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Sabates likes true stories that he can profit from

Charlotte entrepreneur Felix Sabates, who built a fortune after fleeing Cuba at 16, likes to read business success stories.

This month, that meant the latest on the Omaha Oracle, "Even Buffett Isn't Perfect: What You Can – and Can't – Learn From the World's Greatest Investor," by Vahan Janjigian, with a foreword by Steve Forbes.

"I'm not much of a novel reader," said the part owner of a NASCAR team, Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates. "I want something that has to do with business, the life of famous financial people."

Every day, Sabates scours the Web sites of large newspapers nationwide, from the Wall Street Journal to The Los Angeles Times. In addition to keeping up with things, he's seeking potential customers for his luxury yacht business. He says such overtures have won sales for Trinity Yachts, which he says has become the world's largest maker of custom-built yachts.

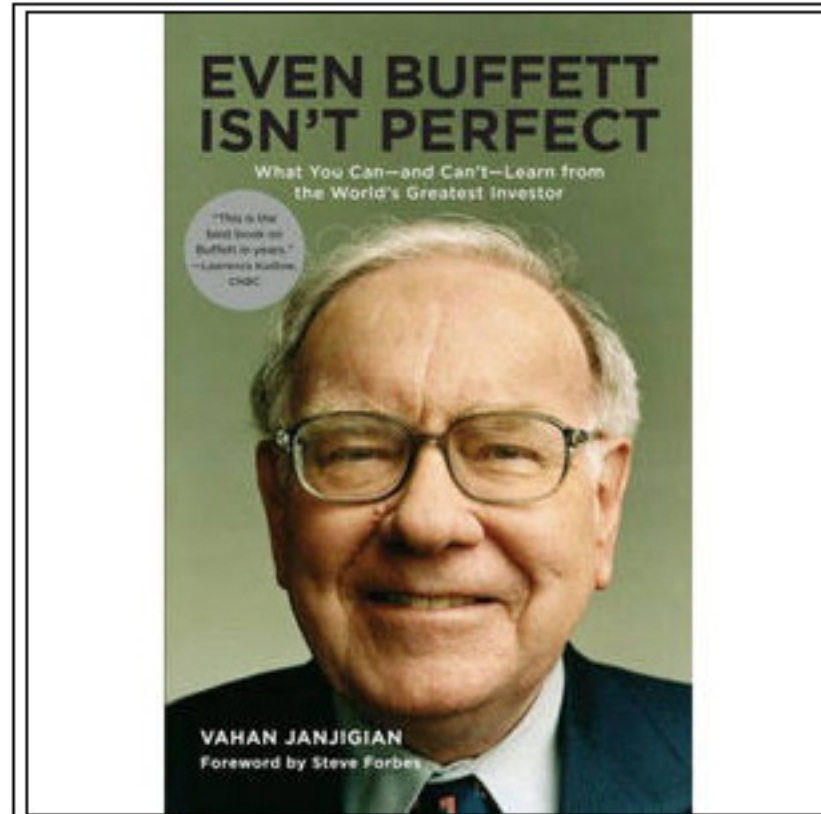
Sabates doesn't have an iPod and rarely turns on a radio. But his cell phone, which rings constantly, plays a well-known phrase from Kenny Rogers's "The Gambler" – "know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em." Sabates said he picked the tune about 15 months ago after walking away from a deal, which he won't identify.

Sabates, who arrived in America virtually penniless, credits his grandfather with key advice.

"When I was leaving Cuba, he said, even if you're hungry, put a toothpick in your mouth and pick your teeth," Sabates recalls. "Let people think you just had a big dinner. Don't ever let anybody know you're broke."

"In the business world, people want to do business with successful people."

Stella M. Hopkins



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