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

Bonnie Harvey, Michael Houlihan

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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.
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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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This book is a testament to the American Entrepreneurial Spirit of resourcefulness, imagination, innovation, and out-of-the-box thinking.
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The Barefoot Spirit is an inspirational guidebook for anyone in business and a great read for everyone who loves a rags-to-riches story. Filled with encouragement, inspiration, and empowerment, including:

* How Michael and Bonnie used Worthy Cause Marketing instead of traditional advertising
* How they used boot-strapping instead of conventional financing
* The surprising advantages of being small and broke
* How creating a fun, yet hardworking positive company culture encourages innovative leadership
* How making mistakes the right way builds your business and saves essential relationships
* Why attitude and determination trumps knowledge and experience
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If you like wine, the wine country, or a story about how a plucky little winery transformed an industry, if you want to know what it takes to really succeed in the face of adversity, if you want to know how to use your core beliefs to build a national brand, then "The Barefoot Spirit" is for you.

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