



COURTNEY BENHAM
OWNER

Courtney Benham, a California native raised on his family's farm in Bakersfield, developed a deep connection to agriculture early on, experiencing firsthand the rigors of farming almonds, pistachios, and other crops. After college and a stint on the professional tennis circuit, he was drawn back to the land, beginning his career in wine 40 years ago at Lost Hills Winery in Lodi. This hands-on experience became the foundation for his future in the wine industry, instilling in him a profound respect for both craftsmanship and sustainability.

After years in the custom-crush winemaking business, Benham's entrepreneurial spirit led him to create Blackstone, his first major label. He built Blackstone into a category leader in under a decade before selling the brand to pursue new opportunities, culminating in his acquisition of Martin Ray Winery.

In 1990, while searching for warehouse space in San Jose, Benham stumbled upon 1,500 cases of library wine from pioneering California winemaker Martin Ray. He purchased both the wine and the name, dedicating himself to preserving Ray's legacy while modernizing the brand. To establish lasting roots for Martin Ray, Benham acquired one of California's oldest continuously operating wineries in the Russian River Valley, Martini & Prati. Since 2003, he has meticulously transformed the property into a state-of-the-art production facility and tasting space, all while championing Sonoma County's sustainability initiatives.

As the Founder and President of Courtney M. Benham Family of Wines (CMB Family of Wines), Benham has expanded his vision beyond Martin Ray, cultivating a portfolio of premium wine brands that includes Angeline, Synthesis, his eponymous label Courtney Benham, and most recently, the acquisitions of Vina Robles and Foppiano. Over the decades, he has earned a reputation for honoring tradition while breathing new life into storied wineries. His commitment to land stewardship, sustainable farming, and heritage preservation is matched by his passion for crafting wines of exceptional character that reflect their unique terroir.

Guided by experience, intuition, and an unwavering respect for the land, Benham continues to push the boundaries of winemaking. His approach blends the artistry of traditional winemaking with modern innovation, ensuring that each wine in the CMB Family of Wines portfolio is a testament to both its heritage and his enduring dedication to quality.