

# BOOKER

## **HILARY GRAVES**

### **Vineyard & Grower Relations Manager**

Hilary Graves is a winegrower, winemaker and viticulture educator with more than 20 years of field experience on California's Central Coast.

Hilary graduated from high school in Hawaii and studied business at CSU Fresno. While her father hailed from a Central Valley farming family, she never planned to pursue agriculture—but, in time, her true calling came clear. After earning a master's degree in Library and Information Science, she returned to CSU Fresno to serve as the academic librarian at the library in the university's Viticulture and Enology Research Center. It was here that Hilary's interest in viticulture was awakened, prompting her to pursue master's studies in Crop Science and ultimately a career in wine and viticulture.

After studying Crop Science at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Hilary taught viticulture at Cal Poly for four years under Dr. Keith Patterson. She also started her own business in 2002, planting a vineyard—called Ohana—and making wines under the Graves Family Winegrowers and Mighty Nimble brands. She later started a vineyard management company and grew fruit for, among others, Booker Vineyard's Farmer-Winemaker Eric Jensen. Hilary and Eric formed a strong connection, and she ultimately joined Booker Vineyard as Vineyard & Grower Relations Manager in 2020.

Hilary's winegrowing philosophy allows the land to speak through the fruit: "I see my job as managing the vines instead of manipulating them, so that the grapes can express where they come from—I never want to change the outcome of what the place wants to show."

This transparent mindset also goes hand in hand with Hilary's passion for sustainability. "I believe that farmers, more than any other occupation, have the ability to capture carbon and turn back the clock on climate change," she says. "It's something that I take to heart and factor into all of my farming decisions."