

# XXIV Karat Gold Diggers Make A Splash

By Sherrie Wilkolaski

Champagne is my absolute favorite cocktail. Give me some bubbles in a flute of sparkling wine or Prosecco and I'll be happy. Indulgence is everything when you're celebrating and "bubbles" is my red carpet drink. When I thought nothing could be better than a brut glass of sparkling wine, I discovered my cocktail could become more luxurious with a new spirit called XXIV Karat. It's the first California sparkling wine infused with indulgent 24-karat gold flakes. Trying this new brand wasn't enough, I was even more intrigued when I found out that co-founders Nicholas Cowherd and Kegan Klein are their own target demography; two recent college grads who are taking this luxury product line to high-end streets.

The idea for the XXIV Karat product came about when these young gentlemen were on the frontlines of the nightclub and bar scene, enjoying Champagne and sparkling wine regularly. They are targeting 21-35 year old millennials who are influenced by pop culture, celebrities and want to set themselves apart from the average bar scene. Nicholas says, "We noticed that the Champagne and Sparkling Wine space lacked innovation and we saw this as an opportunity to change that. Inspired by the sparkler that is so iconic with champagne presentation at nightclubs,



XXIV was created. As millennials, we wanted to capture something innovative, exclusive and made by our generation, for our generation. We've been very fortunate to receive acceptance by our target market and others who enjoy a glass of sparkling wine and champagne."

If you're wondering about the actual cocktail, the sparkling wine is infused with gold-leaf flakes. The XXIV Karat brand thrives on innovation. They see their dancing gold mixing with effervescence of bubbles to be the new caliber of what millennials expect. An LED light illuminates the bottle from within and it definitely creates a distinctive experience. The product is sourced from their vineyard in Mendocino, California and bottled in Lodi. It is blended with multiple varietals, vintages and California Coastal appellations to assure a consistent quality of every bottle. "Our consumers not only enjoy XXIV Karat at exclusive nightclubs and parties, it's also something one can enjoy in the luxury of their own home or give as the ultimate gift," adds co-founder Kegan Klein.

They are young entrepreneurs who have found a niche market that is doing well for them, especially with holidays just around the corner. When I asked about the history behind the launch of their company,

Kegan told me they are very fortunate to be great business partners. "We are both extremely motivated, hungry and we embody our motto, 'Live Life All In.' The first two rounds of funding came from Nick, who put in nearly \$1 million. As a growing business, we are always looking for additional capital and we have been very fortunate. We closed a multimillion-dollar investment Q2 of this year, which gave us the ability to grow our executive management and sales team, along with investing in company infrastructure. We are currently closing our 4th round of financing with an NBA basketball player. As of now, his name is proprietary information, but we will be sure to make an announcement once the ink is dry."

Entrepreneurship doesn't seem to intimidate the pair, and they take day to day business operations in stride. Nick remarks, "Every day is a challenge. Our days consist

of managing our team, continually innovating and moving the business forward, managing the budget, and making daily decisions that can have a positive and lasting effect on future success of the company... these are challenges that we love."

They are not the first to blend gold-leaf and a fizzing cocktail together. There are a handful of other gold-leaf bubbly on the market, but they don't appear to have a direct competitor in the United States within the Champagne and sparkling wine space. Jane Brook Estates in Australia offers two 23 Karat gold sparkling wines, a Sparkling Gold (Chenin Blanc) and Sparkling Gold (Premium). Lussory Gold launched a non-alcoholic gold-leaf product in Dubai in September. "We've found a way to differentiate ourselves from others on the shelf and showcase a clear point of difference with our 24-karat gold flakes."

They are laid back in their business approach, but still have a focus while running the business living in two different cities. Nick resides in Los Angeles and Kegan is based in San Diego. The distance, which could be considered a business challenge, isn't an issue. They have secured an experienced executive team and Kegan says they feel secure in the direction the business is moving. "We were very fortunate to have a terrific team with decades of beverage industry experience. We believe in full transparency and open lines of communication. We have our corporate office in Newport Beach, centrally located and where our CEO, Dan Holland, a 40+ year beverage industry veteran, can be found on a daily basis. We are constantly in contact with our CEO, VP of Sales, and EVP of Business Development, via email and cell phone. We are in our Newport Beach offices five or six times a month, and working the remainder of our time in our

respective cities."

They take each of their responsibilities seriously. Nick's primary focus is marketing and PR and Kegan supports his co-founders' assets, "Nick has a terrific ability to network and connect with those in the industry who support and sell our product."

Kegan's primary focus is the operations and production side of the business. Nick has this to say, "Kegan loves numbers, metrics and controlling the controllable. This was what kept us friends - we stayed in our own lanes, a Ying and Yang per say, and we had very similar visions for the direction of the company."

As a self-proclaimed entrepreneur for over 20 years, I went back and forth on whether or not to ask them about how their age impacts their business dealings. They are two young guys just out of college, they



must come across challenges with age being a factor, and Nick confirmed it. "We would be lying if we said it doesn't. As young business professionals and executives in our company, we will always have to prove ourselves to new customers, business associates, distributors, etc. There is something comfortable for a 50-year-old businessman to do business with someone his own age. Sometimes, we can see hesitation in the eyes of the man or woman sitting across from us, and understandably so. However, we find that with hard work and good business practices, questions about our age go out the window very quickly."

As they approach the holiday season, they are entering their 7th market, and two more will follow in the coming weeks. "In one year, XXIV Karat will be a recognized name throughout the hospitality, nightlife and entertainment industry in the U.S. In five years, we aim to expand our brand with new products." Nick comments. "We believe XXIV Karat is a lifestyle brand that turns any

occasion into a special one. We encourage you to 'Live Life All In' and that's the motto we live by. October, November and December are big business in the beverage industry, especially for the XXIV Karat brand. We have some fantastic partnerships lined up with both retail outlets and on-premise nightlife outlets that are really excited to help push XXIV Karat as the feature drink to celebrate the holidays and ring in the New Year! We are very fortunate to grow every day, and we thank our customers for all of our success."

These young entrepreneurial prospects have found their own 24-karat goldmine. Their passion for champagne and sparkling wine blossomed into a unique luxury product that is sure to be a holiday hit for years to come. Do they still drink other varieties of sparkling wine? The answer is no. They say they are loyal to their brand and now it's only XXIV Karat.

To find a retailer near you go to [xxivkarat.com](http://xxivkarat.com).



## More about Nick and Kegan

### About Nicholas Cowherd

Nicholas Cowherd is the co-founder of XXIV Karat. Cowherd's taste for luxury and lifestyle began in his early career, charting private jets and yachts.

A natural-born networker, Cowherd quickly made connections with club owners and managers in his hometown of Scottsdale, Arizona. After earning high status among movers and shakers in the nightlife industry, Cowherd realized the surge of champagne & sparkling wine consumption and the need for a product that would create a memorable and decadent experience.

In 2012, at the age of only 22, Cowherd left his job at Apple Inc. with his best friend Kegan Klein to pursue their passion to create and introduce one of the most unique products in the industry. The two created what became the first California sparkling wine with indulgent 24-karat gold flakes. Its award-winning design and exquisite taste, truly makes it a craft wine that leaves an everlasting impression.

Cowherd holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business Communications from the

W.P Carey School of Business at Arizona State University and currently resides in Los Angeles.

### What do you do for fun?

**Nick:** Work... Seriously, I enjoy working. But I do love cooking and playing video games to unwind from a long day of work.

### What is your favorite film?

**Nick:** The Wolf of Wall Street.

### What are you reading now?

**Nick:** The Wolf of Wall Street.

### What is your favorite midnight snack?

**Nick:** Candy or ice cream.

### What is your favorite piece of technology?

**Nick:** My phone. I don't know what I would do without it!

### About Kegan Klein

Kegan Klein is the co-founder of XXIV Karat. Kegan's desire for business and marketing began at a young age, working for his family business, operating and opening new restaurant concepts throughout his high school and college years in Arizona.

After graduating college at Arizona State University, he quickly built his resume, working for companies such as Gannett Media, Groupon and Yelp. In 2012, while observing the nightlife scene and the sparkler that is so iconic with champagne presentation, Kegan and his best friend Nicholas Cowherd created the idea of XXIV Karat, the first California sparkling wine with indulgent 24-karat gold flakes.

Since launching in 2013, XXIV Karat far exceeded expectations in both on and off-premise accounts in Arizona, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina and more recently, California, through its distribution partnership with Southern Wine & Spirits.

Kegan holds a Bachelors degree in Business from Arizona State University and currently resides in San Diego, California.

### What do you do for fun?

**Kegan:** I am a typical 26-year old. I love to workout, golf, play basketball, go to the movies, hang out with friends, chase girls, and most recently, hit the beach. There was a time in my life that I loved the nightclub scene. Aspects of this job

were everything you might want when you're still in college, but now the club life seems like work. Every now and then, you will find me letting loose and having a good time in a club, but I must always be mindful of who I am and where I am, and hopefully I don't embarrass myself.

### What is your favorite film?

**Kegan:** As a huge baseball fan, I must say it is For Love of the Game. I just love that movie.

### What are you reading now?

**Kegan:** Killing Patton by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard.

### What is your favorite midnight snack?

**Kegan:** Fire Hot Cheetos, I am a sucker for those things!

### What is your favorite piece of technology?

**Kegan:** The iPhone is both my favorite and least favorite piece of technology. The convenience of constantly being connected to all lines of communication (email, phone, text, social media) is very important to any business owner. However, I have a hard time turning it off and getting away for a period of time to enjoy family and friends.