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Siblings Support One Another to Pursue Their Dreams

By Amanda Kuehn



Brother and sister, Dan and Katie Batlin, at Buon Vino. Photo Amanda Kuehn

and he's brought his sister along for the ride.

"Katie has been with me from day one," said Batlin, who has always wanted to start a business. "She brings the creativity."

Katie Batlin, who majored in sports and recreational management at Saint Mary's, took additional classes in business and Italian while she was at San Francisco State. Having fulfilled her dream of playing professionally, she's now all about supporting her brother.

"Dan and I are really proud for each other," said Katie. "It gives us a special connection." She recounted a time when she was struggling with her situation in Australia and Dan encouraged her, stating, "If it were easy, everyone would be doing it."

The siblings have been in this together from the start. "We would drive around in Dan's car, checking out different places and asking, 'Are these the kind of people we're trying to target? Can we see them walking into our business?'" Katie recalled. The Batlins looked at over 100 different places. Dan negotiated on 10, all of which fell through. Buon Vino made its first appearance at the Walnut Creek Wine Walk back in September 2013, and moved into the shop on Locust Street shortly thereafter.

Dan opened Buon Vino April 11, 2014. Katie joined him as soon as she returned from Australia, where she had already been working on the company's social media promotion. Both brother and sister credit their friends and family for being extremely supportive. "I don't think I could adequately put into words how incredible our family is," said Katie Batlin. "[Our parents] made it safe for us to pursue our dreams and encouraged us to take risks. ... Pursuing our dreams

Moraga native Katie Batlin has realized some pretty lofty dreams. Longtime basketball player, and graduate of Miramonte High School and Saint Mary's College, she has recently returned from an international adventure.

After playing a final year of college basketball with San Francisco State University, Batlin was recruited to play professionally with the Southern Peninsula Sharks in the Big-V League in Victoria, Australia. After five months away, she's back in California and standing by her brother Dan Batlin's side, helping him to realize the dream he's been chasing ever since an extended stay in Italy: to open an Italian-style retail tasting room.

Buon Vino, located in downtown Walnut Creek, is exactly what Batlin had hoped for: an establishment created to "change the way Americans enjoy wine." A 2004 graduate of Campolindo High School, Batlin boasts strong Italian roots and has honed his wine prowess in both Tuscany, Italy and the Napa Valley.

After four years at Chico State, where he majored in business and Spanish, Batlin left his job at Lafayette's Pizza Antica to stay with family friends in Florence. "That's where I first encountered this kind of shop," he said, referring to the retail tasting room. "I said to myself, 'One day I'm going to do this in America.'" And so he has,

is a testament to that."

Much like the Batlin family, Buon Vino is one of a kind. "It's a tasting room," Dan explained. "Not a bar, not a kitchen." Clients can stop by on their way to a party or as they're coming home from work, sample a few of the wines and select one for the evening. The Batlins will fill the bottle right there in the shop. There's also a large back room available for special occasions. It has already seen quite a bit of traffic.

Dan's primary objective is to pair people with wine, giving them something they can take home and enjoy. "It's about relaxing, family and friends," he said. "All of my favorite things."

Dan and Katie could go on for hours discussing their aspirations and mutual excitement. "We've always been a part of each others' dreams," said Katie Batlin. And now they're inviting the entire Bay Area to join them.

You can find Dan and Katie Batlin at Buon Vino from 12 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays at 1545 Locust Street. Stop by and sample a dream turned reality.

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