

## Gary Fisch Bio

Gary Fisch founded Gary's Wine & Marketplace in Madison, NJ in 1987. Gary's has four locations in Northern New Jersey, as well as a new flagship location in St. Helena, Napa Valley. Gary was voted "Retailer of the Year" by Beverage Dynamics magazine in 2012 and 2018, and by Market Watch magazine in 2014. Gary is widely known in the wine industry for his retail expertise and wine knowledge. Notably, Gary was an early adopter of the Premiere Napa Valley Auction, winning top bidder in 10 of the past 20 years. Gary recently served as President of the Wine & Spirits Guild of America, a group of multi-generational, family-owned wine businesses generating over \$3 billion per year in aggregate revenue. Aside from growing his retail footprint, Gary has also developed private label wine brands, including Fisch, Go Figure, Going Forward, and Grand Finale.

Gary Fisch admits that his business ascent was as much the product of an open mind as it was hard work. Fisch studied English and political science at Rider, where he was president of the Student Government Association in his sophomore and junior years. "By my senior year, all of my friends knew exactly what they were going to do next. I didn't have a clue," recounts Fisch.

He took a summer job assisting his father, who was a salesman for a wine and spirits distributor in Kearny, N.J. "I knew nothing about selling wholesale against more experienced salesmen, but I knew I'd be good at sales because I'm a good communicator," he says.

After his introduction to the liquor wholesale business, a chance visit to a small Northern California town changed his life. While visiting friends, Fisch took a day trip to Napa Valley.

"We dropped by the Louis M. Martini Winery in St. Helena, and the owner, Louis, a grape farmer and wine maker, took me under his wing," Fisch says. "In three hours, he showed me everything about making wine and I returned to New Jersey as an ambassador for Martini Wines. After that, anytime I sold a bottle of Louis Martini wine, I had the feeling that I was selling a friend's wine because he was so passionate about it." Fast forward ~35 years, Fisch now has a retail location located across the street from Louis Martini winery in St. Helena, CA.