



## BESPOKE COLLECTION

ARTISANAL BRANDS & EXPERIENCES

### **Michael Polenske** **Creative Director | Chairman | Founder**

Michael Polenske, creative director, chairman and founder of Bespoke Collection, was born in Bermuda to a military family. His father worked as a hurricane hunter and later worked in the Presidential Support Squadron responsible for piloting Air Force One and Two under President Nixon. After an itinerant early childhood, Polenske's family was later transferred to Travis Air Force Base near Napa Valley, where he spent most of his youth. His first exposure to wine came with family trips to California's wine country.

During college, Polenske complemented his business studies with wine classes while majoring in finance at Chico State. His original intention was to provide financial services to the vintners of Napa Valley, but by happenstance, he found himself working with the founders of the burgeoning technology boom of the eighties and nineties in Silicon Valley.

Throughout his 20 years of investment management, Polenske observed the fact that many of his clients preferred investments that reflected their personal interests. Applying the same principle to his investments, he displayed an impressive sensitivity to the prevailing zeitgeist. He became a founding investor of New York's storied Soho House, as well as Boulette's Larder in San Francisco, an epicurean restaurant embracing the slow food movement. Some of his other investments are The Vines of Mendoza in Argentina; Gott's Roadside (Taylor's Refresher) in San Francisco, St. Helena and Napa; Terzo, a sister restaurant to the acclaimed Rose Pistola; and Patina Atelier Antiques, which was an import business carrying European art and furnishings.

Michael began the current chapter of his life devoting his attention to "the business of leisure" with the acquisition of Blackbird Vineyards in 2003 and turning it into an ultra-premium label.

He added curator to his resume when he launched Ma(i)sonry Napa Valley—"a life aesthetic". Opened in the town of Yountville in the fall of 2008, Ma(i)sonry allows guests to appreciate and acquire art and furnishings, all while sampling artisan wines from 20+ collective winery partners, including all three labels that make up the Bespoke Collection.

In November of 2009, Polenske acquired the I. Wolk Gallery in St. Helena, as well as the sculpture gardens located at Aubege Du Soleil in Rutherford, Solage in Calistoga, and MacArthur Place in Sonoma. The I. Wolk Gallery merged with Ma(i)sonry to serve as Napa Valley's premier destination for the appreciation of art and design in five locations. In 2011, Polenske launched Recuerdo Wines with The Vines of Mendoza. In addition to a growing portfolio of wines, Recuerdo Wines offers wine lovers one-of-a-kind, exclusive wine experiences both north and south of the equator.

Philanthropically active, he is a founding board member of Festival Del Sole Napa Valley, which celebrates the art of life with components of music, art, food and wine. Prior to refocusing his time to Napa Valley, Polenske was active on various boards benefiting the San Francisco Ballet, Opera and Zoo. He was also a council member of the Woodrow Wilson Center, a nonpartisan think-tank in Washington, D.C. and is a current board member of the Russian National Orchestra.

Through September of 2006, Polenske served as a managing director of Quellos, focusing on financial and investment activities for private clients. Prior to Quellos, he was a managing director at Mezzacappa Management, LLC, an investment management firm. Before joining Mezzacappa, Polenske was president and CEO of Chase Manhattan Bank & Trust Co., N.A., heading up the private banking business in the Western U.S. Polenske joined Chase Manhattan Corporation from J.P. Morgan, where he served as the head of the private banking group's west coast/north region. Prior to J.P. Morgan, he was the managing principal of the San Francisco region for American Express Financial Advisors and was co-founder of both the San Mateo and San Francisco offices.