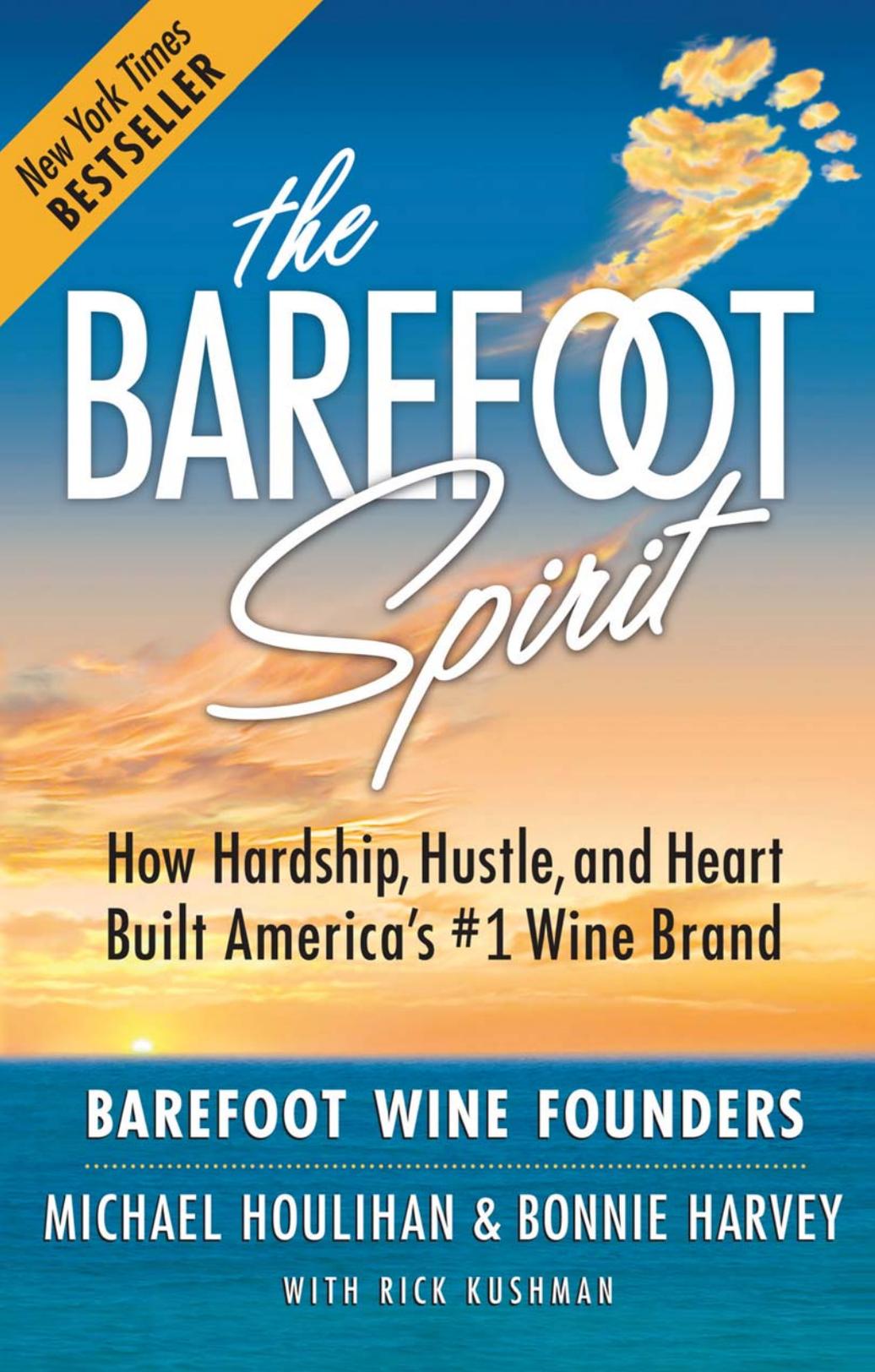


New York Times
BESTSELLER



the
BAREFOOT
Spirit

**How Hardship, Hustle, and Heart
Built America's #1 Wine Brand**

BAREFOOT WINE FOUNDERS

MICHAEL HOULIHAN & BONNIE HARVEY

WITH RICK KUSHMAN

PRAISE FOR *THE BAREFOOT SPIRIT*

"This is a warm, wonderful, inspiring book that entertains and motivates at the same time."

—**Brian Tracy, Motivational Speaker, Entrepreneur and Success Expert, and International Best Selling Author of over 50 Books, including *Eat That Frog!***

"Great read, great book. This story is beyond wine and the love of wine; it's about starting a business."

—**Fran Tarkenton, Hall of Fame NFL Quarterback, Entrepreneur, and Sirius XM Radio Host of *The Fran Tarkenton Show***

"Fun beach reading for small business inspiration. *The Barefoot Spirit* is an entertaining rags-to-riches story of American entrepreneurship. It's the first-hand tale of California rule breakers Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey, founders of the country's top-selling wine brand."

—**Adrienne Burke, Yahoo! Small Business Writer**

"I thoroughly enjoyed *The Barefoot Spirit*. I will make it required reading because it tells a lovely story, and it embodies so much of the entrepreneurial mindset. I loved the 'voice' of the book and storytelling is such a wonderful way to communicate. I believe students will find it a fun addition to their library and in the process they will learn the most important lessons of entrepreneurship!"

—**Rebecca White, Professor, Entrepreneurship, and James W. Walter Distinguished Chair of Entrepreneurship, and Director, Entrepreneurship Center, The University of Tampa, John H. Sykes College of Business, and 2012 President, United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE)**

“It’s an inspiration to see how they broke all the rules and still succeeded against all odds. For anyone contemplating starting a business, there are lessons to be learned here and an entertaining story as a bonus.”

—Alan Caruba, Book Reviewer, National Books Critic Circle,
Author and Columnist

“Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey’s lack of familiarity with the wine business was an asset. Because they didn’t have preconceived notions about the business—and because they were creative and resourceful—they were ultimately successful.”

—Cyril Penn, Editor, *Wine Business Monthly*

“I try to read all the books of the authors on my show and am just getting into *The Barefoot Spirit*. It’s one of the best books on entrepreneurship I’ve read.”

—Kip Marlow, Entrepreneur and Host of
Entrepreneurs Club Radio

“*The Barefoot Spirit* will appeal to entrepreneurs, business people, non-profit leaders, and anyone who is passionate about activism, unlikely success stories, and—oh yes—wine. In content, message, and even writing style, it’s smart, funny, and self-deprecating.”

—Michael Tate, Board President, San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus

“As an entrepreneur, publicist, and publisher, I found great insight in *The Barefoot Spirit*. Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey’s tips on how to survive on less than a shoestring are clever, practical, and, best of all, provide a good giggle to any entrepreneur in panic mode. This book is one that I’m already recommending to my readers, colleagues, and clients in start-up mode—as well as those who are ready to take their business to the next level. Here’s to going Barefoot!”

—Hope Katz Gibbs, Publisher of *Be Inkandescent Magazine*

“In 1986, Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey started Barefoot Wine—in their laundry room. Through the years, they managed and marketed it into a product that was eventually sold to E. & J. Gallo. *The Barefoot Spirit* confidently guides any start-up company to success.”

—David Bruce Smith, Publisher and
Author of *American Hero: John Marshall*,
Chief Justice of the United States

“Michael and Bonnie’s passion is so strong and infectious that it pulls in those around them. They not only worked to increase Barefoot’s presence within the Surfrider community, it became part of the community itself.”

—Michelle Kremer, COO, Surfrider Foundation

“I picked up Michael and Bonnie’s book chronicling the Barefoot story with the intention of a quick scan and found myself spending the better part of a Sunday thoroughly enjoying myself reading it cover-to-cover. I believe students will find *The Barefoot Spirit* both a great read and an important lesson in creative problem solving in the face of critical challenges.”

—Pat Dickson, 2013 President, United States
Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship,
and Associate Professor, Wake Forest University,
North Carolina

“When you have a passion but no formula to follow, *The Barefoot Spirit* will inspire and direct you and your energy. This is a book that shows those with the true entrepreneur’s spirit how not to get stuck on the small things and make decisions from the soul. This book is as unpretentious as the wine they produced.”

—Sonya Gavankar, Broadcast Journalist,
Face of the Newseum

“Michael and Bonnie’s book is a must-read for anyone looking to start a business that will make it in today’s economy. Whether you are starting a company from scratch or investing your money or someone else’s, *The Barefoot Spirit* illustrates the hands-on and no-cost best practices that will make your company a success.”

—**Andrea Keating, Founder,
The International Video Crew Staffing Firm**

“What I like best about the book is that Houlihan and Harvey lead by example and explain how they took an idea and a little blood, sweat, and wine, and turned it into a multimillion-dollar brand that is now a household name. Talk about a financial gold mine.”

—**Bryan Beatty, Certified Financial Planner, and a Partner at
the Financial Planning Firm, Egan, Berger & Weiner**

“Michael and Bonnie took a chance on potentially losing sales when they supported our cause with Barefoot Cellars in the early 1990s. Their co-promotion with the League to Save Lake Tahoe took a strong position on a very controversial issue involving the development of the Lake Tahoe Basin. They helped us get the word out about our cause through wine shops, markets, and restaurants in California.”

—**Darcie Goodman-Collins, Ph.D.,
Executive Director, League to Save Lake Tahoe**

“Michael and Bonnie started the tradition of Worthy Cause Marketing and for well over a decade used their winery, Barefoot Cellars, to support the Mono Lake Committee’s grassroots efforts. Their approach helped spread the word about protection, restoration, and education at Mono Lake—inspiring people to get out and get involved.”

—**Geoff McQuilkin, Executive Director, Mono Lake Committee**

Introduction

They had a saying at Barefoot that says a lot about the people who created one of America's most recognizable wine brands: You sell more wine wearing a funny hat.

It's simple, true, and something many wineries would never have admitted in the mid-1980s when Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey started Barefoot Cellars and launched the Barefoot Spirit. In the mid-'80s, that idea was nearly revolutionary.

Michael and Bonnie didn't know they were defying convention because they didn't know what the wine industry's conventions were. They started in the laundry room of a rented farmhouse with no money, no wine experience, and no clue about what they were getting into—and that was one key to their success.

The tale of Barefoot Cellars is like no other in wine and it's a landmark in American business. It's a rags-to-riches story in the first degree, a chronicle of how outsiders followed their own path, believed in their ideas and each other, and changed an industry.

THE BAREFOOT SPIRIT

Barefoot transformed American wine so completely that it's hard to remember how staid and unimaginative it once was. Before Barefoot, wine marketing and wine labels were as serious as a masters seminar on viticulture. Wine seemed exclusive, unwelcoming, almost foreboding. Barefoot's success brought fun and energy and lightheartedness to wine, and it led the way for animals and art, for bikes, for silly pictures, for embracing everyone. It helped make wine into something that was approachable and egalitarian and thoroughly American.

The Barefoot Spirit is also a close-up of the American entrepreneurial spirit with a West Coast smile, an ode to originality and perseverance, and just as much, one terrific tale.

But this book is more than just the story of Barefoot's unlikely success, it's also a guidebook for any entrepreneur. The against-the-odds triumph of Michael and Bonnie and Barefoot Cellars is a business lesson in creative thinking, optimism, flexibility, using your lack of money and experience, and maybe most of all, in how to learn from the astounding number of mistakes you will make.

This is also a lesson about people. It shows how independent thinkers can succeed, and how listening to everyone—customers, allies, employees, and each other—is the first way to solve problems. Plus, it's a reminder never to be afraid, if the moment is right, to put on a funny hat.

A couple notes about this book: *The Barefoot Spirit* is Michael and Bonnie's story as they and dozens of other people told it to me. But this is not an attempt at pure journalism; it's an act of collaboration, a way for them to tell what they learned and how they learned it.

The conversations among people in the story are, obviously, reconstructed. They came from interviews with as many people as possible. We stand by the gist of them all, but we are not pretending they are accurate word for word. They're in the book so

INTRODUCTION

you can understand more about the people who played a role in Barefoot's story.

Finally, I'm doing the writing because, honestly, I've fallen for Michael and Bonnie as businesspeople and just as people. They're creative, quirky, and thoughtful, they stand for something, they love each other, and they listen to everyone. I'm doing the writing because Michael Houlihan, Bonnie Harvey, and the Barefoot Spirit are all worth getting to know.

—Rick Kushman



Many people have been asking us to tell our story because it's such an important chapter in American wine. We chose Rick to write it after we learned the first time we met that he's one of us—a Barefooter at heart. He's a journalist who's covered politics, business, and Hollywood, but for us what matters most is that he's a wine writer who writes and teaches about wine like he actually enjoys it.

He thinks like we do: Wine should be fun, friendly, and interesting, but it shouldn't be scary. We also think the same about business and life. We all believe your values should be apparent in everything you do. So, simply enough, we chose Rick because he, too, has the Barefoot Spirit.

And we agree that Barefoot's story is a significant step in the evolution of wine in America. Our success gave the wine industry and wine drinkers permission to have fun, to be inclusive, and to believe there is not just one way to sell or enjoy wine.

We also want to tell our story because we want to share what we learned. We want entrepreneurs in any industry to know it's not going to be easy, but there is a way to persevere and succeed.

THE BAREFOOT SPIRIT

And we want people to know, that even while you're building your business, you can still give back and help the causes you hold dear.

We created—discovered, really—something we called Worthy Cause Marketing, because we had no money for advertising or much of anything at the beginning. So we found a way to support both Barefoot and the people and causes we cared about. We aided hundreds of non-profits with our wine, energy, and time, and their members spread the word about Barefoot. As we grew, we never did advertise, we just supported more worthy causes, and they made Barefoot one of America's most popular brands.

Worthy Cause Marketing was a key piece of Barefoot's success, but there were many other pieces that we discovered, too, through trial and, often, error.

We always tried to be mentors when we were running Barefoot, and now we have the chance to pass along to everyone the lessons that came so hard. There are too many to list, but they include everything from how to survive when you're small and how to turn your debts into assets, to how to grow into a national brand, how to create a company culture that works for you, and how to make your values part of your success. We believe this book can help good people avoid some of the pitfalls and the growing pains we experienced. We learned the hard way; you don't have to.

Within our story are the lessons all entrepreneurs need to survive, to thrive, to be successful, and to give their own brands and companies a spirit of fun, purpose, innovation, and heart. That's the Barefoot Spirit, and we believe it can help anyone with a dream.

—Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey