



# AMICI

**John Harris**  
**Owner, CEO**

Never idle, John Harris leads an adventurous life. Prior to establishing Amici Cellars, his business career spanned more than three decades and dozens of countries with posts in Bolivia, Argentina, Canada, Singapore and Australia.

A Texas native, he attended The University of Texas, never intending a desk job. A post-college walk-about through Europe eventually led to settling in South America to make his way in mining. But on a return trip home, he changed tack to developing technologies in the oil and gas industry. After two successful stints with Houston-based companies, California called with a start-up opportunity in Silicon Valley. Risky, perhaps, but John has never shied from risk taking ventures.

Long, adrenaline-fueled weeks in start-up mode gave way to John's weekend retreats more reminiscent of his rural roots – Napa Valley. Through his travels, John's immersion in culture and community was largely influenced by his interest in food and wine. He had started a conscientious collection of old-world Bordeaux, Burgundies and Champagne, and soon began collecting Northern California's new world wines. At home in Menlo Park, CA, he opened his doors and entertained, sharing his love of cooking and wine with colleagues and friends, including Bob and Celia Shepard. Along the way, these three kindred spirits' frequent visits to Napa Valley grew more serious with purpose and passion to produce a wine of their own – Amici Cellars.

Purchasing a home in St. Helena was just the beginning for John. Never one to do something halfway, he relocated to Bordeaux for two years study in the D.U.A.D Programme at the Université de Bordeaux, where fewer than 42 people are accepted each year. There, he gained valuable knowledge and relationships, while also adding vintages to his collection.

Returning to Napa, John became an active member in the community and even more active at Amici Cellars, guiding the winery from its early small production success to today's profitable portfolio of premier wines.

With his dedication to Amici Cellars being tantamount to the winery's success, downtime is an oxymoron, but John still makes every effort to entertain, cooking with ingredients grown in his garden, is a voracious reader, and enjoys any activity in the great outdoors, especially with his two sons.



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## **Bob Shepard Owner**

Bob Shepard has a laser-like focus and attention to detail that can be disarming. You're just as likely to see him walking the aisles of a nearby wine merchant discussing shelf placement, as you are to see him at a restaurant pouring Amici Cellars wines for clients. He's made a career out of building relationships.

A Bay Area native, Bob graduated from San Jose State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics, where he was also a member of the university's Division One golf team. A college internship in finance provided an early introduction to wine through regular business dinners. Intrigued, Bob applied the same practice and precision used in honing his golf game towards a more disciplined study of wine.

Post-graduation, he began his career in real estate investment and finance, eventually settling in Woodside, CA with his wife Celia, also a Bay Area native. With a shared passion for wine, they continued their exploration; Bob through practical study, a wine class with Master of Wine Peter Marks and together through more informal, but regular tastings with friends and neighbors like John Harris.

It was Bob's more spiritual study of wine, and frequent trips with Celia, their children and friends, to the world's famous wine growing regions in Italy and France, where vintner dreams crystallized. These travels further illuminated the importance of geography, terroir and winemaking techniques as the foundation, with the resulting wines informing the very fabric of culture, community and cuisine.

In 2000, through an introduction from John Harris, Bob saw an opportunity with Amici Cellars for a different kind of start-up, but a familiar environment that felt like home – working with a small group of people who really believe in what they're doing, who are passionate, energetic – an environment that Bob and John thrive in.

Indefatigable, Bob and John still spend half the year meeting with customers, crossing the country, racking up hundreds of thousands of airline miles. Bob, a dedicated salesman, borrows from the playbook of the legendary Robert Mondavi who spent countless miles on the road, "shaking hands with people."

When it comes to their winemaking philosophy, on par isn't good enough. They challenge the Amici Cellars team to bottle the best wines, year-over-year, no matter the price point; a commitment to quality that translates in an ever-growing number of fans.

Bob proudly credits Celia and their daughters for his success. As a family-owned business it's truly a team effort that requires sacrifice; without their support and understanding it simply wouldn't be possible. Despite his long hours and extended trips, Bob makes a point of being present for the girls' activities and occasionally still manages to squeeze in a round of golf.