

# Dr. Laura Catena Announced as WSET's New Honorary President at Annual Graduation Ceremony

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[/EINPresswire.com/](#) -- Yesterday, [WSET](#) (the Wine & Spirit Education Trust) hosted its annual Graduation Ceremony and Prize Reception at the Guildhall in the City of London, England. 131 graduates from the USA have successfully completed WSET's world-renowned diploma, with 96 of those attending the ceremony in person or virtually. During the celebration, WSET CEO Michelle Brampton announced that Dr. Laura Catena, well-known as the "face of Argentine wine" and founder of Catena Institute of Wine, is to become WSET's new Honorary President.

Dr. Laura Catena was selected as WSET's new Honorary President, taking over from Paul Symington CMG, for her commitment and passion for education in the drinks industry. Named the Drinks Business' 2022 Woman of the Year, she is currently Managing Director of Bodega [Catena Zapata](#).

Hosted for the first time by Michelle Brampton, the hybrid event saw 73% of all WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines graduates from the 2021/2022 academic year attend, either online or



Dr. Laura Catena is WSET's new Honorary President



WSET at Guildhall in the City of London

in person. 587 new WSET Diploma graduates were honoured at the ceremony, bringing the total number of WSET Alumni globally to over 12,500. There were graduates from 20 countries worldwide who studied with 35 different WSET course providers. Michelle was joined on stage by former-Honorary President Paul Symington CMG, Executive Director Dave Rudman and Regional Director Rachel Webster.



WSET at Guildhall in the City of London

Michelle Brampton, WSET Chief Executive, said: "Many congratulations

to the graduates who have successfully achieved their WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines. This cohort joins a prestigious group of over 12,500 graduates from around the world who have completed this globally recognised qualification. I'd also like to congratulate our scholarship and prize winners who achieved exceptional results in their exams. Every student has a unique story to tell about their WSET journey and how they came to achieve their award.

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I am deeply honoured and committed to supporting WSET in its efforts to increase diversity in the world of wine and to communicate and embrace sustainability in our community.”

*Dr. Laura Catena*

“I'm excited about Laura's appointment as our new Honorary President – she will be a fantastic ambassador. I look forward to working with her to further WSET's purpose in empowering people through inspiring learning experiences all over the world. As my first graduation and anniversary as CEO, this was a special event for me.”

Dr Laura Catena, WSET Honorary President, said: "I am deeply honoured and committed to supporting WSET in its

efforts to increase diversity in the world of wine, and to communicate and embrace sustainability in our community. There is no organisation with a wider international footprint than WSET in wine, and that is why the Honorary President position is so exciting for me.”

Outstanding Alumni Award

The Outstanding Alumni Award, sponsored by JancisRobinson.com, celebrates the achievements of WSET's global alumni community. This year, alumni were invited to nominate their winner by shining a spotlight on the inspiring work of diploma graduates around the world. The award recognises an exceptional contribution to creating positive change within the global drinks industry in the last six years.

This year's winner is Alexandra Schrecengost from New York, USA. Alex is the 2021 Wine Enthusiast 40 under 40 Tastemaker, and she founded Virtual With Us in 2020, followed by Culture With Us in 2021. Alex commented, "I am so unbelievably humbled and honoured to receive this award. I am excited to continue the work I am doing with the industry I have grown to love so much."

#### Regional scholarships

Graduate scholarships were awarded to WSET Diploma students who achieved the highest overall mark in their WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines in their respective regions:

Decanter Americas Scholarship: Cory Marx, who studied at Grape Experience, USA

Napa Valley Asia Pacific Scholarship: Marc Bloom, who studied at Sydney Wine Academy, Australia

IWSC EMEA Scholarship: Kristel Balcaen, who studied with WineWise, Belgium

Vintners' UK Scholarship: Peter Bland, who studied with WSET School London, UK

#### Vintners' Cup

The Vintners' Cup, which has been in existence since 1946, is awarded annually to the graduate achieving the highest mark across all units of the WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines. The winner is awarded a silver trophy and engraved decanter.

Vintners' Cup winner, Felicity Cox, UK, said: "Stunned and surprised sums up my feelings. Gaining the WSET Diploma has given me the confidence to help others understand wine better and impart my passion for wine to them. I support my husband, Tim Syrad, who has a business selling wine, running tastings and events and taking people on wine holidays. Every time we explore a wine region, I draw on my WSET learning and really enjoy furthering my knowledge and understanding of the people who tend the vines, make the wine and market it to wine lovers."

To learn more about WSET's qualifications or to find a local course provider, visit [wsetglobal.com](https://www.wsetglobal.com).

To view the full list of this year's prize winners, scholars, graduates and prize sponsors download our WSET Yearbook 2023.

#### About the WSET

WSET (the Wine & Spirit Education Trust) is the largest global provider of wine, spirits and sake qualifications. Set up in 1969, and recognised by the awarding body Ofqual, we have awarded nearly one million individuals with a qualification since our inception. The courses are open to both industry professionals and interested enthusiasts who can take them across four levels, from one-day beginner to expert level diploma. Available in more than 15 languages and over 70 countries, our qualifications have a strong reputation worldwide as the industry standard for knowledge. In the last academic year (2021/22) more than 115,000 candidates sat for a WSET

qualification. Follow us on Twitter @WSETglobal

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