

HERLIFE®

KEEPING WOMEN CONNECTED

FEBRUARY 2017

Bridal Issue

REAL ESTATE

BUYING YOUR HOME
SWEET HOME TOGETHER

#TRENDING

BRIDAL AND FLORAL
TRENDS WITH AZ FLORAL

GREEN LIVING

CHOOSING TO BE
A GREEN BRIDE

Marisa Manna Ferrell

A ROLE MODEL IN LIFE AND BUSINESS

HERLIFE INSPIRATIONS

WRITTEN BY
REBECCA FLANSBURG

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DEE YATES

MAKEUP BY
MEGAN MANNA

HAIR BY
RENAISSANCE SALON

FLOWERS PROVIDED BY
BELLE'S LODI
FLOWER SHOP



Marisa Manna Ferrell



AN EVENTFUL LIFE NURTURES AN EVENTFUL BUSINESS

As a fourth-generation grape grower, Marisa Manna Ferrell has always cultivated a deep love of wines, vineyards and the wine country lifestyle. Born and raised in Lodi, Marisa spent much of her younger years working alongside her parents, Mike and Lisa Manna, and her brother, Matt Manna, in the family's grape-growing business. After graduating from high school, her desire to learn more about the wine industry prompted her to enroll at Sonoma State to study wine business. While attending college, she also took on a part-

time job at a local tasting room in Sonoma County. It was a decision that set the wheels of her future in motion.

"I loved working at the winery tasting room in Healdsburg," Marisa remembered. "It was a fun job that kept me in touch with the industry I loved. A couple of months into my employment, the winery's event manager quit. I went to the owners and asked if I could fill in. I didn't have any formal training in managing events, but my parents had always entertained at home so I felt very comfortable with that topic. I also knew from personal experience what it took to pull an event together. So

instead of canceling their next event, the business owners agreed to let me have a shot at it. I also told them that if the event I was going to coordinate for them went well and they liked my work, I would be open to filling the role of event manager for them."

BEGINNING A CAREER

Long story short, her test event went off without a hitch and Marisa held the winery's event manager position for four years. As her reputation for being a thorough and professional event planner grew, she soon found herself taking on side work as a wedding planner,



with her employer's blessing. Not long after that, a vision for creating her own business based on her skills and knowledge began to form. She immersed herself in months of researching and creating a business plan, determined to make informed decisions regarding her business dream. Her parents were admittedly hesitant about the idea at first, but soon got on board when they saw how committed their daughter was about starting her own event planning business.

"I came up with the name, So Eventful, with my best friend over a couple of bottles of wine," Marisa shared with a laugh. "We were brainstorming on business ideas one evening and, after describing all that I had been involved in over the last few years, my friend made the observation, 'You're just so eventful!' I loved the name immediately and I knew it would be perfect for my business."

REALIZING A DREAM

In 2008, So Eventful opened its doors as a professional, full-service company that provided the Central Valley region with professional planning and support for weddings, social events and everything in between. To date, Marisa's business employs 11 event planners who work alongside her to cover Northern California and destination weddings at locations such as Mexico and Hawaii. Marisa's team is composed of some of the most skilled and talented wedding and event planners in the industry, each with their own unique background. Together the team endeavors to create extraordinary events and to make their clients feel like a guests at their own event.

"As a professional wedding and event planner, I have a great sense of fashion, color and design," Marisa noted. "So Eventful is known for creating an event that is the perfect complement to our client's own style and desires. Whether you want dramatic beauty or just elegant simplicity, So Eventful weaves the various elements together to create a work of art on our client's special day."

A FAMILY TEAM

The newest addition to the successful So Eventful team is also a very special one. Marisa's husband, Brian, left his corporate job of 16 years to join his wife in growing the So Eventful em-

pire, a move that has proven to be a savvy one for the business while also being a positive one for the duo.

"Having Brian on board as the business manager of So Eventful has been a blessing for us," Marisa noted. "This business has just grown by leaps and bounds over the years and we are getting busier and busier with every passing month. Having him here gives me peace of mind and has given the business a strong structure that wasn't in place during our early years. He's worked very hard to form structure and flow by creating operating procedures, timelines and checklists for our team. It has helped us all be more effective and more professional in everything that we do."

Through his role as business manager, Brian has also implemented a positive change that not only sets the company apart as a premier event planning company, but one that has their clients' wellbeing in mind as well. At his urging, all of So Eventful's planners are CPR and first aid certified, one of the many extra touches that have elevated the business' already stellar reputation.

"Marisa built this company, and we own it together, but she gets the final say in all decisions," Brian added. "It's been great working

"I feel so blessed to be living the life I am living," Marisa concluded. "It can be a challenging juggling act some days, but when it comes to marriage, children and business, you do the best you can do to be present in all aspects. Brian and I agree that family comes first and we work very hard to focus on what is right in front of us. That includes walking away from work when the kids need our love and attention. I would advise women to love your family with all of your heart, but never feel guilty about enjoying your work. Do your best in everything you do and be the best role model for your children in the process."



together, and as the business grows, we grow stronger as a couple as well. I am really proud to be part of this process and work alongside my wife in a truly successful business.”

REACHING A BALANCE

Marisa and Brian both agree that working side by side has also instilled in them the importance of respect, communication and understanding, both on and off the job. “They say opposites attract, and Brian and I are complete polar opposites,” Marisa observed. “But I think that works to our advantage and we balance each other out beautifully. Each of us brings different strengths, perspectives and talents to the table and we recognize and respect that.”

The work-life balance became even more important when their son, Asher, was born in 2014 and their daughter, Sutton, was born in July 2016. When not working on their business, the Ferrells can be found in their boat enjoying the water, sun and family time as much as possible. When not playing with Asher and Sutton, both Marisa and Brian also like to decompress and relax over a good glass of wine

or a casual game of golf. Marisa also finds comfort and joy in cooking, pairing wines with foods and looking for opportunities to gather with friends and family for a party. A self-proclaimed “super-social person who loves life,” this wife, mother and successful businesswoman is grateful for the gifts she’s been given and for the amazing support from family, friends, her team and her clients.

“I feel so blessed to be living the life I am living,” Marisa concluded. “It can be a challenging juggling act some days, but when it comes to marriage, children and business, you do the best you can do to be present in all aspects. Brian and I agree that family comes first and we work very hard to focus on what is right in front of us. That includes walking away from work when the kids need our love and attention. I would advise women to love your family with all of your heart, but never feel guilty about enjoying your work. Do your best in everything you do and be the best role model for your children in the process.” ■



“As a professional wedding and event planner, I have a great sense of fashion, color and design,” Marisa noted. “So Eventful is known for creating an event that is the perfect complement to our client’s own style and desires. Whether you want dramatic beauty or just elegant simplicity, So Eventful weaves the various elements together to create a work of art on our client’s special day.”