

# Member Profile

## Maggie Wilderotter “Breaking ground & pushing the frontiers”

By Suzanne Brownstein



**Name:** Maggie Wilderotter

**Lives in:** Plymouth, California

**Current publicly traded corporate boards:** Hewlett Packard Enterprise, DocuSign, Costco Wholesale Corporation, and Cadence Design Systems

**Current privately held corporate boards:** Ardent Health Services, Lyft, and Tanium

*If wine is, as Benjamin Franklin said, “proof that God wants us to be happy,” then Maggie Wilderotter is indeed on the path to pure bliss.*

At the beginning of 2017, Maggie and her husband Jay opened the Grand Reserve Inn, located in the

heart of the 80-acre Wilderotter winery in northern California’s stunning Shenandoah Valley. The family wanted to create an immersive experience for guests visiting their winery, where they have produced, for over 15 years, European-style wines in the lighter-bodied tradition, using largely Iberian and French varietals. When breaking ground for their new Inn, Maggie and Jay sought to continue the European theme into the building itself, with Tuscan-style luxury suites, where you could sip champagne at breakfast overlooking rolling hills. True to everything she does, the Grand Reserve succeeds on all levels.

“The Inn is heaven!” Maggie says. It is, for guests, a destination for a magical few days. For Maggie, the grounds are a place where she can take her nearly daily 5-6 mile walks to clear her head and think about what she’s going to do next.



Launching the Grand Reserve Inn is just the latest step in Maggie’s lifelong path of trying something

new in business. As her sister-former CEO of Campbell Soup, Denise Morrison describes, this drive was forged early on by nightly lessons around the dinner table from their ATT-executive father when they were growing up – “tutorials” about business, sales, and profit margins.

Before Maggie embarked on her wine adventure, of course, she broke new ground in industry, pioneering telecommunications in both cities and underserved rural communities across the country. She joined her first corporate board – American Cablesystems – when she was only 28 years old. This would be the first of 31 company boards on which she would serve throughout her career in this booming industry. Recently, Maggie stepped down as Chairman of Frontier Communications, where she had taken what had been a regional telephone company to a \$10-billion-revenue voice and video provider nationwide.

What have these decades of board service taught her? “One of the most important things I’ve learned is remembering that board members are all peers,” she says. “We all need to learn to respect the collective view and keep the dynamic of listening, learning, and contributing top of mind.” Being able to probe into issues in an open-ended way is Maggie’s favorite quality in a board colleague – a trait she seeks in her still heavy load of board work in her post-Frontier days, serving as director of several high-profile companies, including Costco, HP, DreamWorks, and Juno Therapeutics.

When asked what advice she would have given herself 20 years ago, she replies, “Take more time for myself!” But it seems that this passionate WCD member just can’t stop, especially when it comes to helping other women. “Maggie defines the idea of ‘paying it forward,’” says Kelly Watson, the U.S. National Service Group Leader-Risk Consulting at KPMG, whom Maggie has mentored for 10 years. “She gets enormous pleasure in recognizing talent

and then mobilizing herself and her network to do whatever she can to help.”

Working behind the scenes, Maggie has helped place 20 to 30 women each year on corporate boards, making calls and introductions and building relationships. Women helping women is a cause vital to her, she says: “We have to make sure the business world recognizes and supports parity.”

Maggie will be appearing at the 2019 Global Institute, and her vineyard is open to those who may wish to visit before or after the Institute.

*\*This profile has been modified from the original article published in March 2017.*

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