

Bob Marr of Marr Cellars

Hand-Crafting His Futures, One Barrel at a Time

By Jo Diaz



Not much is done “the old fashioned way” anymore. Who has the time? There’ll never be another Sistine Chapel in Rome, or another Union Station like the opulent, cathedral-type buildings that dot the American landscape. Those buildings were crafted in an era when time wasn’t measured in dollars and cents, and every kind of artist was hired to leave his special mark.

Within the wine industry, we still have a few holdouts who are crafting one barrel at a time against all odds: creating very small, precious lots of wine. One such winery is Marr Cellars. Bob Marr, proprietor/winemaker is living his passion for winemaking. Granted, Bob has a day job, but he also lives the rest of his time after hours and weekends as an artisan.

In spring, with the energy of a triathlete, Bob sprints through the vineyards in excited anticipation, seeking out what the vines are beginning to offer. When you’re out there with him, there’s no way to escape his infectious enthusiasm for each new development. He’s as eager as he could possibly be.

Bob has a hands-on selection of fruit from nurtured, vineyard sources. He crushes one ton at a time, personally monitors each fermentation, punches down each lot, decides when the process is complete, which barrel to use, for how long, and when to release it.

He’s no stranger to the wine industry. It’s in his DNA. His family background is mostly French. The culture of wine and food is a natural lifestyle. Two of his great-grandparents came from wine producing regions in Southwestern France. Upon arriving in the Bay Area, great-grandfather Jules Roumiguere and Jules’ mother Celestine Roumiguere purchased property adjacent to the Water Temple in Sunol. This was to become the ranch where they would plant vines and start their own winery, known as Cote d’Or.

In 1983, Bob found a cellar position for crush at Chateau St. Jean, working first-hand with Dick Schmidt. This was when his passion came alive. From that point forward until now, Bob has worked crush somewhere every harvest. According to Bob, “I was moonlighting in the cellar.”



Here’s how wines get their names: Cuvée Selena and Cuvée Patrick. Bet you can tell who’s who. This is how a family man brings the next generation into the winemaking process.

Almost 15 years later, in 1997, Bob started Marr Cellars, his first year producing a Sonoma Old Vine Zinfandel and a Rhone Blend – Cuvée Patrick. Eventually, Bob was employed by the state, bringing him back to the Central Valley. He now works in Sacramento, and has his small winery in Woodland, just north of Davis.

He’s a one-of-a-kind, and he’s doing it all his way, one barrel at a time!

