

# Fred Dexheimer, MS

## OMNI'S WINE AND SPIRITS GURU STAYS BUSY ON-PREMISE AND OFF

by Anthony Dias Blue / photo by Matt Wilson

**WHEN ASKED WHAT HE DOES**, Fred Dexheimer will answer facetiously, but actually quite accurately, "Well, what day is it?"

Consultant, educator and speaker about everything food and drink, Dexheimer is the only Master Sommelier in the Carolinas. With his finger on the pulse of the current beverage world, Dexheimer uses his expertise to advise brands on events, build successful cocktail and wine programs, tailor strategies on how to get sommeliers as well as the trade and press involved, and create alluring restaurant and bar models.

Before starting Juiceman Consulting in 2009, the company through which he provides his comprehensive services, Dexheimer had spent about 15 years in the restaurant, beverage and bartending field, launching a dozen or so restaurants for the BLT Restaurant Group, and managing sales for 40 wineries from California, Oregon and Washington for T. Edward Wines.

Today, Dexheimer's archive of consultant experience includes being the long-time ambassador for Wines of Chile and South West France Wines, and representing regions as diverse as Macedonia, Campania and Portugal, as well as involvement in Chef Laurent Tourondel's launch of L'Amico in New York City.

On a more personal level, Dexheimer is working to transform the way consumers drink, making it into a more cognitive experience. Through this project, which he calls RX Wine Lab, Dexheimer, along with two other sommeliers, are spreading the concept of the no-menu wine list (see sidebar) to both empower and educate consumers on what they are drinking.

Dexheimer is building on this same consumer education momentum in his work with the Omni hotel group as well. The privately-owned hotel and resort chain is lauded for giving guests an authentic feel for each city's local flavor: In an effort to upgrade Omni's already impressive food and beverage programs, Dexheimer is hard at work conducting event entertainment education and holding seminars for both Omni's internal events groups and corporations that choose to host special events at Omni properties.

To keep the beverage programs exciting and unique at each Omni property, Dexheimer has also assumed yearly by-the-glass programming responsibilities. Based on an extensive, rigorous and streamlined annual blind tasting program, Dexheimer rotates in and out exciting wines, ranging in variety, region and price, behind the bars of seven of Omni's 62 properties. Omni's updated beverage programming is reflective in large part of their yearly regional focus. Every year for the past six years, Omni has selected a wine region or country for Omni's chefs and food and beverage directors to travel to where they learn about local gustatory culture. "It's really unique for a hotel group of that size to every year be so diligent about vetting new wines and trying new wines to keep the programs fresh," says Master Somm. Dexheimer then uses these cultural findings to help design programs within Omni to make their hospitality services truly premium. For the record, this year's destination is Chile.

It is only when Dexheimer isn't running around the country offering up his comprehensive consulting services that he is in North Carolina, trying to make the Triangle area a better place to drink. *SD*



*Fred Dexheimer, MS, photographed in Chile.*

### **Fred Dexheimer Explains THE NO-MENU WINE LIST**

My team and I at Rx Wine Lab started off with a selection of 12 to 15 different wines every week but realized that our guests just wanted our advice and what we were into. So we basically stopped making menus, just profiling their tastes and pouring them different wines until we found what they liked. What we created was a non-menu that shifts wines every night but has all the categorical flavor profiles of a BTG program. For example:

- Multiple Bubbles**
- Light White**
- Aromatic White**
- Off-Dry White**
- Rich/Texture White**
- Some Oak White**
- 2 Rosés**
- Light Red**
- Medium Earthy Red**
- Spicy Red**
- Juicy Red**
- Big Red**
- Tannic Red**