



Les Dames d'Escoffier
INTERNATIONAL

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*Photo upon request

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Les Dames d'Escoffier International Announces Its 2020 Grande Dame Award Winner As

Carolyn Wentz Joins Lidia Bastianich, Joan Nathan, Edna Lewis and Alice Waters in Honor

LOUISVILLE, KY (July 21, 2020) – Les Dames d'Escoffier International's (LDEI) prestigious Grande Dame Award will be presented this year to Carolyn Wentz, CEO of Wentz Family Estates, America's longest continuously operated family-owned winery. Wentz has guided the expansion and growth of the Wentz Family Estate's portfolio of wines and the development of the Wentz family's lifestyle businesses for four decades. A co-founder of LDEI's San Francisco Chapter, Wentz has been a member of Les Dames d'Escoffier for 31 years and has served on the national Board of Directors as well as in San Francisco.

LDEI is an organization of women leaders in the food, beverage and hospitality industries. Its Grande Dame Award honors a lifetime of outstanding professional achievement, excellence, and charitable/community contributions within the culinary industry and is bestowed annually. Wentz, the sixteenth recipient of this international honor, will receive the award at LDEI's first virtual conference to be held in October.

Joining the family business in the early 1980s, Wentz's culinary career in wine spans over 40 years and she is a part of the fourth generation of Wentz's family-owned vineyards, sustainably cultivating over 3,000 acres. *"There are very few family businesses that survive past the third generation,"* shares Wentz. *"I am proud to be a member of the fourth generation in a successful and growing family business in a very competitive global environment."*

Under Wentz's leadership, the company has become a world-renowned destination located in the idyllic settings of the Livermore Valley and Monterey County, California. The first step to realizing the family's dream for a new appreciation of wine as part of America culture was the opening of the Wentz Vineyards Visitors Center and Restaurant in 1986. In that same year, The Concerts at Wentz Vineyards was launched featuring musical artists including James Taylor and Sheryl Crow. In 1998, an 18-hole championship golf course designed by Australian golfing great Greg Norman was developed. And in 2010, the course was awarded with the esteemed "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" status.

Wente has authored two books. In 2003, “The Casual Vineyard Table” was published, sharing wine and food pairing along with everyday meal planning. Prior to its publication, she co-authored “Sharing the Vineyard Table: A Celebration of Wine and Food from the Wente Vineyard Restaurant” with Kimball Jones.

Over the last several years, Wente has been awarded numerous honors, perhaps most notably the Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World in 2002 sponsored by J.P. Morgan, Baccarat and Hermes. Additionally, she was awarded Winery CEO of the Year 2019 by *North Bay Business Journal*; the “20 Most Admired People in the North America Wine Industry” in 2013 from *Vineyard & Winery Management*; the Women Leadership Award in 2012 from Girl Scouts of America; and the American Winery of the Year Award in 2011 from *Wine Enthusiast* — among many others.

Wente is well-known for her generosity of time and community outreach as seen through her board service with the Stanford Athletic Advisory, the U.S. Department of State’s Fine Arts Committee, and more. She also has the distinction of being the fifth member of the Wente family to serve as Board Chair of the California Wine Institute (2014-2015).

Currently, Wente is heading efforts to meet her family’s goals for Wente Family Estates: continued business growth, strengthening the brand promise, and developing a high performing organization — each integral to ensuring transition where the fifth and future generations take over a healthy profitable business to include both family and non-family members. Wente says, *“As a family, we are always pushing the quality envelope for our wines. With our Lifestyle businesses, the same holds true, providing a quality experience that exceeds our guests’ expectations.”*

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Les Dames d’Escoffier International (LDEI) is a worldwide philanthropic organization of professional women leaders in the fields of food, fine beverage and hospitality. The invitation-only membership, composed of over 2,400 women in 44 chapters across the US, Canada, France, the United Kingdom and Mexico, is highly diversified and reflects the multifaceted fields of contemporary gastronomy and hospitality. For more information, visit www.ldei.org

About Wente Family Estates

Founded in 1883, Wente Vineyards has been resoundingly celebrated for its industry-wide contributions to innovation as the longest continuously operated, family-owned winery in the country, now owned and managed by the fourth and fifth generations of the Wente family. The company portfolio is comprised of Wente Vineyards, Murrieta’s Well, Hayes Ranch, Ravel & Stitch, entwine and Angel’s Ink brands. The winery draws from certified sustainable estate vineyards in the Livermore Valley, San Francisco Bay and Arroyo Seco, Monterey appellations to create an outstanding array of fine wines that are distributed in all 50 states and in over 70 countries worldwide. In 2010, it joined the top 4 percent of California wineries who meet all three tiers within the Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing codes & designation. In 2011, Wente Family Estates was named American Winery of the Year by Wine

Enthusiast and is among the top 30 wineries in the United States according to Wine Business Monthly, (February 2020). 2012 marked the 100th anniversary of the Wente family bringing Chardonnay cuttings to California from France. Today, the Wente clones of Chardonnay are the most widely planted in California.

Located just east of San Francisco in the historic Livermore Valley, Wente Vineyards is recognized as one of California's premier wine country destinations. In 2018, the winery took a leadership role in its longstanding mission to inspire employees and guests to make time for what really matters, as realized through Wente Vineyards' best practices, outstanding wines and wine country experiences. The property features wine tasting, world-class concerts, award-winning fine dining and championship golf. Wente Vineyards is also proud to have 100% estate grown wines and have the Certified Sustainable designations across their vineyards and winery through California Certified Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance.

For more information, visit www.wentevineyards.com.

For media inquiries, interviews, images about Wente Vineyards, please contact Kimberly Noelle Charles of Charles Communications Associates at 415 | 701-9463 or press@charlescomm.com.