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by Alisha Sommer

Maternal Forces In Sync

HOW THE WINE INDUSTRY CAN SUPPORT WORKING MOMS

"I think every working mom probably feels the same thing. You go through big chunks of time where you're just thinking, 'This is impossible—oh, this is impossible.' And then you just keep going and keep going, and you sort of do the impossible." —Tina Fey

CHALLENGES FOR MOTHERS exist at almost every level within the wine industry, from the vineyard to the tasting room to the C-suite. Winemaking is strenuous work, requiring considerable physical labor on an unpredictable schedule; during harvest season, it is not uncommon to work 60 or more hours a week. Women in these roles struggle to balance their desire to achieve their career goals with the needs of their families. "With my husband in the industry too, harvest is this wild time where we're both working excessive hours," says Jennifer Reichardt, winemaker and owner of Raft Wines. "We do want kids and have talked about timing, but we just don't know how it will work."

For Tahira Habibi, sommelier and founder of The Hue Society, navigating events was one of the more difficult parts of re-entering the industry after having a child. "Wine is always after hours. As a single parent, after-work hours are after-school hours. I had to bring my child with me," she says. "I would strap her on my back and go to tastings." Though she figured out ways to bring her child into her work environment safely, she experienced judgment from those around her. "Why can't child care be built in?" Habibi asks. "If restaurants can have water bowls for dogs, why can't there be a room for children to sit and color?" Now Habibi creates food and wine experiences with the intention of making them as accessible as possible. At Wine & Culture Fest in Atlanta this August, for instance, she will provide onsite child care for a nominal fee

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The Hue Society founder Tahira Habibi with her daughter.

people for Wente Family Estates. "The organic and consistent inclusion of women creates a culture in which women support one another through daily connection, shared understanding, and compassion [for] the realities of pursuing your passion at work and at home. Each individual female leader's story and experience is unique, and our continued goal is to be an employer of choice for women within the industry. It is part of the fabric of the brand, the tradition of Wente Family Estates, and it is organic to our growth."

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to all parents who might not otherwise be able to attend the celebration of BIPOC achievements in food and wine due to lack of available care. While conversations about the relationship between career and family continue to occur over coffee among women like my friends and me, what kinds of conversations are industry executives and management teams having about the needs of working mothers in the industry? At Wente Family Estates, the strategy involves the strong presence of women in leadership positions. "Female leaders are integrated within every facet and discipline of the business," says Suzi Potts, senior vice president of human resources and head of

Alisha Sommer is the director of marketing and e-commerce for Trois Noix Wine.

Fresh Voices is a collaborative effort between The SOMM Journal, The Tasting Panel, and 501(c)(3) organization Dream Big Darling. The concept centers around providing opportunities to and amplifying the voices of the next generation of women in the wine and spirits industry. To learn more about Dream Big Darling, visit dreambigdarling.org or follow [@dreambigdarling_org](https://www.instagram.com/dreambigdarling_org).