



# The Barefoot Spirit: How Hardship, Hustle, and Heart Built America's #1 Wine Brand

*Michael Houlihan, Bonnie Harvey*

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It is hard to believe that such an iconic brand as Barefoot Wines began as a start-up in a laundry room of a rented farmhouse in the Sonoma County hills. Even more surprising is that the people who started it were just an average business couple, Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey, with no money and no real knowledge about the wine industry. The part that isn't a surprise is that, because of their lack of experience, and because the wine business is one massively complicated industry, they ran into difficulties and setbacks that regularly put the brand near death in the first two decades. What kept it going was an unshakable belief in Barefoot's potential, Michael's and Bonnie's use of universal business principles, and their never-say-die outlook despite facing one seemingly insurmountable hurdle after another. Those hardships, that hustle, and their heart, are the essence of the Barefoot Spirit.

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For years, Michael and Bonnie, the Barefoot Wine founders, have been asked to write a book about how this brand got started and became a best seller. The Barefoot Spirit, the New York Times Bestselling Business Paperback, traces that history and tells the story of how an unknown novelty wine became an American icon. It chronicles the unlikely events that made it possible, and it lays out the cornerstone business and lifestyle philosophies that made it, ultimately, an enduring success. By the time they sold the brand to E&J Gallo in 2005, they'd won a ton of awards and helped transform an entire industry from stuffy and intimidating to fun, casual, and socially aware.

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The Barefoot Spirit is not a dry business text. The lessons are cheerfully woven into a twenty-year business adventure story that's inspiring, amazing, and entertaining. It's a case study, an idea book, an uncommon peek behind the curtain of the wine business, and a snapshot of the American spirit, West Coast style.

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The book was written by award-winning journalist Rick Kushman after hundreds of hours of research and interviews with Michael, Bonnie, and many others.

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