

LEADER TO LEADER

Leading from the Middle

In Conversation with Martin M. Reyes

Regine T. Rousseau



**Meet the Author: Regine T. Rousseau** is the founder and CEO of Shall We Wine, a strategic marketing company. Rousseau is a wine and spirits entrepreneur, writer, presenter and media personality, focusing on making wine knowledge accessible to people at all levels of proficiency. She is recognized as a 2022 "Leader in the Wine Industry" by *WineBusiness Monthly*, a nominee for the 2020 *Wine Enthusiast* "Wine Star Awards," "Wine Educator of the Year," a WSET Level 3 with Merit, an International Sommelier Guild Level II and an Executive Bourbon Steward, Stave and Thief. She has authored and/or been featured in articles in *The Drop*, *New Yorker*, *Wine Enthusiast*, *Black Enterprise*, *Black Food and Beverage*, *Wine Spectator*, *Forbes* and *Chicago Tribune*.

**IN THIS EPISODE OF** Leader to Leader, Regine T. Rousseau sits down with Martin M. Reyes, MW, founder of Reyes Wine Group and partner at WineWise LLC, a prominent California importer. Together, they delve into Martin's diverse experiences within the wine industry and his latest groundbreaking endeavor, the Napa RISE Initiative. This article provides a comprehensive overview of their discussion, highlighting Martin's collaborative approach, the importance of community and his strategies for fostering impactful partnerships.

Reyes shares his passion for collaboration, stressing its central role in his personal and professional life. Drawing from his extensive experience that spans over 15 years, Martin identifies collaboration as the driving force behind successful projects and businesses. He emphasizes the power of working together within a sense of community, whether in small groups of friends and family or on a larger scale with different organizations.

Throughout the interview, Martin emphasized his belief in bridging gaps and building relationships. Instead of seeking agreement at any cost, he values the diversity of opinions, as a mechanism, to test ideas and challenge

the status quo. Martin highlights the importance of surrounding oneself with people who can balance strengths and weaknesses, forming partnerships that propel projects forward.

One of Martin's remarkable achievements is the Napa RISE Initiative, a program that encourages businesses to actively pursue social equity, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cultivate healthy vineyards while giving back to the local community. This is more than just a conference: Napa RISE comprises a year-long mentorship program, carefully guiding two participants towards achieving ambitious goals.

The discussion continues with Martin and I exploring the intricacies of collaboration and the selection process for potential partners. Martin explained that he seeks individuals who complement his own skills and abilities, creating a harmonious balance that sets the stage for success. By assembling a diverse team that brings unique perspectives, he fosters an environment where ideas are rigorously tested, promoting innovation and growth.

Collaboration and community lie at the heart of what makes Reyes an impactful leader. Through his various roles as an importer, buyer, writer, winemaker and podcast co-host, Martin has consistently worked towards cultivating meaningful relationships and fostering a sense of togetherness. From his latest venture, the Napa RISE Initiative, it is evident that Martin's dedication to collaboration has transformative effects, not only in the wine world but also in promoting social equity and ecological sustainability.

This conversation with Martin Reyes left me inspired to embrace collaboration in my own lives and endeavors. As we bridge gaps and seek out diverse perspectives, we must tap into the collective strength of our communities, nurturing opportunities for growth and positive change. **WBM**



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