

Jeff Durham **Vintner, Gentleman Farmer Wines**

Born and raised in Napa, California, Jeff Durham is a self-proclaimed “product of the valley.” His Napa Valley roots were planted in the early 1980’s, when his family began farming grapes in Napa Valley’s Oak Knoll region. His father planted 22 acres on Big Ranch Road where he and his siblings worked after school, on weekend, and during vacations, instilling a sense of responsibility as they learned vineyard management, trellising, pruning, and harvest. Wine brought Jeff full circle, back to Yountville and the Napa Valley giving him a true understanding of the T.S. Elliot quote, “...to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time.”

At the early age of 16, Jeff’s hotel and hospitality experience was kickstarted as a busboy. After years of hands-on experience and an undergraduate education at the University of Southern California, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel & Restaurant Management from California Polytechnic University.

In the spring of 1999, Jeff met his future life partner, Joe Wolosz. Both holding bachelor’s degrees in Hotel & Restaurant Management and a wealth of experience working in food, wine, and travel, their fateful connection fueled the start of a fruitful life together. They began their winemaking journey in fall of 1999 in a garage in St. Helena with a half-ton of fruit from a small vineyard off Zinfandel Lane and the guidance of a local winemaker. They started by sourcing grapes from Jeff’s family vineyard, and have now expanded to some of the most exciting sustainable sites in Oak Knoll, St. Helena, and the Russian River Valley in Sonoma Coast.

Jeff’s career path extends beyond wine. A founder of The Passport Group, he is a hotel broker, an independent hotel owner and expert in consulting hotel owners into transitioning to becoming an independent hotel operator. He founded Haversack Hospitality, which specializes in hotel management and consulting.

In 2008, Jeff and Joe founded [The Redwood Riverwalk](#) – a boutique motel (AKA The Redwood), is a stylish roadside motel destination located off California’s iconic Redwood Highway (Hwy 101) in charming town of Fortuna, nestled in the heart of Humboldt County.

Jeff is also a founding member of the Humboldt County Tourism Improvement District (TBID) and is currently on the board of the California Association of Boutique and Breakfast Inns. In addition to his hotel business ventures, he finds ways to make real changes in his community. After his six-year tenure as a city councilman for the Town of Yountville, Jeff now pens a weekly activist newsletter [The Yountvillian](#), which covers community news, information, activities, food, wine, and culture.

Jeff enjoys sharing his vast knowledge about hospitality and hotel management with others and building relationships. He has a shrewd eye for design and loves repurposing unique artwork and family heirlooms into stunning conversation pieces in the Yountville home he shares with Joe. A life-long learner, he recently picked up the clarinet, which helps him achieve his core goal - to laugh every day, trying not to take life too seriously.