



Meet Mark Simiele President Wine & Glass Tour, Inc.

Describe your business

Captain Bill's Seneca Lake Cruises, Seneca Harbor West Marina, and Seneca Harbor Station are owned and operated by Wine & Glass Tour, Inc. Wine & Glass Tour, Inc. was formed in 1963 by William Simiele to purchase the existing lake ride from the Palmer brothers. Over the years the business has expanded its footprint and expanded its business to include additional vessels, a marina, and a full-service restaurant. We have grown from six to 140 seasonal employees at our lakefront location. Captain Bill's has two vessels sailing from April through October for sightseeing, dining, and entertainment cruises. Seneca Harbor Station is a full-service restaurant operating April through mid-December. Seneca Harbor West Marina rents seasonal slips. As many know the Captain Bill's building is coming down and being replaced with a new Port of Seneca Cruise Terminal. This new building is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2020

Tell us your story

I am a hometown boy who grew up on the hip of my father as I loved spending time at the lake with him in the early days of the business. I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Economics from SUNY Oneonta, but I have always credited my real business education to the years spent with my father as a young man. My dad and I never played catch in the front yard or shared traditional father and son hobbies. Our time together revolved around time spent at Captain Bill's and I loved it. After I graduated from college and worked five years in sales, my father invited me to join the business in 1986. I looked forward to joining the family business, but the prospect of moving from Tampa Florida at age 26, back to my small home town, was one that caused me apprehension. It turned out to be a good decision as concerns of living in my hometown were unfounded and I became absorbed in growing the business. The business provided a discipline that served me well. What I thought would be a short stint to help my father reach retirement has turned into the bulk of my life's work now some 33 years later.



What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

I became involved in the community, through the Chamber of Commerce and several regional boards. I learned a lot in a short period of time from the business people that I associated with in the community. I was welcomed into the fold and put to work. I quickly developed a broad network within the motor coach and hospitality industry that help to nurture the growth of our business. There will always be detractors and I credit my detractors for the additional motivation to push through the hard times.

What inspires you?

My parents were both hard working people, and that was the expectation within our family. This work ethic combined with my father's vision was a large part of my inspiration. Additionally, my father managed people with grace and humor. He showed me that managing people was as much an art as it is a skill. I am inspired by successful organizations that treat their people well.

What keeps you up at night? What are your challenges?

As a business person I try to control as many variables as possible. There are always negative economic factors that are out of my control and the inability to know their potential impact on my business causes me concern. Being a seasonal business is another challenge in maintaining quality staff from season to season. I am fortunate to have a quality core group of people that have been with us for years. Having great people within our organization is one of the secrets to our success.

My biggest challenge as a person is balancing my work schedule with family time. I am blessed with a loving and understanding blended family consisting of my wife Michelle, six children, and eight grandchildren. There is never enough time in the day.

What is your favorite local activity?

My wife and I spend a lot of our free time following our children in local youth sports programs. Our community has many volunteers that offer their time to organize, support, and coach our youth. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those involved in these programs.

It was not that long ago when you had to leave the county for entertainment. As we know times have changed and we are now a destination for those seeking entertainment from outside our area. Michelle and I enjoy all of the local entertainment venues that are now available locally.

Is there anything else we should know about you?

One of the traditional benefits of living in a small town is the sense of community and a working business environment where civility prevails with other businesses and community leaders. As our area grows and outside influences move in, I hope that we can maintain the quality of civil discourse that this community has always valued.

New for 2020

The new Port of Seneca Cruise Terminal will feature a nautical emporium with all things nautical for sale, Asher's Gourmet chocolate covered pretzels, and other assorted sweets, as well as gifts and souvenirs.

Seneca Harbor Station will be offering year-round outside catering.

Captain Bill's Seneca Lake Cruises 1 N. Franklin St., Watkins Glen NY 14891 607-535-4541

Seneca Harbor Station 3 N. Franklin St., Watkins Glen NY 14891 607-535-6101

Seneca Harbor West Marina Lakeshore Dr., Watkins Glen NY 14891 607-535-4541

<https://senecaharborstation.com/> shs@stny.twcbc.com