



Jesse Rodriguez is an award-winning beverage professional known for his combination of world-class tastes and sensibilities with his down-to-earth soulfulness. He holds multiple positions: Advisory board member of SommConUSA, adjunct instructor at San Diego State University and proprietor of Kaizen Wine Group based in Bluffton, South Carolina.

Kaizen Wine Group has a myriad of roles and responsibilities within the beverage industry. One such role includes representing 00 wines from Willamette Valley, Burgundy and Champagne as its National Sales Ambassador and Director

Rodriguez is an Advanced Sommelier by the American Chapter of the Court of Master Sommeliers, is credentialed as a Certified Wine Educator (CWE), by the Society of Wine Educators, a Spanish Wine Scholar (SWS) Wine Scholar Guild and has his Diploma from the Wine and Spirits Educational Trust (DipWSET).

He earned a master's in education (M.Ed.) in curriculum and instruction from Arizona State University. Jesse's early degree in Archaeology dovetailed into his studies and profound appreciation in the ways in which we as a culture enjoy, critique and build businesses around wine.



Prior to establishing Kaizen Wine Group in South Carolina, Rodriguez managed luxury resort and fine dining restaurant beverage programs across California. During his tenure in Southern California, Rodriguez was awarded the inaugural Wine Spectator Grand Award for both Studio at Montage Laguna Beach and Addison at The Grand Del Mar. In addition, his beverage programs were the first in both Orange County and San Diego to be nominated for the James Beard Award: Outstanding Wine Service.

In Northern California, Rodriguez was the Head Sommelier at Napa Valley's The French Laundry, and was a part of the Thomas Keller team that received their first Three Michelin Star rating.

Professional decorations on the National level include:

- "Best New Sommelier" by Wine & Spirits magazine
- Food & Wine "Best Sommelier (Wine List)"
- Wine Enthusiast's Ultimate Award of Distinction and "100 Best Wine Restaurants"
- Santé "Wine Restaurant of the Year" Award

Regional decorations include:

- StarChefs Los Angeles-San Diego "Rising Star Sommelier"
- San Diego and Ranch & Coast magazines: "Best Sommelier" for four consecutive years