



# MOST PROGRESSIVE

PRESENTED BY:

**MEGHAN S. WEBSTER OF THE CASSINA GROUP**

WHEN THE COMPANY YOU KEEP MATTERS.



## KURT WEINBERGER

KING OF THE BEAN

You may be a just-one-cup-in-the-morning type of person or the die-hard-double-shot type. You're not an expert, but you know some and you enjoy the smell. You always opt for post-dinner-and-wine coffee at your favorite restaurant and believe that great coffee is organic, balanced and high-quality. Because, above all, you love your relationship with it.

You're probably drinking Kurt Weinberger's coffee.

It's called [King Bean](#). You've heard of it. Kurt is head roaster of the nearly twenty-year-old Charleston-based coffee collective and he isn't about cranking out coffee for profit. Instead, he's about organic growth, balanced work-life, and high-quality business practices that contribute to his foodie town.

Kurt grew up in the restaurant business and has a natural knowledge of the industry. He knows that sourcing great, sustainable coffee is a restaurant standard.

"Restaurants are like bootcamp," Kurt says. "It influenced my work ethic for sure. Controlled, sustainable growth that is natural and organic has been our philosophy and it's always worked. You can't force it."

As a result, Kurt is only interested in aligning King Bean with likeminded restaurants and businesses, like [Callie's Biscuits](#), with whom they created a 2014 Wine & Food Festival event. It's also why he never buys huge ads; he chooses smart collaborations that lead to word-of-mouth. It makes sense that Kurt would operate all que-sera-sera: He got into the coffee game when the Navy sent him to Seattle by chance and he met his wife on a day-trip to Hilton Head when she just happened to be filling in for someone that one day.

"We're not as in control as we think we are," he laughs.

For Kurt and King Bean's eight employees, maintaining work-life balance is essential. "I live in Charleston," Kurt says. "My quality of life is very important to me." He has a four-year-old son and is planning a trip to Central America with his wife at the end of the year. Kurt also hires a personal trainer for his team.

Because he knows fair-traded beans are just one part of what makes great coffee, Kurt makes sure all King-Bean-carrying restaurants have received full hands-on training on grinding equipment, brewing machines and water purification to deliver the best possible experience. There's a 24-hour number for clients to call. He installed motion-sensors on his lights, one of his many methods to reduce his roaster's carbon footprint. Instead of throwing broken equipment into the scrap metal pile, Kurt has an entire shop with technicians who refurbish machines to better-than-new condition, including his own hard-to-come-by Italian-made "Petroncini," the Ferrari of coffee roasters.

It's the only way he wants to operate, an approach to business and life that's refreshing.

Kind of like a cup of coffee.

*Words by: Jessica Kenny*

*Photography by: Karson Photography*