



COURTNEY BENHAM, OWNER:

Growing up in Bakersfield, California and experiencing the rigors of farming firsthand, Courtney Benham was drawn to the romance of the grape. What called him—and calls him still—was the business side of the equation. It was a business opportunity that entered Benham's mind when he stumbled upon 1,500 cases of library wine from the legendary Martin Ray label in 1990. He ventured further into the business when he purchased the brand a year later and has spent the past 27 years shaping it into a vision of his own.



Benham is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley. Driven by intuition, Courtney has always directed the course of his brands by his experience, assessment of the market, and love for fine wine and the value of quality. While many know him for his first winery, Blackstone, which he eventually sold after building it into a category leader in just seven years, he now draws attention with a simple philosophy that is carried throughout both the Martin Ray and Angeline portfolio...to make consistent, terroir-driven, 100% single varietal wines.

To establish roots for Martin Ray, Benham purchased one of California's oldest, continuously operating wineries in Russian River Valley (Martini & Prati) which, since 2003, he has been transforming into a modern-day production facility. Courtney recognizes that great wine is the sum of more than just good grapes and a talent in the cellar; it's the result of an efficient whole. He has developed a lean core team, led by winemaker Lindsey Haughton, which is broadened by expert consultants and top-tier growers. This has given him access to some of the best minds and best fruit in California, which the foundation for is built upon developing a state-of-the-art certified sustainable facility. The recent completion of the winery allows Courtney to invite guests to experience some of Martin Ray's small production, single-vineyard wines at one of the most historical properties in Sonoma County.

Courtney Benham continues to push the boundaries of making great wine with true varietal character for the discerning masses. His business model brings together a unique blend of terroir, modern-day craftsmanship and hospitality, which allows him the ability to consistently create top-quality wines while being dedicated to fusing the historical significance and philosophy of Martin Ray.