

Ryan Brazell Bio:

I was raised in the upstate of South Carolina. I enrolled in the College of Charleston from 2000 to 2002, and while in Charleston worked in restaurants, which is where I first gained an academic interest in wine. In 2003 I transferred to the University of Colorado, Boulder, where I went on to earn a Bachelors Degree in Human Physiology. I subsequently spent a year in graduate school in the same department, but realized that as passionate as I was about my specific area of study (Neuro-Endocrinology), I wasn't suited to laboratory life.

I spent some years after that working in restaurants and seasonally traveling in North America (and Europe to a lesser extent) for rock climbing -- a now 16 year obsession of mine. Throughout, I had an interest in and a passion for wine, but had always considered it to be more of an avocation. Finally in 2009, I decided to turn it into a proper vocation, and took a job at the Boulder Wine Merchant, where I would ultimately work and study under three Master Sommeliers. In the two and a half years I was there, I took the Introductory, Certified and Advanced Exams through the Court of Master Sommeliers. I was lucky enough to pass all three on my first attempt.

In 2011, my then fiancée (now wife), Jamie and I decided to move closer to family on the East Coast. We appreciated the size of Boulder and loved living in the mountains, so we chose Asheville as the closest analog in the Southeast. In 2013, we welcomed an addition to the family with the birth of our son, Wyatt. Since living here, I have had short stints as a restaurant and retail wine buyer, but I have been working on the distribution side with Proof Wine and Spirits since 2015. Also in 2015, I passed the Theory portion of the Master Sommelier Exam. I don't intend to stop until I've passed the full exam. Perhaps then, finally, I will be able to refocus my energy... on climbing.