

For Alan Kropf, everything is about artistic expression. The self-described “cinematic pop keyboardist” began to view beverages as an art medium while working as a barista at *Starbucks*. From there he learned to craft cocktails at the National Bartenders School of Los Angeles and developed his love of wine as a server at *Hatfield’s* in LA. Later, while working as a sommelier at The Beverly Hills Hotel, he began to find his niche. “I noticed that a certain demographic of guests was craving accessible wine information without scores,” says Kropf. “I felt there was more discussion to be had, and that’s when I had the idea for *Mutineer Magazine*.”

A mutual friend who knew about Kropf’s idea for a magazine hooked him up with LA beer geek JJ Bagley. With the help of Kropf’s brother, Brian, and friend Jeff Dorenbush, they bought an RV and drove up and down the West Coast doing demographic research for the future millennial-mentoring, all-encompassing beverage rag that went national in 2009.

Sasha Kadey, the under-30 marketing director for King Estate in Oregon, thinks Kropf’s team is onto something. “It’s a post-digital publication,” he says, “designed with a digital look and feel that works for people who consume their information online. The combination of the post-digital design and the almost surreal art vibe of the photography has a lot to do with their connection with their audience.” —C.H.

