

# Q+A with Emmy-Winning Sportscaster Jim Nantz

BY JAMESON FINK

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Photo by Christine Bush



**Did you have an “a-ha” moment with wine, where it became something more than just a drink?**



I would have a hard time pinpointing an “a-ha” moment. Mine was more of building my love for the grape as my career was building.



**When did you decide you actually wanted to get involved in the wine - business?**



I have three different lives. I cover the NFL, college basketball and the PGA Tour. When my life is involved with golf, about 40 percent of the year, I realized more and more that pro golfers were developing their own brands and putting their names on labels, and it stirred my interest. My competitive nature said, “If they’re doing this, I’m capable of doing this.”

I want what’s inside the bottle to be the trigger point for people to fall in love with it and become followers of The Calling for life. If I’m going to be involved in the wine business, I’m going to own it all the way through, from the dirt up.

**Talk about that personal involvement in *The Calling* as you travel the country.**

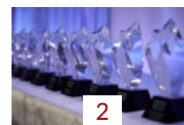
I’m going to the restaurants that carry The Calling to go in and thank them for carrying [the wine]. I want people to know how much I appreciate the fact that they support us. I do staff trainings. Say I’m in Cincinnati at Jeff Ruby’s Steakhouse, a phenomenal chain of restaurants. Next thing you know, I have 40 minutes free, and the staff would be showing up around that time. I called and said I’ve got a free half-hour and I went in and just thanked them for carrying

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said I've got a few here and there in and just wanted them for carrying the brand and educated them on the brand and what they're carrying.

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*"I have so many things I enjoy eating. [...] I'll give you one: Joe's Stone Crab and our Dutton Ranch Chardonnay."*

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### What was it about Sonoma that made it right for The Calling?

We did some site surveys out in California and Peter [Deutsch, partner in The Calling and CEO of Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits] thought that Sonoma would be the best place to go. He liked the opportunity to really develop some great Chardonnay and Pinot [Noir]. One of our first stops was to visit with Steve and Joe Dutton and the great folks at Dutton Ranch. Obviously, they have a tremendous pedigree there, stand for nothing but excellence and quality. If we could start off with a relationship with them, we could get off to a running start.

### You're a big proponent of enjoying wine at the dinner table. Do you have a favorite food pairing with one of your wines?

I have eclectic tastes. I have so many things I enjoy eating. I do love to have a glass or two of wine with virtually every meal. I'll give you one: Joe's Stone Crab and our **Dutton Ranch Chardonnay**. I've long loved Joe's, and to have our Chardonnay at Joe's in Miami is a big deal. And that's a reflection on the power of the brand and where we've gotten in a short time frame.

### The Calling was a host committee sponsor for Super Bowl 50. What was the atmosphere like in regards to wine?

It was a perfect confluence of the Super Bowl being in Northern California, Sonoma taking a position as one of the sponsors for the local Super Bowl committee, and the co-owner of the brand was calling the 50th Super Bowl in history.

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**TOPICS:** Sports + Wine, Wine Enthusiast Q+A



**About the Author**  
**JAMESON FINK**

A two-time SAVEUR Blog Award finalist, Fink launched his wine blog and began a career in retail wine in 2004. Fink has been a wine editor at *Foodista*, *Grape Collective*, and *msn.com*. He recently relocated from Seattle to New York City and is passionate about enjoying Champagne with popcorn.

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