



## **Santa Barbara Wine Country Celebrates More Honors**

Santa Barbara, CA, October 11, 2022 – On the heels of being internationally recognized as Wine Enthusiast’s Wine Region of the Year in 2021, Santa Barbara Wine Country is again collecting accolades to match its high-scoring wines. Wine Enthusiast recently announced its Wine Star Awards nominations for 2022, which include a few notable Santa Barbara winemakers and executives.

William Foley, considered one of the most influential vintners in California, has been honored with a Wine Star 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award, which will be presented at the Wine Enthusiast Awards Dinner in January 2023. As founder and owner of Foley Family Wines, Foley owns Lincourt Vineyards, Foley Estates Vineyard & Wine, and Firestone Vineyard, among others.

Wine Enthusiast has also nominated Doug Margerum as Winemaker of the Year. As owner and director of winemaking for Margerum Wines and Barden Wines, Margerum began his food and wine explorations while traveling in France with his parents at the age of 14, and has devoted decades to hospitality and winemaking. In addition to his own labels, Margerum is also the winemaker/consultant for Happy Canyon Vineyards and has created several private label programs for restaurants and retail groups throughout the country.

Editors of the prestigious magazine have also named Santa Barbara County’s Nicholas Miller the Wine Executive of the Year. As Chief Sales & Marketing Officer and Executive Vice President for Miller Family Wine Co., Miller represents the fifth generation to lead the family business. Bien Nacido and Solomon Hills Vineyards are two prominent labels by Miller Family Wine Co., along with Santa Barbara wine labels optik and J. Wilkes.

“We’re so proud that Santa Barbara Wine Country is again being recognized for its vintners and leaders in the wine industry,” said Alison Laslett, CEO of the Santa Barbara Vintners Association. “Every nomination and award that Santa Barbara Wine Country receives solidifies this as a world-class wine region and pays tribute to the extraordinary people who grow our grapes, make our wines, and send them out to restaurants and retailers around the world.”

“Restaurants across the country often look to wine scores to help with their branding and to build successful wine programs,” noted Laslett. In addition to the Wine Enthusiast honors, Laslett adds that more than 100 wines recently received high scores from respected wine critics for 2019 and 2020 vintages.

Wine critic Jeb Dunnuck recently rated 54 Santa Barbara Vintners wines at 95 points and higher. Dragonette Cellars received an exceedingly rare 100 points for its 2019 Dragonette Black Label Pinot Noir, and a rare 99 points for its 2020 Dragonette Black Label Chardonnay.

Esteemed Vinous wine critic Antonio Galloni recently rated 60 Santa Barbara Vintners wines at 95 points and higher for vintages 2020 and 2021, writing that “Santa Barbara produced the finest wines in California in 2020 by a wide margin.”

“I have been a big admirer of these wines for some time,” Galloni wrote in Vinous. “Santa Barbara wines remain, inexplicably, largely undiscovered by both consumers and the wine trade.” He added that diners should look for Santa Barbara wines on restaurant wine lists, as “they often have the most gentle of markups.”

In an effort to further illuminate a deep understanding of Santa Barbara, Galloni is spearheading Vinous' pioneering efforts to create the first comprehensive vineyard maps of the region. The first map in the series is of Sta. Rita Hills AVA, one of the seven officially recognized American Viticultural Areas within Santa Barbara County.

### **About Santa Barbara Vintners**

Santa Barbara Vintners (Santa Barbara County Vintners Association) is a non-profit 501(c)6 organization founded in 1983 to protect and promote Santa Barbara County as a world-class wine producing and winegrape growing region. The association includes winery members whose annual production is at least 75% Santa Barbara County (or sub-AVA) labeled and extensive industry-associated members. The association produces festivals; educational seminars and tastings; provides information to consumers, trade, and media; and advocates for the Santa Barbara County wine and grape industry. For additional information, visit <https://www.sbcountywines.com/> and follow @santabarbarawinecountry on Facebook and Instagram, and @sbcwines on Twitter.

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