

**AUDIO: Andy Harris, Host of the SoCal Restaurant Show Interviews
Dave Specter of Bells Up Winery, Part 2 of 2 [TRANSCRIPT]
Recorded December 28, 2019**

Tristan Beeman ([00:00](#)):

This is Tristan Beeman of Wine Exchange in Santa Ana. You're listening to a spectacular vintage year in food news. SoCal Restaurant Show. Cheers.

Andy Harris ([00:10](#)):

And welcome back. It is the SoCal Restaurant Show. And we're here with you every Saturday morning from 10:00 AM until 12 noon right here on AM 830 KLAA the home of Ducks hockey and Angels baseball. I'm Andy Harris, the executive producer and co-host of the show. So happy to be sitting in the chair with you this holiday weekend between Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's. Kind of exciting that we're going into a new decade, do keep up with us on social media. We're on all the platforms, a lot of good information there that connects Saturdays, and we're enthusiastically presented to you each and every week by Melissa's World Variety Produce and West Coast Prime Meats.

Andy Harris ([00:49](#)):

Not too long ago, I was back up in the Willamette Valley for the second time this year and had a chance to meet with a smaller, more personal winery. That is the husband and wife team in Newberg, Oregon called Bells Up Winery, and it is a pleasure to welcome their co proprietor and winemaker Dave Specter, back to the show, Dave. Good morning.

Dave Specter ([01:13](#)):

Hello again, Andy.

Andy Harris ([01:16](#)):

We want to let our listeners know a little bit Dave, because we've kind of whet their whistle and intrigued them a little bit about the wines that Bells Up is doing. Very briefly, you were in Cincinnati in a whole other career, very and, and, and your wife was in a whole other career though, the, the marketing background that she has obviously transferred to, to Bells Up. But what were you doing? And just briefly, how did all this happen? Because so many people, Dave, are locked into what they're doing and not necessarily happy and fear initiating that chapter two, which you definitely did and obviously are much happier now.

Dave Specter ([02:08](#)):

Absolutely. And you know, it's one of those stories that it's tough to tell in a really short, but I'll, I'll do the best I can. My previous life was, I was a tax lawyer for 10 years. I worked for major multinational accounting firms and I helped to analyze mergers, transactions and other sort of corporate transactions. And I was good enough at it, but I was very unhappy with it. I worked with a lot of wonderful people and I worked at a lot of great couple great firms, but it was really just more the lifestyle and the nature of the job that just got to me and wore me down the, the way Sara and I got into wine just was completely unrelated to that. We, we started, it was our five-year wedding anniversary and we started making it as a hobby. We, we both have always loved wine, although as I always say, neither of us are really academics about it.

Dave Specter ([02:59](#)):

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You know, the things that we love, we're going to the wineries and kind of learning by absorption being onsite and talking to people versus sitting around reading books about it. And so our first wine was made with a winemaking kit that you can get from any supply shop. And I just kind of got the bug and it didn't take too long before I started saying, no, I need to actually get real grapes, which wasn't always the easiest thing when you live in Ohio, but we were able to do it. And it, my love for kind of grew from there. And it, it got to a point where in my career I was starting to get pressure to, to look at going on partner track at my firm. And I realized, I couldn't imagine doing the next 20, 25 years of, of that kind of work.

Dave Specter ([03:42](#)):

And, you know, to your, to your point about making the leap, you know, I think the thing that Sara and I talked a lot about in our decision-making when it came time to how we were going to do this was, what was the worst thing that could happen? You know, we, we figured, Hey, if, if we fall flat on our face, you could always go back to doing what you were doing. And you'd have a lot of really interesting stories to tell in your job interviews as to why you hadn't done any work in five years.

Andy Harris ([04:10](#)):

But I think the thing that really got to us as far as the timing perspective was the lesson that we had from Sara's professional mentor you know, a truly wonderful woman named Kelly. And she was so sadly diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at age 40 when she had three young children and, and this diagnosis was kind of all happening at about the time when, you know, we were having these discussions about, you know, can we make these changes in our lives? And I think the, the Kelly experience just continued to push the idea that life is too short to be sitting and miserable. The last thing we ever wanted to do was get to the end of our lives and wonder what if, you know, I, I don't think we've been afraid to fail. I think we've certainly been, you know, we've certainly been pushing ourselves and pushing ourselves to succeed, but I think that failure would have, was a better option than not having tried at all.

Andy Harris ([05:08](#)):

Dave very well said. Now transitioning into something a lot more fun. Let's talk about some of the wines. We talked about the Seyval it is called 2018 Helios. Just briefly tell us a little bit about its characteristics.

Dave Specter ([05:26](#)):

Oh, so sure. So the beautiful thing about Seyval Blanc is that it tastes, it doesn't, because it's got that Sauvignon Blanc characteristic to it. It tastes like something that people have had before. And a lot of times some of these hybrid grapes can taste really, really zany and totally foreign, but this is something that is, is a little bit more familiar than that. It's, it's crisp, it's clean. And then the way I make my wines, and I have to say that the 2018 version of this is sold out, but the 2019 is coming back in the spring and we'll even have more of it when we get to 2019. So be looking for that as we, as we get closer into late March, early April.

Dave Specter ([06:06](#)):

Um but you know, for me, my goal in making every wine that I do is about versatility. I want these every, every wine that I do, I want to be able to be a food pairing wine, if you choose it to be, but at the same time will do perfectly wonderful on its own. So when I making my whites, when I'm making my Rosé I

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want them to be a little fuller bodied and have a little more structure. So the Seyval Blanc and the Pinot Blanc, and the Rosé are all going to have a little bit more weight, especially in the middle of your tongue. The reds, I do a little bit differently. I'm looking for softer, more elegant, something that's just going to be enjoyable. You can just kind of close your eyes and it feels like it's kind of just taking you away to someplace nice and quiet and, and secure and warm, and, you know, just kind of create that full experience kind of in your mouth and then kind of all the way through your brain as, as you're absorbing it.

Andy Harris ([07:01](#)):

Well, all right, let's move on to another wine that our group really enjoyed. And this is the Estate Rosé of Pinot Noir that you talked briefly about in the last segment, but the official name is the Prelude. Is that still available or is the 2018 sold out on that?

Dave Specter ([07:17](#)):

The 18 is sold out, but the 19 is coming back in the spring as well. We're, we're going to be fully back. That's kind of typical, you know, once we get to about Thanksgiving the Rosé is, is pretty much sold out at that point. But you know, like the great thing about it is it comes back every year. I make a very unusual Rosé, at least this is what people tell me. I make it a hundred percent from the Pinot Noir grape. And a lot of times what we tend to see here in the Valley, especially from pinot made rosés is that they end up being very, very light and, you know, they have some flavor, but it just doesn't end up kind of holding on. And for me, it's really about how it's a long time that I keep the skins in contact with the juice. It builds both a good amount of that salmon color and a depth of the flavor that people really enjoy. It's funny, I sell a lot of this wine to people from down in Texas, because it's the only Rosé they can find that ends up holding up to things like brisket and, you know, kind of the, the big one, the big meats that, that they're used to down there. So it does a lot of different things and it fits in great with what we want to accomplish.

Andy Harris ([08:25](#)):

Well, you know definitely a very well balanced wine. Now you, we talked about the Syrah earlier the Firebird you like to describe that is a Syrah for Pinot drinkers. Just very briefly explain the why on that, David.

Dave Specter ([08:42](#)):

Sure. You know, as I said, you know, before being in Pinot country, you know, folks here really love their, their wines, but you know, what I, what we see is that there is so much Pinot Noir that's planted and produced here in the Valley that, you know, the customers that have come to see us are almost always saying, you know, we love your Pinots. We love all the Pinots in the Valley, but it'd be nice to have some other options too. And what we hear specifically is it's, it's really not about wanting to have something that's big and heavy and tannic and jammy, but it's just about having some other flavors. So bringing in the Syrah is, is kind of one way that we can accomplish that. And as I said, we get this fruit from Northeastern, Oregon. It's a vineyard called Summit View, and it's a very different vineyard than you'll see in most parts of Walla Walla.

Dave Specter ([09:31](#)):

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Most of the vineyards that you see are on the Valley floor, it gets hot, it stays hot. And the, the fruit that you get is often very concentrated. You get heavy tannins, very jammy. The vineyard I use is up on the side of a mountain. So during the day you're going to get the heat and the sun and the exposure, but at night, it cools off. And so when I bring those grapes back here to make the wines, what we see is that it gives you so much more of an openness and just brings the fruit out without the heavy tannin. It doesn't feel like all the enamel is being stripped off your teeth. And you're not going to wake up the next morning with headaches.

Andy Harris ([10:06](#)):

Yeah. There you go, Dave. Unfortunately we are out of time, but before we need to say goodbye, we definitely want people to have the website so they can get more information on Bells Up Winery. Also, if you want more of a profile of each of the wines, we talked about my colleague, Cori Solomon, who is the head of the LA wine writers on her blog. She has done a nice write-up of all the wines we tasted with technical notes at Bells Up. Her website is writtenpalette.com palette spelled P A L E T T E.com. Now, Dave, your information, if you would.

Dave Specter ([10:42](#)):

Absolutely. So our website is [www dot bells up winery](http://www.bellsupwinery.com) that's B E L L S U P winery, all one word.com. And you can also reach us by email at info@bellsupwinery.com as well.

Andy Harris ([10:59](#)):

And for all our listeners, when you find yourself up in the Willamette Valley area or in the area of Portland, do make an appointment and go out and do some tasting at Bells Up Winery meet Dave and Sara, very special experience. And if you go to their website, you will also find out where and why the name Bells Up Winery comes from and why all of their wines are named after musical pieces. Kind of fun, Dave, thanks for the time. Happy holidays, and look forward to staying in touch.

Dave Specter ([11:32](#)):

It's been a pleasure, Andy. Thank you so much.

Andy Harris ([11:34](#)):

You are more than welcome. You are listening to the SoCal Restaurant. When we come back, it is chef Yani and we're talking about the olive pit Mediterranean grills in Huntington beach and Brea. What a wonderful success story. We're proudly presented by Melissa's World Variety Produce and West Coast Prime Meats.