

# diabolo

## MAGAZINE

## Splendor in the Glass in Livermore Valley

Meet three female power players who are bringing their A games to our local wine region.

WRITTEN BY LAURA LEVY SHATKIN // April 19, 2019

### Carolyn Wente: Building on a Legacy

This year marks the 136th anniversary of Livermore's Wente Vineyards, making it the oldest continuously operated family-owned winery in the country. Fourth-generation winemaker and brand CEO Carolyn Wente now runs the company her grandfather once passionately led.

Wente grew up around the family business, participating in all aspects of grape growing and winemaking during weekends and school vacations (and on weekdays, before or after school, as needed). Her parents, grandparents, and two older brothers had a tremendous influence on her career path, exposing her to agricultural experiences on the farm and in the vineyards and to production at the winery. "My grandfather would pick us up early in the morning and drive through the vineyards, talking and explaining what was going on and what to look for during the various growing seasons," Wente recalls. Her family also encouraged her outside interests: When Wente was accepted at Stanford University, her parents urged her to spend summers away from the winery to gain different points of view. She took advantage of the opportunity to explore, working in commodities at the EF Hutton brokerage firm, interning for a U.S. senator, and completing a stint at a solar-energy start-up. She soaked up these diverse experiences and came to a better understanding of all the options she could pursue before ultimately joining the family winery in the 1980s.

"Generally, I never felt any resistance as a woman," Wente says, attributing that in large part to the way she was raised. "Girls and boys, men and women—all can do and achieve the same things. Just don't wait to be asked. Have confidence in your ability."

In recent years, Wente has played an integral role in the expansion of Wente Family Estates' portfolio of wines. The business has also grown to encompass more than just a winery under her direction: She introduced a restaurant on the property's grounds, a casual eatery serving Californian-Mediterranean fare, and an award-winning Greg Norman golf course. Now, she aspires to nurture the fifth generation of the Wente family and support their stewardship. "I would not be in the position I am today without my family and the people I have worked with through the years," she says. Despite the pressures of leading a century-old family business, Wente still loves what she does. "As a leader, I believe that if your job lets you satisfy some of your core values, you will feel that what you do is important," she says, "and you'll look forward to going to work each day."



Carolyn Wente, Wente Vineyards

