Bill Price III  
Principal

Bill Price spent much of his youth in Hawaii, where he enjoyed his free time surfing with his buddies. As he describes his path from seawater to wine in a calm, steady voice, it’s hard to guess that this is the same man who spent much of the last 30 years in corporate board rooms. Rather, it seems only natural that Price would trade in a thriving business career for a life among the vines, and that the father of three would wax poetic on the importance of leaving the world a better place for generations to come—whether through sustainable vineyard and winery practices, or through his nonprofit work.

Born in Los Angeles, Price was introduced to wine at an early age by his father, who was born in France, and would give him thimble-sized tastes of wine mixed into a glass of water. Price remembers playing ball against the wall of the Louis M. Martini Winery in St. Helena, bored and impatient, while his father, who often brought his son along on sojourns to Napa and Sonoma wine country, tasted wine inside the winery.

Price attended high school in Hawaii before returning to California to study at Stanford University. He earned his law degree from the University of California Berkeley’s Boalt Hall School of Law, and following a few years practicing law and also consulting at Bain & Company, he was hired to work for Jack Welch at GE Capital.

In 1992, Price co-founded Texas Pacific Group (TPG), a private equity firm, with two partners. TPG invested in companies as large and diverse as J. Crew, Burger King, Continental Airlines, and Petco. In 1995, TPG purchased Beringer. “That’s when I was really introduced to the wine business,” says Price.

The company continued to invest in wineries, including Chateau St. Jean., which sourced grapes for some of its wines from the Durell Vineyard in Sonoma. It was then that Price began to take a more active interest not just in the business of wine, but in vineyards as well. He purchased the Durell Vineyard in 1998, and launched Three Sticks Wines in 2002. In 2007, he sold his share of TPG back to his partners, and entered the wine business full-stop. He was soon approached by Steve Kistler to partner with him in his vineyards, and Price’s role as a farmer began to grow.

“I realized I’d made all the money I needed to make in my career, and I longed to return to something that brought me back in touch with the natural world on a more regular basis,” says Price.

Price is the proprietor of Classic Wines, LLC and Price Family Vineyards, LLC—including ownership and management of Sonoma Coast vineyards including Durell, 111 Wilson Vineyard, DuPont Vineyard, One Sky Vineyard and Gap’s Crown Vineyard. Classic Wines also has ownership interests in Kistler Vineyards, Buccella, Three Sticks and Lutum. Price is chairman of Kosta Browne Winery and Gary Farrell Winery.

Price sees his family vineyards and winery investments as something he can share with his children someday. Already, his two eldest children have wines named for them: a “James” Cuvee from Three
Sticks, and a “Natalie” Cuvee from Kistler. Soon, Price says, he’ll introduce a wine in honor of his toddler-age daughter, Alana.

Price is also an active philanthropist, and holds positions as Chairman of the Gladstone Foundation, which serves as the fundraising arm of the Gladstone Institutes, a leading organization in the research and development of solutions to widespread disease; and as Chair of Common Sense Media, which seeks to rate, advocate and educate families and schools on media technology for kids.

Price resides in Marin County with his family, and strives to get in at least 30 days of surfing per year.