — and Sandhu was the first recipient.

Sandhu has worked for Rack & Riddle for nine years, initially hired in 2011 as Assistant Winemaker/Laboratory Manager. He then became Head Winemaker, and eventually took on the Director of Winemaking role in 2020.



Manveer Sandhu, Director of Winemaking at Rack & Riddle Custom Wine Services

Under the direct tutelage of Rack & Riddle’s Executive Director of Winemaking over the course of his tenure, Penelope (Penny) Gadd-Coster, Sandhu has mastered the art of Méthode Champenoise winemaking. He now leads a team of five award-winning winemakers.

Gadd-Coster, says of Sandhu, “I have been working with Manveer since he started at Rack & Riddle — first managing the lab, then moving on to winemaking positions. He has acquired the position of Director of Winemaking with his love of wine and in particular Sparkling wine — a whole different animal in the winemaking world! This love follows through in his work with bubbles. I am proud to have been a part of his growth and as a partner in his winemaking goals.”

His Early Career

Asked by NBBJ how he got started in the industry, Sandhu, said, “My entry into the wine industry started with a circumstance of convenience. While job hunting as a student at UC Davis, I came across a laboratory technician position in Dr. David Smart’s Research Lab. Working in the lab/vineyard, along with taking a few V&E (*viticulture and enology*) classes, ignited a passion in me and a new direction for my future.”

Prior to working at Rack & Riddle, he worked for a few of California’s largest wine producers. He says, “After two years in the Delicato Laboratory I joined the Lab team at E&J Gallo’s Modesto facility. Having a firm grasp in the laboratory and production, it was time for me to forge ahead in my winemaking career path. Joining Rack & Riddle in 2011, as an Assistant Winemaker/Laboratory Manager, has been the most educational and gratifying journey in my career, and continues to be as I have opportunities to learn, and teach every day.”

His View on How the Pandemic and Wildfires Have Altered Business

Asked by NBBJ how the pandemic has affected business, Sandhu said, “The health, safety and well-being of our employees and clients have been the upmost priority throughout the pandemic. Following local and state health guidelines, we have implemented policies to minimize contact and spread of the virus. We have daily wellness check updates for all our team members as well as any visiting clients. To maintain our work ‘bubble’ we have designated areas for client visitors with hand sanitizing stations. In addition, for the safety of our employees, we have restricted the time of client visits and visiting hours for customers. It is a difficult time for the restaurant and hospitality industry, and we have done so much to remain safe and keep our doors open. Luckily there has been an increased demand in online and retail wine sales, which has kept production on our lines and cellar busy through the pandemic.”

On the topic of wildfires, Sandhu said, “We realized pretty quickly that the challenges of seasonal wildfires and power shutoffs will likely be something we will continue to deal with in the future. Taking this new reality into account when planning facility projects and equipment purchases, we have put ourselves in a position to be proactive instead of reactive. Over the last two harvests, we have had generators onsite to continue winery operations in case of planned/unplanned power outages. Harvest is a critical and time-sensitive time, so not having power to perform necessary work functions can be devastating. We have additional systems in place like positive pressure nitrogen gassing system for wine tanks and a cellar-wide tank chilling system, to keep wine temperature-controlled and nitrogen gassed, if the winery is inaccessible during wildfires.

To read the NBBJ online award interview with Manveer Sandhu, go to:

<https://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/article/industrynews/manveer-sandhu-of-sonoma-countys-rack-riddle-custom-wine-services-wins-w/>

To read the article announcing the entire NBBJ 8th Annual Wine, Spirits and Beer Industry Awards, go to:

<https://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/article/industrynews/meet-the-winners-of-2020-wine-spirits-beer-industry-awards-by-north-bay/>

About Rack & Riddle

With three locations in Sonoma County, California, Rack & Riddle is an innovative leader in the custom crush, custom wine services marketplace. Committed to providing pristine facilities where both Rack & Riddle and client winemakers are able to craft award-winning still and sparkling wines, the facilities are bustling year-round.

Rack & Riddle offers complete grape-to-bottle and base-to-bottle production for still and sparkling wines, and private-label sparkling wine services. The installation of state-of-the-art, high-capacity still and sparkling wine production and bottling lines provides the ability to service client demands. The facilities house nearly two million gallons of stainless-steel storage and fermentation vessels, where an exceptional winemaking team produces 1.7 million cases of wine annually.

To learn more, visit Rack & Riddle online at rackandriddle.com, and follow on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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