


CALIFORNIA

How a beloved corner market hangs on in the corporate age



Rick Rosenbloom curates the wine and liquor offerings at Bob's Market in Santa Monica on Thursday, Aug. 28, 2025. His father, Bob, took over the location in 1979 and family members have been running it ever since. (James Rainey / Los Angeles Times)



By James Rainey
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Aug. 29, 2025 6:30 AM PT

Maria Stewart knows she can count on Bob's Market every time she needs an obscure ingredient for a new recipe.

Betsy Adler recalls how a Bob's employee schooled her on how to make a to-die-for milkshake, spiked with amaretto and garnished with whipped cream.

And Hank, who declined to give his last name, loves visiting the meat and deli counter, where the staff greets him like an old friend. It reminds him of his childhood in Boston's North End.

Bob's in Santa Monica has a loyal following because of the big and little things. The wine guy (Mike, a veteran of decades in the restaurant business) and the meat guy (Ramiro) will take the time to help you plan your next meal. David "The Deli Lama" Golden remembers how you like your sandwich and asks about your kids. It's the way the place smells and the way the employees treat you like family.

"This place? It's like, you know, a flashback," said Hank, 66, an actor who said he wasn't sure his agent would want him to give his last name. "It's like watching an old film that you saw when you were younger and you still love it. You know what I mean?"

A lot of you *do* know, because you wrote Essential California a couple of weeks ago to bestow your blessing on Bob's, after I asked readers to tell me about local businesses they couldn't live without. I'm still listening, so write EssentialCalifornia@latimes.com and we'll try to give a shout-out to some other favorites.

Bob's came into being in 1979, when founder Bob Rosenbloom bought out another grocery at 17th Street and Ocean Park Boulevard, in a building that once housed a roller-skating rink. Rosenbloom encouraged his staff to lean heavily on the family touch, which continues with his niece as general manager and his son, Rick, overseeing wine and liquor.

Rick Rosenbloom sports early-Roger-Daltry hair, befitting his other life as a musician and songwriter, and spends long hours curating Bob's wine selections, which are described by his handwritten shelf signs. "2015 Croatian Red, \$19.99," reads one. "This beauty was crafted to age and is just now hitting its stride."

The younger Rosenbloom (now 70) says he personally tasted every one of the 2,000 different selections, the evidence gathered beside him in the form of half-filled glasses, spread around his cluttered upstairs office.

"As Costco and Walmart and all the rest of them come in, the small markets go out of business. Not just here, but all across the country," Rosenbloom said. "This place is definitely a dying breed."



Bob's Market in Santa Monica's Sunset Park neighborhood on Thursday, Aug. 28, 2025. The market has been a local favorite since 1979. Bob Rosenbloom's son, Rick, curates the store's wine and liquor selections.
(James Rainey / Los Angeles Times)



Betsy Adler chats with Rick Rosenbloom, whose family has been running Bob's Market in Santa Monica for 46 years. Rosenbloom is the son of store founder Bob Rosenbloom, who died in 2024 at age 92. (James Rainey / Los Angeles Times)

Rosenbloom's dad once controlled four markets on L.A.'s Westside, but sold off three and kept the most successful one, in Santa Monica's Sunset Park neighborhood. (The Palms store remains in business, though under different ownership.)

Bob kept working well into his 80s and died last year at 92. Rick, who started behind the butcher's counter at age 7, has helped keep the place going, on behalf of seven siblings and other family members.

Because the family owns the building, it doesn't fear the big rent increases that have killed scores of other small

businesses. And the business could even improve, the younger Rosenbloom predicts, because Gelson's down the street is scheduled to close down temporarily to make way for a big housing development.

"With all that going on, our business will gain 20% or more. So we'd be stupid to shut it down," he said. "This world is becoming more digital, even as we speak. So my sort of mission and soapbox is to maintain a little of this analog world."