



Messina Hof Family Biographies



Paul Mitchell Bonarrigo, *Chief Executive Officer and Owner*

Paul Mitchell Bonarrigo is the current Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Head Winemaker at Messina Hof Wine Cellars, Inc. Born into the Texas Wine Industry, Paul grew up working alongside Paul Vincent Bonarrigo and Merrill Bonarrigo, his parents and founders of Messina Hof, gaining knowledge in all aspects of the vineyard, winery, sales and marketing. Paul graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering from The United States Naval Academy and was commissioned as a United States Marine Corps Officer where he served on Active Duty. After two deployments to combat zones in Iraq as well as an overseas assignment in Nigeria, Paul returned to Messina Hof and worked as Operations Manager until becoming the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Winemaker in 2012. Paul received his certificate of Viticulture and Enology from UC Davis, and he has earned the Level 2 Award from the Wine and Spirits Education Trust (WSET). Paul serves as the President of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association (TWGGA) and Chairman of the Legislative Committee. He has served on multiple boards and committees representing Texas Wine throughout the United States and continues his family legacy of growing and making great Texas Wine.



Karen Bonarrigo, *Chief Administrative Officer and Owner*

Karen Bonarrigo started her journey into the Texas Wine Industry fifteen years ago after meeting her (now) husband, Paul M. Bonarrigo. Karen grew up in Pennsylvania and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in History from The George Washington University. During her time at The George Washington University she participated in the selective Elizabeth J. Somers Women's Leadership Program and worked at The George Washington University Law School as well as Marzulla and Marzulla Law Firm in Washington D.C. After graduation, Karen worked as a litigation paralegal in North Carolina while Paul served as an Active Duty Officer in the United States Marine Corps. Paul and Karen moved back to Texas in 2010 for Paul to begin the ownership and wine program transition with his parents, Paul V. and Merrill Bonarrigo. Karen transitioned into Messina Hof Winery as the Human Resources Manager in 2010, was promoted to Director of Administration in 2012 and then to Chief Administration Officer in 2018 which holds today. Karen currently serves within the industry as the Region 3 Foundation Director for the Texas Wine Foundation and Secretary/Treasurer on the Board of Experience Bryan-College Station (formerly known as the Bryan-College Station Convention and Visitors Bureau). Karen also serves as a Committee Member of Texas Hill Country Wineries' Marketing Committee and Legislative Committee. Karen previously held the positions of Vice-President, President, Past-President, and Chairman of the Legislative Committee of Texas Hill Country Wineries from 2016 through 2019. Karen holds a Wine and Spirits Education Trust (WSET) Level Two Award in Wine and Spirits and passed with distinction, and she recently passed the Introductory Level with The Court of Master Sommeliers. Karen was named a Master Lady of the Vine with the esteemed Brotherhood of the Knights of the Vine in 2017. Overseeing the food and wine pairing and education programs, she is dedicated to steering Messina Hof toward nationally recognized culinary programs while continuing to expand her passion for food and wine.



Paul Vincent Bonarrigo, *Founder*

Paul V Bonarrigo, born in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, graduated from Columbia, served in the Navy during Vietnam, and studied winemaking at UC Davis while stationed in California. He and wife Merrill founded Messina Hof Winery & Resort in 1977 in Bryan, Texas, time during which they helped pioneer the wine industry of Texas. A sixth-generation winemaker, Paul's passion for wine stems from a family rich in winemaking traditions. After 39 years Messina Hof continues to be one of the most awarded wineries in Texas in regional, national and international competitions. Under his leadership as Winemaker, Messina Hof won Top All Around Winery at Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. In 2013, Messina Hof earned a "Lifetime Achievement Award". Paul has served as chairman of the Texas Wine Industry Development Advisory Committee under three Agriculture Commissioners and fulfilled three terms as president of the TWGGA organization. He has been honored with the Qualia and John Crosby awards, as Businessman of the year, as Vin du

Professionale, and as a Supreme Master Knight.



Merrill Bonarrigo, *Founder*

Merrill Bonarrigo, a native of Bryan-College Station, Texas, graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in Business Management. She and her husband Paul V Bonarrigo founded Messina Hof Winery & Resort in 1977 in Bryan, Texas, and helped pioneer the wine industry of Texas. Under Merrill's management, Messina Hof took the lead in wine tourism, offered the first full service event company, developed with the Parks and Recreation Department of TAMU the first wine hospitality internship program; founded the Brazos Valley Cattle Baron's Ball; developed and produced a TWGGA annual wine marketing conference, and wrote the first wine and food pairing cookbook. In 2013, Messina Hof earned a "Lifetime Achievement Award". Merrill has been honored with the Louis F. Qualia award, the Blazing Star Award, TAMU Women's Former Student Legacy Award, and is a Supreme Master Lady of the Vine in the Knights of the Vine.