



Second Annual Women's Sommelier Symposium Elevates Women in Wine

Ten Women Selected to Participate in Impactful and Empowering Event for Women in the Wine Industry

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, California (December 13, 2023) Building on the success of its inaugural event, the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas (CMS-A) is pleased to announce the return of the Women's Sommelier Symposium and its ten selected attendees. This symposium, scheduled to be held during Women's History Month from March 17 to 20, 2024, across Santa Barbara County, promises another impactful and empowering experience for women in the wine industry.

This year, the Court is delighted to introduce the ten outstanding women selected to participate. Chosen from over 100 applications, these women have demonstrated excellence as sommeliers, having successfully passed the Certified or Advanced Level through the Court of Master Sommeliers and showcasing significant leadership potential. The application process, administered by SommFoundation, sought out women dedicated to their studies who may face barriers to networking within the wine industry.

The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas proudly welcomes the following female leaders to the 2024 symposium: Julia Borkowski (Rochester, NY), Maria Cardenas (Aspen, CO), Beverly Crandon (Toronto, ON), Lindsey Fern (Culpeper, VA), Jessica Forster (Kenmore, NY), Christina Hartigan (Vancouver, BC), Briana Dema Markovic (Kitchener, ON), Oriana Maday Cartaya Maldonado (Hastings on Hudson, NY), Katja Scharnagl (Brooklyn, NY), and Amanda Cannon Winquist (Portland, OR). These exceptional women bring diverse backgrounds and experiences, united by their passion for wine and commitment to excellence.



Attendees of the Inaugural Women's Sommelier Symposium 2023

In addition to the selected participants, the symposium is honored to host a distinguished group of Master Sommeliers serving as panelists and mentors: Emily Wines MS, Rebecca Fineman MS, Jennifer Huether MS, Sally Mohr MS, Melissa Monosoff MS, June Rodil MS, and Mia Van de Water MS. Confirmed speakers also include Julia Coney, wine writer and founder of Black Wine Professionals, Robin McBride and Andrea McBride John, founders of the McBride Sisters Wine Company, and Julie Cohen Theobald, CMS-A's Executive Director. These accomplished leaders will share their wealth of knowledge, providing guidance and inspiration to the next generation of women sommeliers.

The Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas (CMS-A) expresses gratitude to Santa Barbara Vintners for hosting the event as well as the event sponsors — Republic National Distributing Company, Foxen Vineyard and Winery, Cork Supply, Foley Family Wines, Cambria Estate Winery, Nielson Wines, Brewer-Clifton, Diatom, Cooper's Hawk, KRUG Champagne, and Jackson Family Wines — for their vital support of the Women's Sommelier Symposium. As industry leaders, their sponsorship underscores a dedication to creating an environment where women can learn and thrive. The majority female-owned and led company, Jackson Family Wines, will again be the lead presenting sponsor of the event. Chairman and Proprietor Barbara Banke, one of the wine community's most highly regarded executives and innovators, has spent the last four decades leading the company she co-founded. Today, Jackson Family Wines continues to empower and champion women in the industry by giving women equal voices and opportunities to lead and create impact.

"The Women's Sommelier Symposium is not just an event; it's a movement towards empowerment, equality, and excellence in the wine industry," said Emily Wines, Master Sommelier, and founder of the symposium. "As we gather once again, we look forward to creating a space where women can thrive, learn, and support each other on their journeys."

To follow these women's journey through the symposium, follow the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas on Instagram at [@mastersommeliers_americas](https://www.instagram.com/mastersommeliers_americas).

ABOUT COURT OF MASTER SOMMELIERS, AMERICAS

The Court was established in England in 1977 and sets the global standard of excellence for beverage service within the hospitality industry with integrity, exemplary knowledge, and humility. The first Master Sommelier Diploma Exam to be held in the United States was in 1987. The Americas chapter, which serves both North and South America, was established in 1987. Since then, 170 professionals have earned the title of Master Sommelier as part of the Americas chapter. The title Master Sommelier marks the highest recognition of wine and spirits knowledge, beverage service abilities, and professionalism in the hospitality trade. Education was then, and remains today, the Court's charter. For more information, please visit www.mastersommeliers.org.