

# SPOTTSWOODE

## The Wearing of Many Hats!

FROM our winemaker removing tablecloths from our outside picnic tables in advance of a rainstorm to our vineyard and cellar workers decanting and pouring wine at winery events to our vice president using the pallet jack (which she loves!) to rearrange the wine in our cellar so we can actually access it, in a small vineyard and winery like ours roles are not always clearly defined and one necessarily wears a lot of hats!

And the truth is we like it this way. The camaraderie that develops between us as we work together, both in our defined roles and when we step out of them (which is often), creates meaningful relationships among us, and we truly enjoy working together.

Call us here at the winery! When you do, it is likely that you will first talk with either Tiffany Minnick (customer relations) or Erica Wallenbrock (office manager). If, however, they are attending to other responsibilities—accommodating visitors; decanting wines for our twice-weekly tours; arranging lunch for the office and, often, production crew; consolidating wine in the cellar for pick up; delivering wine to local accounts; in a meeting or working on special projects—you may reach Peah Armstrong (vice president) or Tracey Skupny (marketing director). Peah has worked closely with Beth and Mary on Spottswood's strategic operations for more than 21 years. If she is not creating financial reports or managing the computer systems, she may be creating email blasts, printing name tags for our annual Garden Party, taking out the trash here at the winery, or...moving wine with the pallet jack! Tracey, whose job it is to be in close communication with our myriad distributors, importers, and retail and restaurant accounts, can sometimes be found watering our office plants or making cappuccinos. What is nice about our small, intimate company is that any of us will be able to answer your questions.

Join us for a tour! Sue Cross will likely be your guide, and not only will she share our history, property and wines with you, she will also set up the glasses for your tasting before you arrive, and take care of everything after your visit. During

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A Family Wine Estate



the tour, Jennifer Williams (winemaker) or Aron Weinkauff (assistant winemaker and vineyard manager) might meet up with you between the tasks associated with crafting our wines and overseeing our vineyard operations, and they will be happy to stop and talk with you.

Jennifer's baby daughter might be along for the ride. Kiran has now graduated to a backpack, and we are sure she will know the winemaking process through and through by the time she is two!

Aron is truly passionate about wine, the land and organics. He cares for our chickens and bees, monitors the bird boxes, maintains the solar arrays, mixes biodynamic teas—the list goes on. (We're not convinced he goes home during harvest, as his car is here when we arrive and when we leave.) You will occasionally find Jennifer and Aron dressed in something other than blue jeans and work boots (yes, this is admittedly rare) to host a tour or a wine tasting, or perhaps a winemaker dinner. Or, to sit on a winegrowing panel; be interviewed for an article; travel for the winery; or...take tablecloths off of tables before the rain sets in!

Our vineyard foreman, Jose Luis Lopez, has worked with us for 28 years and knows literally every vine on the estate. Jose and his team, Trino, Jose Mora, Agustin and Marcos, each contribute different skills required for both vineyard and winery work. They also help with the chickens and olives and plant an amazing garden each year in which they grow tomatillos, pumpkins, sunflowers, and melons. Our agricultural land nurtures more than wine grapes, thanks to their efforts.

My mother, Mary Novak, is Spottswode's proprietor and sets the tone and quietly lends her valued input. She is also our primary weed puller (she can't help herself), picks up needed supplies at Steve's Hardware, cleans the dog kennel (among her favorite jobs...), gardens as often as she can, and generally keeps us all in line. My sister, Lindy Novak, is our national sales director. She works primarily from her home office in the Bay Area and visits with our customers throughout California and around the country. Glamorous? Well, delicious meals, nice wine tastings and conversations with friendly customers are the rewards, but there are also the details around planning one's schedule, preparing the wines for tasting, and being ever convivial—all of which Lindy does very well!

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Finally, there is me, Spottswode's president (or, as I call myself, a big fish in a small pond). Like everyone here, I wear many hats—along with coordinating our strategic plan, reviewing financials and all that operating a family business entails, I am lucky enough to participate in blending tastings with Jennifer and Aron; to help set and clear tables—and select and prepare the wines—for winery events; to serve, along with my mother, as Honorary Chair of Auction Napa Valley 2010; to hike with our winery dogs, Murphy and Riley, to keep them in some semblance of shape; and, yes, to jump in and do whatever might need to be done at any given moment.

Titles without Borders? Working at our small, family-owned winery means that all of us work together—like an extended family—to get everything done. Our holistic approach is truly gratifying and keeps us passionate, engaged and interested as we collaboratively strive to achieve our vision of having Spottswode recognized among the world's most respected winegrowing estates.

—*Beth Novak Milliken, Excerpt from the Spottswode 2009 Newsletter*

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