



Santa Barbara Wine Region Vintners Honored with Prestigious Wine Enthusiast 2022 Wine Star Nominations & Awards

Santa Barbara, CA, October 19, 2022 – Santa Barbara Wine Country, named Wine Enthusiast’s Wine Region of the Year for 2021, has again been recognized with Wine Enthusiast’s Annual Wine Star Awards. Three notable wine executives and winemakers from Santa Barbara have been honored for their outstanding contributions to the wine world.

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, Solomon Hills Vineyards, J. Wilkes, and optik are Santa Barbara labels by Miller Family Wine Co.

Miller has also maintained an active role in the Santa Barbara wine community, serving as a current board member for the Santa Barbara Vintners Association and other industry boards, while continuing to be an advocate for Santa Barbara County as world-class wine region.

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 editors 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.

“We’re so proud that Santa Barbara Wine Country vintners and leaders are again being recognized for their contributions to 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. These honors pay tribute to the extraordinary people who grow our grapes, make our wines, and send them out to restaurants and retailers around the world.”

Laslett also noted what sets Santa Barbara County apart from other California wine regions is captured in the Santa Barbara Vinters Association marketing campaign, “West of France, Just North of LA.” This is a nod to Santa Barbara’s European similarities, diverse grape varieties, and close proximity to Los Angeles.

“Many Angelenos don’t even know that they have such a gorgeous wine region nearby. It’s only ninety minutes on the train, or you can drive up in less than two hours, which is a lot closer than the northern California wine regions that take a day to reach,” said Laslett.

The unique, transverse nature of the valleys of Santa Barbara Wine Country provides a patchwork quilt of micro-climates and terrains, resulting in one of the most diverse grape growing regions in the world. The famed Sta. Rita Hills and Santa Maria AVAs (American Viticultural Areas) allow Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes to thrive, while the warmer AVAs in the Santa Ynez Valley produce conditions prime for Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc to succeed.

Santa Barbara County, nestled 90 miles north of Los Angeles, boasts some of the best micro-climates and terrains available for winemaking in the U.S. and includes seven AVAs. The area has gained in popularity over the years for its sweeping landscapes and incredible variety of wines produced. With over 300 wine labels, Santa Barbara County has more hidden gems and boutique wineries than most regions, producing innovative wines from determined vintners.

For more about the Santa Barbara Wine Region, please visit www.sbcountywines.com.

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.

About Wine Enthusiast Media

Wine Enthusiast’s approach to wine and spirits is accessible and unpretentious, and enjoyed by novices and experts alike. With a vibrant print magazine published 10 times a year including two double issues and a dynamic digital media platform delivering original content daily, the media group’s audience is over one million strong. The magazine and its Buying Guide with more than 280,000 ratings and reviews make up the most comprehensive database in the industry available for free online at www.WineMag.com

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