



WINE INDUSTRY LEADERS HONOURED AT THE 2022 CANADIAN WINE GROWERS SYMPOSIUM

For Immediate Release

Ottawa, ON (July 11, 2022). Wine Growers Canada (WGC), Wine Growers British Columbia (WGBC), Wine Growers Ontario (WGO) and Ontario Craft Wineries (OCW) are proud to announce the recipients of the 2022 Canadian Wine Industry Awards, the 2022 Wine Growers British Columbia Industry Recognition Awards, and the Ontario Wine Industry Champion Award which were all presented during a virtual ceremony today.

This year's distinguished recipients are:

Canadian Wine Industry Award of Distinction - Gary Pillitteri
Canadian Wine Industry Champion Award - Debbie Inglis
The Karl Kaiser Canadian Winemaker Award – Paul Pender
Wine Growers British Columbia Industry Recognition Award – Marjorie King
Wine Growers British Columbia Award of Distinction – Josie Tyabji
Ontario Wine Industry Champion Award - Rafik Louli

2022 Canadian Wine Industry Awards

The Canadian Wine Industry Awards, sponsored by national accounting, tax and business firm MNP, are presented annually by WGC and recognize individuals, organizations and businesses that have gone above and beyond to support and enhance the wine industry in Canada, celebrating the success, leadership, and outstanding commitment in Canada's grape wine industry.

"Today's Canadian Wine Industry Awards have showcased our diverse industry, and everyone at Wine Growers Canada is honoured to recognize the outstanding contribution, dedication and expertise that all of our nominees and winners have provided. Recognizing and celebrating these accomplishments is very important, to showcase the expertise and sheer hard work of our deserving winners," said WGC President and CEO, Dan Paszkowski.

The winner of the **Canadian Wine Industry Award of Distinction** - regarded as the highest form of peer recognition in the Canadian wine industry is Gary Pillitteri, Owner/Founder, Pillitteri Estates Winery.

“For decades, Gary Pillitteri has been known for his work ethic and initiative, with a strong sense of family, giving back to his community, and an unwavering commitment towards the pursuit of Canadian wine excellence,” remarked Paszkowski. “This award is a testament to Gary’s vision of building a world class winery and a true family business, with a devotion to growing the Canadian wine industry and producing wines that are sold around the world.”

The **Wine Industry Champion Award**, is presented to an individual who has provided exemplary support to the Canadian wine industry through media, policy or advocacy, was awarded to Debbie Inglis, Director of Brock University’s Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture (CCOVI).

“WGC is proud to honour Debbie for her exceptional contribution by focusing on the research priorities of the Canadian grape and wine industry,” stated Paszkowski. “Through hard scientific work and leadership, ranging from yeast to icewine, and being named Director of CCOVI to being crowned Grape King, Debbie is breaking down barriers and is an internationally recognized advocate for the Canadian wine industry.”

The **Karl Kaiser Canadian Winemaker Award** was created in 2018 to celebrate great Canadian winemakers, in honour of the legacy of the late Karl Kaiser, a Canadian wine industry pioneer and viticultural visionary. The recipient of this year’s award is the late Paul Pender, Tawse Winery.

“With roughly 20 vintages, and an impressive list of awards, Paul has crafted beautiful Canadian wines. His service to winemaking, his skills and talents, his passion and innovation, have all played a big part in not only helping create a love for wine, but also placing Canada on the world map of great wines,” said Paszkowski.

2022 British Columbia Industry Recognition Awards

The Wine Growers British Columbia (WGBC) Industry Recognition Awards are presented annually in acknowledgement of outstanding achievements and contributions to the BC wine industry.

“It is always important to recognize individuals and organizations who go above and beyond to promote and support our industry. That is why today we are pleased to present our annual awards alongside Wine Growers Canada and the Ontario wine industry in order to honour individuals who have become stewards of the grape wine industry across Canada,” says WGBC CEO & President Miles Prodan. “The storied accomplishments of today’s BC industry award recipients speak to how far we have come as an industry, and the bright future ahead for BC VQA wine.”

The **Wine Growers British Columbia Industry Recognition Award** was established in 2013 to honour a non-winery individual, business, or organization for support of the BC wine industry and BC VQA Wine through media, research, policy, regulation, education, or advocacy. Past recipients include Kurtis Kolt (sommelier), Tim Pawsey (wine writer), Jeffrey Thomas (BC Wine Authority), MLA and former Parliamentary Secretary of Liquor John Yap, and John Schreiner (wine writer). We are delighted to announce that this year's winner of the WGBC Industry Recognition Award is Marjorie King, pioneer of BC VQA wine evaluation and Canadian based wine award competitions.

"Marjorie's passion for BC wine, sharing knowledge, and building community shines through her work developing the BC VQA sensory evaluation process, a vital contributor to the evolution of the BC wine industry," said Prodan. "We thank Marjorie for her leadership role in building the reputation of BC VQA wine, today known for consistently world-class quality."

"I'm honored to accept this award. I was particularly fortunate to work with people who collectively had a vision for the future of a young Canadian Wine Industry," remarked King. "It was their belief, determination, and willingness to work together that made my contribution possible. It is gratifying to see some of that belief come to fruition."

Established in 2016, the **Wine Growers British Columbia Award of Distinction** recognizes a winery or grower representative for outstanding leadership, commitment, and passion for the advancement of the British Columbia wine industry. Past winners include Glen Fawcett (Black Hills Estate Winery), Howard Soon (Andrew Peller Ltd.), Harry McWatters (Encore Vineyards), Tony Stewart (Quails' Gate Winery), and Vera Klokocka (Hillside Winery). We are proud to announce that this year's recipient is Josie Tyabji, Partner at Gneiss Wines at the District Wine Village in Oliver, BC.

"Josie has been a leading wine industry voice representing winery interests on local and national boards including as the first woman Chair of Wine Growers British Columbia (then the BC Wine Institute)," noted Prodan. "Josie was integral in seeing the industry through tumultuous times, and her continued involvement in BC wineries, including her hand in the establishment of Nk'Mip Cellars through collaboration with the Osoyoos Indian Band speaks to her never-ceasing commitment to the growth of the BC wine industry."

"'It takes a village' is what we like to say these days at the District Wine Village and that has always been something I believe in wholeheartedly. From the early pioneering days of developing industry's premium wine focus post free trade, to now back to a boutique winery bringing in the 3rd generation with my daughter Christine," remarked Tyabji on her 35+ year career. "When wine gets in your blood it becomes a lifetime passion, and when we are all rowing in the same direction toward our common vision we can accomplish great things. I look forward to the next chapter of wines in British Columbia as we continue to grow this incredible world class region together."

2022 Ontario Wine Industry Champion Award

The Ontario Wine Industry Champion Award is bestowed to an individual who has provided exemplary support for the Ontario wine industry through media, research, policy and regulation, education or advocacy, or significantly contributing to the overall strength and long-term viability of the industry. The award recognizes champions who are passionate about Ontario wine and industry prosperity, beyond those employed directly in the industry. "Ontario Craft Wineries and Wine Growers Ontario are very proud to announce the inaugural Ontario Wine Industry Champion Award winner. It is very important to our organizations that we recognize the significant contributions from people who make the success of our industry possible," said Aaron Dobbin, President and CEO of Wine Growers Ontario.

Wine Growers Ontario and Ontario Craft Wineries wish to congratulate Rafik Louli from the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) on being chosen as the inaugural recipient of the Ontario Wine Industry Champion Award! Rafik is the Vice President, Retail Operations Division at the LCBO. Rafik was chosen in recognition of all the hard work and support he and the LCBO retail team have shown the Ontario wine industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are incredibly grateful for the support. "The COVID pandemic proved to be a very difficult time for Ontario VQA wineries. Keeping the LCBO open during those challenging times by providing a safe experience for their shoppers and staff was very important for our industry, and Rafik and his team were instrumental in that effort," said Richard Linley, President of Ontario Craft Wineries.

"I want to thank the OCW and WGO for the inaugural Ontario Wine Industry Champion Award," said Rafik Louli. "I wish to accept this recognition on behalf of our retail employees who demonstrate dedication and professionalism every day, and have been integral to LCBO doors staying open for Ontarians throughout the pandemic. The LCBO is committed to providing a best-in-class retail experience for our customers and we are proud to support the local wines made in Ontario."

Congratulations to this year's worthy recipients and thank you for your extraordinary contributions to the Canadian wine industry.

To learn more about the Canadian Wine Industry Awards, visit [WineGrowersCanada.ca](https://www.winegrowerscanada.ca), for more details about the Wine Growers British Columbia Industry Recognition Awards, visit [WineBC.com](https://www.winebc.com) and for information on the Ontario Wine Industry Champion Award visit [WineGrowersOntario.ca](https://www.winegrowersontario.ca)

Suggested Tweet: Wine industry leaders honoured at the 2022 Canadian Wine Industry Awards
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ABOUT WINE GROWERS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Since 1990, WGBC has played a pivotal role in taking B.C.'s wine industry from a vision to an internationally recognized niche region producing premium wines and providing exceptional wine tourism experiences.

WGBC markets the wine and regions of B.C.; delivers quality trade, media and consumer tastings; and acts as the voice of B.C.'s wine industry by advocating to government on behalf of industry that contributes \$2.8 billion in provincial economic growth annually.

WGBC represents all wineries in British Columbia to grow the premium market share for the Wines of British Columbia, while driving awareness of our world-class wines and tourism product - currently drawing 1,000,000 visitors with \$600 million in tourism and tourism employment related economic impact every year. For more information about Wine Growers British Columbia's member programs and services, please visit WineBC.com.

ABOUT WINE GROWERS CANADA

Wine Growers Canada (WGC) is the national voice of the Canadian wine industry, representing more than 90% of annual wine production. CVA members are engaged in the entire wine value chain from grape growing, farm management, grape harvesting, research, wine production, bottling, retail sales and tourism. For more information about Wine Growers Canada, visit WineGrowersCanada.ca.

ABOUT WINE GROWERS ONTARIO

Wine Growers Ontario (WGO) are the leading Ontario wineries and grape growers that are committed to offering Ontario wine drinkers a wide range of quality wines to enjoy at any occasion. From 100% Ontario Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) to International Domestic Blends (IDB) wines, our award winning wines span the taste preference, quality and value appreciated by our local customers. We are generations of winemakers as well as new entrepreneurs. We cultivate vast acreages of grapes and smaller vineyards too. Together, we are proud of our international acclaim for award winning wines produced from the beautiful, rich and diverse Wine Country of Ontario. Visit WineGrowersOntario.ca

ABOUT ONTARIO CRAFT WINERIES

The OCW champions and advocates for the growth and success of Ontario VQA wine producers. As a capital intensive and vertically integrated businesses, OCW helps its winery members navigate the industry, grow and be successful. Over the past five years, VQA wine producers have grown to 183 wineries from 161 in 2016. VQA production rose to 3.3 million cases in 2021 from 2.24 million cases in 2016, a striking 47% increase. VQA grape production rose to an estimated 40.6 tonnes from an estimated 31.2 tonnes in 2016. Annually, the Ontario VQA industry contributes well in excess of \$2 billion to the province's economy and supports over 11,000 direct and indirect jobs. Visit OntarioCraftWineries.ca

ABOUT MNP

MNP is a leading national accounting, tax and business consulting firm in Canada. Through partner-led engagements, MNP provides a collaborative, cost-effective approach to doing business and personalized strategies to help organizations succeed in Canada and internationally, and has an extensive history of working with food and beverage processors. For more information about MNP, visit MNP.ca.