



Barry Schuler: Where Idiosyncrasy and Invention meet

Like his Patek Philippe wristwatch, Barry Schuler is in perpetual motion. While he will submit to a sit-down interview, his hectic schedule is such that journalists more often catch him by telephone or e-mail.

There's a lot to know about Barry, much more than a 30-minute telephone interview is likely to reveal. While you might know he's a former American Online chief executive and acclaimed entrepreneur, what about the robot building and butter making he does on the side. How about his activities in the realm of public education reform and subversive film making?

The bottom line: To make linear sense of Barry Schuler, we think it helps to know something about his idiosyncrasies. In the process, one can begin to see how this New Jersey native moved from Point A to Point C—the “C” being California's Napa Valley, where he lives and works, making both wine and venture capital investments in high tech laser technologies and the like that can treat cancer.

For instance:

--Barry considers his best all-around investment to be 21st Century Public School Education. A vocal advocate of public education reform, Barry and wife Tracy co-founded the Blue Oak School, a Napa-based non-profit school catering to students K-8.

---He's an enthusiastic cook who cures his own meats, roasts his own coffee beans and churns his own butter. How he finds the time for such domestic bliss is a mystery, even to his family.

---He prefers pets with a work ethic, rabbits and chickens, among them.

--His favorite beach is Long Island's Fire Island where wife Tracy spent her childhood summers and the couple now owns a home. His favorite way to get there is by boat. In fact, his idea of a perfect vacation is one reached *only* by boat.

--When it comes to business travel, he's a huge fan of private aviation. It's no surprise, really: Barry spends about 250 hours per year in the air traveling to and from business engagements. He'd be clocking even more time; he says were the flights taken commercially as opposed to jetting around in his Falcon 50.

---Barry claims he is “still waiting” for his dream car to be built. When it does, he expects it will run on *Biofuel*.

---Adventurous though he may be, when it comes to overnight stays, Barry is a big believer in one brand—Four Seasons. He'll stay in any Four Seasons, anywhere.



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--His favorite American city is not New York or San Francisco but Napa, where he has wanted to live since he was 18 and took an under-age liking to wine. As Barry sees it, the downtown area is ten minutes from his home; the city is developing great schools; it offers a hopping restaurant scene along; there are 18 wine tasting rooms all within the city limits; and it has a vibrant, young art community to boot—a component that speaks directly to Barry’s passion for pottery making.

--His favorite bottles of wine include not only his own 2005 Meteor Cabernet Sauvignon but Etude, Harlan, Dyer, Favia and Lail.

--He and his family moved to Napa to grow grapes but not necessarily bottle them. After a few years tromping through his historic vineyard property in Coombsville, Barry could no longer ignore the obvious: The vineyard, which had supplied grapes to the likes of Vineyard 29, Arietta and Etude, deserved its own label. In 2003, he says, the vineyard “told” him so.

--He got into film making in 2007, helping fund and produce the film “LOOK” not because he had big dreams of being a Hollywood star so much as an agent for change. Using advanced digital techniques, some of which Barry developed, “LOOK” pushed all kinds of film-making boundaries; so, too, did its unconventional distribution model. ###