

**SHEILA ROCKWOOD**  
Bio  
NAPA SOAP COMPANY

Sheila Rockwood's passion for creating soaps from natural ingredients was sparked after years of watching her grandfather farm the land. "My grandfather was a farmer in California and my family was raised with a love of farming and gardening," she recalls. It was this connection to nature that lead Rockwood on the road to discovery and the eventual founding of the Napa Soap Company, a premier luxury bath and body product company located in the Napa Valley.

From the beginning, Sheila wanted to create products which utilized ingredients made in the Napa Valley where she was raised. She also wanted to produce a tangible product line which could truly work – one which others could enjoy and use. "We wanted to develop a line that made sense in terms of my interests in aromatherapy and the way we live as a family, with three young, active boys," she says. "The initial result, a line of handmade soaps, was met with a tremendous response and we've continued to expand from there," she adds.

In an age where consumers are becoming more and more conscious by the day of their usage of natural resources, the Napa Soap Company has remained ahead of the curve with a green-friendly way of doing business and a recycling and repurposing mission that has been a part of the company's overall goal from the beginning.

Rockwood's journey from motherhood to entrepreneurship took many different turns, originating to some degree in numerous chemistry courses required for studying marine biology in college. "Turns out, it (chemistry) is coming in handy in soap-making," she says with a smile. "It's all about the chemical reaction called saponification, which is basically what happens when you mix oils (acids) with sodium hydroxide (a base) to create soap," she adds. After college, Sheila joined three partners and started a company that manufactured apparel accessories. She gained firsthand experience with business operations and product sales.

After years of living in other parts of the country (San Diego, Tahoe and the Bay Area), Sheila and her husband moved back to the Napa Valley in 1996, where she worked in the hospitality industry for a destination management company. It was there that she found herself in need of unique corporate gifts for clients, ones that were different from the traditional and expected bottle of wine. She began dabbling in soap making, using lavender from her own backyard and remembering this potential gifting opportunity. After the birth to her third son, Sheila found herself in need of more flexibility in her schedule and decided to give soap-making an honest try. The company simply blossomed from there.

The repurposing of local homegrown products that enhance and enrich the soul is at the heart of the Napa Soap Company. The product line is vast and includes items that incorporate ingredients into rich body butters, natural home cleansers and diffusers.

What started as a lavender gathering excursion in Sheila's backyard to create her first soaps has turned into a lush product line filled with local ingredients that respect the natural environment while benefiting from its inherent gifting.

The Mediterranean-like climate of the Napa Valley is ideal for growing lavender and other botanicals used regularly in Napa Soap products. The grape seed oil used in Napa Soap products is a recycled by-product of the local wine industry. While Grape seed oil does not prove necessarily useful for winemakers, it has wonderful properties that make it great for skincare. Napa Soap benefits from its geographical location by receiving by-products from vintners and wineries that Napa Soap in turn uses in their luxurious bath and body, aromatherapy, and home-keeping lines. Napa Soap also utilizes outdated vintages of wines that are not up to the winemaker's standards, benefiting from a product that is perfect for skincare products.

Another important aspect of the Napa Soap experience lies in its packaging. Each soap is intricately wrapped in a beautiful handmade paper, made especially for the company from recycled and natural materials that are harvested in a sustainable way. "The part of the tree that is used to make our paper grows back very quickly and does not damage the tree when harvested," Sheila says. Many of Sheila's customers find a second use of the paper after they have used the soap, such as drawer liners and wrapping paper.

The organic nature of Napa Soap is encompassed in every aspect of the product. In the spirit of giving back to the community, Napa Soap donates a portion of its profits to the Boys and Girls Club of St. Helena and Calistoga, the California communities in which Sheila and her family live. "The Boys and Girls Club is a wonderful resource," Sheila says. "All three of my boys belong to it and it has been wonderful for me as a working parent to know that they are somewhere safe where they can work on their homework and play with friends after school," she adds.

The Napa Soap Company has grown to something greater than Sheila could have ever imagined during those days of gardening and farming with her family. "For me it's a dream come true," she says. "Napa Soap is everything I love about this luscious valley – fragrant indigenous plants, olive oil, and wine! If someone can take home a little bit of the Napa Valley to enjoy and remember... that makes me extremely happy!"

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