

## Carla Snow's Story

### 'Woman of Focus'

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*You have control over your success and you are the only one that does. Do not let people tell you that you can't do it,* says Carla Snow this month's Woman of Focus.

Drive, determination to succeed, faith, positive thinking, and passion are the ingredients to success for Carla who is New Hampshire's first female CSW, Certified Specialist of Wine with the Society of Wine Educators. She received Advance Certification with merit from Wine & Spirit Education Trust where she is currently enrolled in the diploma program to become a Master of Wine.

Carla also studied at Le Cordon Bleu in Australia where she earned both culinary and Sommeliers Certifications. She then traveled to Bordeaux, France and then the Rhone to apprentice with the world's best wine makers before returning home to New Hampshire.

"I started in the restaurant industry at the age of 14 and knew that was where I wanted to be. I decided then that I wanted my own restaurant. I went to college right after high school but only for an Associate's Degree."

After over 20 years in the hospitality field, Carla was in executive management at the W Hotel in San Francisco. She had about 100 employees and was required to sit in on many meetings. She realized she was removed from her passion and needed to learn more. So she left San Francisco with only a pack on her back and enrolled in Culinary School in Australia where she received a culinary degree. "Here I discovered the amazing and constantly changing world of wine. I was very excited!"

Carla met the wife of a wine maker from Bordeaux in her travels and they offered her an apprenticeship. She then moved to France for 6 months and worked with two great winemakers. Here she learned more in six months than she had in ten years.

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“I was hooked. I moved back to New Hampshire where I grew up in order to find a restaurant. I worked for a wine distributor for three years while I looked for the perfect spot to fit the business plan I had worked on for so many years. Since I was then in my mid 30's I decided to start a family. Once I met my daughter for the first time it was love at first sight and I knew I was not going to spend 90+hours a week running a restaurant.”

Carla created her business, **A Grape Affair**, after being asked to do many private events when while she was working with the wine distributor.

“I was single when my daughter was born and when I decided to start the business. It was scary but I knew I needed to be a very present mom for her. Knowing that I was where I should be kept me working hard and moving forward. I am a very driven, positive woman with a sincere faith in God and the plan he has for me.”

Keep negative thoughts at bay, is Carla's advice to women just starting their career ladder. Stay focused on your business plan, set goals, especially small ones (if they are too big they are overwhelming). You have to be willing to re-invest in your business to keep it going but take advantage of as much free advertising as possible, she says.

Goal setting has always been a key component in Carla's success. “I have always done a business plan and reassess the business every year to ensure I am staying true and not going off track. That is important to remain true and consistent and not try to change with every wind of change. I set personal and business goals every year and love to check the boxes complete.”

“I go 110 or 0 and realized I needed to slow down a little for myself and my family. I want to do everything and do it well. I am excited to move forward with a yoga and meditation practice, but have started the process by just letting a few things go and trying to remember I started the business for my family so I need to keep that in mind.”

“I am most proud of being self employed and a mom and loving both. My faith is huge as a support in everything I do. My husband (we were married in 2008) is amazing and so

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supportive of what I do, also my mother, who is an amazing woman, has been instrumental in all I have and do.

“My mom, husband and daughter inspire me. I was raised by my mother who was single when I was 6 months old and never remarried. She had a lot of struggles and a lot of hard times. I feel like my story started that way, but because of my upbringing I was determined to make it different. I am so happy and blessed to have my daughter and husband. We have a wonderful loving family that has a lot of fun with life. I always say that I am grateful, thankful and blessed!”

Network, network, network, says Carla. “I give my card to everyone and tell everyone what I do. (I also have a business that peaks peoples interest). I do not go to networking events though. I tried those and found them awkward and uncomfortable. I do social media now which has been very successful.”

Essentials to career building are having a business plan, organization, and a support system. And know your weaknesses, says Carla. “I am not a numbers person so I had a book keeper from day one to keep the business real. I also now have a virtual assistant so that I can spend less time at my computer and more time with my family or with clients, very valuable.”

The next level of Carla’s business includes a business plan for a wine school. “With my daughter going into school I will have more time and want to grow the education aspect. I hope to achieve a few more certifications and get some national attention to my business and books.”

Carla wrote *Wine & Dine with New Hampshire*. This book was published last year and she is currently working on two other books.

She is taking her wine expertise to homes all around New England through MyTV New England. Wine and Dine with Carla Snow will air in November of 2010. She will talk to wine professionals and restaurants around New England making the world of wine a less intimidating place.

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Carla can also be heard on "The Chef's Plate" with food and fun connoisseurs Helen Rybaand and Scott Franz, known for their cable program. The show will be live at the WTSN AM 1270 studio every Saturday from 9am to 10am. Carla Snow will provide trends, wine-pairing tips and wine picks.

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## Carla's Favorite Recipe

"Love to feed people and love to cook. I never cook the same dish twice so I do not have a favorite recipe. I always send a recipe in my monthly newsletter though paired with wine." However, this fried chicken with a glass of champagne she would consider her comfort food.

Eating this fried chicken the next day along with drinking Sparkling Gruet Brut from New Mexico is delectable on a picnic, says Carla.

### Crispy Buttermilk Fried Chicken

#### Buttermilk soak

- 3 cups buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 4 lbs medium chicken wings, thighs and drumsticks

#### Flour Dredge

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- Vegetable oil for frying

1. Make the buttermilk soak in a large bowl combine the buttermilk with the salt black pepper and cayenne. Add the chicken and stir to coat. Let stand at room temp for 2 hours or refrigerate for four hours.
2. To make the flour dredge: in a large re-sealable plastic bag, mix the flour with the onion powder, garlic powder, salt, black pepper, and cayenne and shake to combine.
3. Set a rack on a baking sheet working with one piece at a time remove the chicken from the buttermilk soak letting the excess drip back into the bowl. Dredge the chicken in the flour mix, pressing so that it adheres all over. Transfer the coated chicken to the rack and let stand.

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4. In a deep skillet heat 1 inch of oil to 350 degrees. Set another rack over a baking sheet lined with paper towels. Fry the chicken in batches at 315 degrees, turning once, until golden and an instant read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of each piece registers 160 degrees (15 to 18 minutes) Transfer the chicken to the paper lined rack and let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

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Carla Snow can be reached at A Grape Affair ([www.agrapeaffair.com](http://www.agrapeaffair.com)).