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## Overview

Confident in what he calls his “unstoppable entrepreneurial spirit,” James MacPhail founded MacPhail Family Wines in 2002. He chose his childhood Radio Flyer wagon for the logo. “It symbolizes fun and family,” says James, “and it represents timeless design and high quality.”

The MacPhails have a 125-year history of successful, local businesses in Marin and Sonoma counties. In founding MacPhail Family Wines, James is using his family’s inspiration to build a wine brand centered on quality, product and service.

In the 1990s, James began working in specialized, family-owned wineries in the Dry Creek Valley and Russian River Valley appellations. Each a unique brand, all produced wines expressing local character. James tasted the imprint of vineyards on wine and learned the techniques of handcraftsmanship in winemaking. Wine became the avenue for James’ creative expression and a means of sharing life’s pleasures. From his first vintage in 2002, he deliberately built his brand in small increments, establishing personal relationships with his growers and customers while building a reputation for extraordinary quality and service.

For six vintages, James made wine in a custom crush facility, alongside other small producers of Pinot Noir. In 2008, James realized a long-held dream when he built his own winery, erecting a handsome barn-like building quite literally in his backyard. With an eye toward sustainable development, he installed a unique, constructed wetlands that reclaim all the winery’s wastewater.

“This little winery allows me to fine tune my winemaking, crafting small lots with traditional techniques, minimal intervention and hands-on attention,” says James.

“My use permit is for just 5,000 cases, so production will remain small in scale and personal in style.”

MacPhail Family Wines is a Pinot Noir specialist, James’ hands-down favorite variety. Purchasing grapes from passionate, attentive growers who do it right — respect their land with sustainable farming and tailor practices to the terroir — James is concentrating on Pinot Noir from Anderson Valley in Mendocino County and Sonoma Coast. He is resolute, working solely with growers and grapes that have personality and integrity. The impressive reputation of MacPhail wines has inspired growers to offer their grapes to James. The 2007 vintage boasts seven vineyard designated Pinot Noirs.

“I am fortunate,” says James. “MacPhail Family Wines is my opportunity to do something in my life for the joy of it, and to share it with others.” He defines the success of his brand by customers who appreciate the high quality of his wines, value his fresh approach to service and find him down to earth and accessible. How large will the brand grow? Production will always be small, held in check by James’ determination to be personally involved in farming, winemaking, marketing and hospitality. MacPhail Family Wines is a relation-shaped business that will remain small in size and personal in style.

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