

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**2023 WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL WINE & SPIRITS COMPETITION NAMES
NEW CLAIRVAUX VINEYARDS' PETITE SIRAH BEST OF THE BEST WINE;
GARRISON BROTHERS HONEYDEW BOURBON TAKES TOP SPIRITS**

JULY 5, 2023 – Winners have been announced in the 16th annual Women's International Wine & Spirits Competition (IWWSC). The competition, which took place June 21-23 in Santa Rosa, Calif., was founded on the premise that the majority of wine purchased for home consumption is bought by women. The IWWSC judging panels consist entirely of professional women in the wine and spirits industries — winemakers, distillers, marketers, buyers, sommeliers, educators and journalists.

“As always, the International Women's Wine & Spirits Competition shined a spotlight on hundreds of deserving wines,” says Debra Del Fiorentino, owner of Wine Competitions Management & Production, which organizes and presents IWWSC. “And even though entry is open to all winemakers regardless of gender, I found it gratifying that this year's wine winner also was named Best Woman Winemaker.”

This year, New Clairvaux Winery's Poor Souls Petite Sirah took the top prize, beating out nearly 300 competitors. Judges described it as “chalky, caramel, oak”; “super spicy”; “blueberry pie”; “nutmeg.”

Winemaker Aimée Sunseri has a deep connection to the land that grew these grapes. “Poor Souls block is my happy place,” she says of the family-owned acreage in Vina, Calif. “It’s where I fell in love with grape growing. It was my first vineyard and I managed it for the first 5 years before winemaking took over my life.”

Sunseri was also named 2023’s Best Woman Winemaker, based on the level of awards her wines earned in the competition. “There are many men and women that have helped build me to be who I am today,” she says, clearly elated by the recognition. “I thank them all for their wisdom and trust that I would work hard and never give up.”

In addition to the Poor Souls Petite Sirah, New Clairvaux Wines and Nichelini (Sunseri’s family winery, for which she’s also winemaker) earned a total 18 gold medals or above. “Wine competitions are blind, meaning the judges are tasting wines without the influence of a producer’s name or label — and sometimes even without knowing the region,” she says. “The judges are evaluating our wines based on one sole criteria: How does it taste? That is all I want.”

Turning to spirits, judges recognized Garrison Brothers HoneyDew Straight Bourbon Whiskey as the competition’s best, describing it as “Smooth”; “complex”; “pleasing”; “bright”; “soft”; “good acid”; “well-balanced.”

“This is only our second year including spirits in this competition,” says Del Fiorentino. “I’m pleased with the category’s growth since then. We continue to add entry volume and product quality every year, and our judges appreciate being exposed to new releases and companies.”

Iliana Partida was named best Woman Distiller in recognition for her Elevacion 1250 Tequila, which judges called “Lean”; “clean”; “spicy” and “elegant.”

“I have been in charge of this distillery for three years, but I’ve been accompanying my parents into the agave fields and working here since I was 14 years old,” says Partida. “I feel incredibly honored and energized [by this award], with a renewed feeling of responsibility to perfect the process, so that each batch has a unique personality and stands out from other spirits.”

This year’s IWWSC awarded gold medals (or higher) to twice as many wines as it did last year. In addition, winemaker Carol Shelton was named Honorary Head Judge in recognition of her years of winemaking excellence.

A list of Sweepstakes wines and Best of Class spirits follows this press release.

About Wine Competitions Management & Production

Wine Competitions Management & Productions (WCMP) produces more than a dozen wine, cider and spirits competitions annually, each carefully designed to appeal to a niche market based on regionality or style of judging. Judges are internationally renowned and respected experts. For more information, [visit our website](#).

2023 Women's International Wine & Spirits Competition Wine Sweepstakes Entries

Best of the Best, Best of Show Red Wine, Best Woman Winemaker

New Clairvaux Vineyard 2020 Poor Souls Petite Sirah (BOC, GG, 99 pts)

Judges: "Chalky, caramel, oak"; "super spicy"; "blueberry pie"; "nutmeg"

Best of Show White Wine

Brecon Estate 2022 True Acacia Head Albariño (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Pomelo, lemon, melon"; "white pepper"; "beautiful win"; "very complex, lingering finish"; "So much stuff is happening in this glass!"

Best of Show Rosé Wine

Goose Ridge 2022 Revelation Rosé (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Strawberries and watermelon"; "solid acidity"

Best of Show Sparkling Wine (tie)

Domaine Carneros 2018 Estate Brut (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Brilliant!"; "honeysuckle, apple"; "purity of fruit"; "buttery with a hint of toast"

Domaine Carneros 2019 Brut Rosé (BOC, GG, 96 pts.)

Judges: "Great balance"; "expressive notes"; "citrus blossom mouthfeel"; "salmon color"; "elegant, well-made"

Best of Class Red Wines

Adrice Wines 2019 Friend's Blend (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Violets, blackberries and textured tannins"

Blue Farm 2021 Pinot Noir Gap's Crown (BOC, G, 94 pts.)

Judges: "Brambly, huckleberry and wild blackberries"; "lovely viscosity"; "bright and crisp"; "lingering acid"

Carol Shelton Wines 2021 Coquille Rouge (BOC, GG, 98 pts.)

Judges: "Black cherry"; "licorice"; "touch of leather"; "creamy"; "long and lush"

Carol Shelton Wines 2019 Peaceland Zinfandel (BOC, GG, 99 pts.)

Judges: "Blackberry, plum"; "a great barbeque wine"; "caramel, anise, cola"; "long finish"

Charles Smith 2020 The Velvet Devil Merlot (BOC, GG, 96 pts.)

Judges: "A classic Washington Merlot"

deLorimier Winery 2018 Phoebe Keys Red Blend (BOG, GG, 95 pts.)

Judges: "Lovely blend"; "black fruit"; "delicious and weird"; "velvety"

deLorimier Winery 2020 Primitivo (BOG, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Toasty"; "ripe"; "great wine"; "exuberant"

Ehret Family Winery 2019 Bella's Cabernet Sauvignon (BOC, GG, 99 pts.)

Judges: "Blackberry"; "dark chocolate nibs"; "savory with a long finish"

Imagery Estate Winery 2020 Grenache (BOC, GG, 95 pts.)

Judges: "Dried cranberry"; "luscious"; "woody"

Jacuzzi Family Vineyards 2021 Valeriano (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Amazing fruit"; "well-balanced"; "a complete wine"

New Clairvaux Vineyard 2021 Tempranillo (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Tobacco"; "dark cherry"; "cacao"; "smooth tannins"

Oak Farm Vineyards 2019 Petit Verdot (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Hardy"; "toasty"; "espresso"; "cherry coke"

Ojai Pacific View 2020 Dolcetto (BOC, GG, 96 pts.)

Judges: "Farmers market fresh fruit"; "vibrant, zippy, fresh"

St. Francis 2020 Caro Santo Sangiovese (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: "Plum"; "spices"; "black olives"; "textured tannins"

Best of Class White Wines

Imagery Estate 2021 Chardonnay (BOC, GG, 99 pts.)

Judges: "Nice hazelnut"; "tropical fruit"; "bright, lovely balance"; "rich"; "honeydew"

King Estate 2022 Sauvignon Blanc (BOC, GG, 95 pts.)

Judges: “Creamy”; “floral on nose and perfumy”; “juicy”

Lakeridge Winery & Vineyards NV Southern White (BOC, GG, 96 pts.)

Judges: “Brilliant”; “perfect Carlos”; “nice depth”; “juicy”; “expressive spice”; “coral notes; tropical breezy”; “guava”; “white flowers, plumeria”

Lost Oak Winery 2022 Orange Muscat (BOC, GG, 96 pts.)

Judges: “Almond”; “good acidity, balanced”; “orange blossoms”

LWG 2019 Sonnenfrost Dry Riesling (BOC, GG, 98 pts.)

Judges: “Petroleum notes”; “wild white flowers”; “true to the variety”

Navarro Vineyards 2022 Pinot Grigio; Anderson Valley (BOG, GG, 97 pts.) Judges:

“Lovely aromatic rosé”; “lady apple”; “juicy, crisp apple”; “umami”; “lime zest”

New Clairvaux Vineyard 2022 Viognier (BOC, GG, 96 pts.)

Judges: “Nice acid”; “peach”; “pear”

Pennyroyal Farm 2022 PinoTrio (BOG, GG, 98 pts.)

Judges: “Honeydew melon”; “good acidity”; “pineapple”; “grapefruit”

Trattore Farms 2021 Stone Soup Blanc (BOC, GG, 97 pts.)

Judges: “Flower aromas”; “beautiful flavors”; “peach”; “nice texture”

Best of Show Spirits

Best of the Best, Best Whiskey

Garrison Brothers HoneyDew Straight Bourbon Whiskey (BOC, GG, 99 pts.)

Judges: “Smooth”; “complex”; “pleasing”; “bright”; “soft”; “good acid”; “well-balanced”

Best Tequila, Best Woman Distiller (BOC, GG, 98 pts.)

Elevacion 1250 Tequila

Judges: “Lean”; “clean”; “spicy”; “elegant”

Best Gin, (BOC, GG, 98 pts.)

Central Coast Distillery Bergamont Gin

Judges: “Lively notes of citrus”; “elegant nose”; “fresh herb garden”

Best Vodka

Highway Vodka (BOC, GG, 95 pts.) Judges: “Unique aroma”; “long, dry finish”; “nutty”; “soft”

Best Rum

Liberty & Plenty Cap and Cane Rum (BOC, G, 93 pts.)

Judges: “Butterscotch”; “subtle hint of coconut water”

Best Liqueur

Jack from Brooklyn Sorrel Liqueur (BOC, GG, 96 pts.)

Judges: “Cinnamon”; “coconut”; “Crabapples”; “fun to drink, straight up or in your favorite cocktail”

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