

# Sonoma County Barrel Auction Honors Wine Industry Trailblazers at the 10th Anniversary Celebration

*Lifetime Achievement, Icon and Innovator Awards to be Presented at the Live Auction May 3*

SANTA ROSA, CA, USA, February 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Sonoma County Vintners](#), in collaboration with presenting sponsor [American AgCredit](#), will honor legendary winemaking pioneer Zelma Long with a Lifetime Achievement Award during the [Sonoma County Barrel Auction](#) (SoCoBA) at MacMurray Estate Vineyards on Friday, May 3, 2024. The awards presentation will also honor Marimar Torres, Founder & President of Marimar Estate Vineyards & Winery, as a Sonoma County Icon and George Christie, Founder and CEO of Wine Industry Network and Partner of Saini Vineyards, as a Sonoma County Innovator. The Sonoma County Barrel Auction is a live auction featuring one-of-a-kind wines crafted specifically for licensed members of the trade. Following the awards presentation, a very special 10th anniversary collection of “never before, never again” wines will be auctioned to visiting trade buyers from around the world.



SoCoBA Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient Zelma Long



SoCoBA Icon Marimar Torres

Lifetime Achievement Award recipients have made a significant impact in the wine community by researching and creating new techniques with groundbreaking work to raise the profile of

Sonoma County wines. Sonoma County Icons are individuals who have had a significant impact on the evolution, development and perpetuation of Sonoma County wine and have helped raise the global perception for the region. Sonoma County Innovators are visionaries, who are introducing new methods, ideas or products. They provide fresh insight and new ways of thinking about wine and Sonoma County that help shape the future of our wine region and industry.



SoCoBA Innovator George Christie

Zelma Long

Enologist, Winemaker, Consultant and Author for more than 50 Years  
Lifetime Achievement Award

A prolific enologist, winemaker, consultant and author, Zelma Long is one of the forerunners of

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This milestone anniversary will reflect on the achievements that have propelled Sonoma County wine onto the global stage while nurturing new collaborations between vintners and trade members.”

*Sonoma County Vintners  
Executive Director Michael  
Haney*

California wine and was the first woman to assume leadership of a Californian winery, Simi Winery in Sonoma County. She founded the American Vineyard Foundation to help finance research in enology and viticulture, as well as the American Viticulture and Enology Research Network (AVERN). Zelma was also the founding president of Alexander Valley Winegrowers and a founding member of the North Coast Viticultural Research Group.

Zelma has received numerous awards and accolades over the course of her career, including the James Beard Hall of Fame and James Beard Wine Professional of the Year. She was named California Wine Pioneer by Wine Spectator and inducted into the Culinary Institute of America’s Vintner’s Hall of Fame. In 2009 the American Society of Enology and

Viticulture selected her for the ASEV Award of Merit.

She has also received the Outstanding Alumni Award from the University of California, Davis. Zelma has written and contributed to numerous books and publications focused on wine, winemaking and the science of growing grapes.

Zelma has been involved in winemaking and viticulture projects around the world for the past 50 years and serves as a mentor to aspiring viticulturalists and winemakers. In the course of her

career, she has consulted in countries and regions as diverse as Israel, Germany, the Rhone Valley, the Pacific Northwest and South Africa. She established Zelphi Wines with her husband Dr. Phillip Freese and they have, over 25 years, founded and established as winemaking partner and winegrowing partner Vilafonté Wine Estate in South Africa, named Best Wine Producer in the International Wine and Spirits Competition in 2021.

Marimar Torres

Founder & President of Marimar Estate Vineyards & Winery  
Icon

Marimar Torres has been involved in the wine business all her life. Born in Barcelona, Spain, she is fluent in six languages and holds a degree in Business & Economics from the University of Barcelona. She is also a graduate of the Stanford Executive Program and studied enology and viticulture for a year at the University of California at Davis. Prior to her involvement in the California operation, Marimar traveled extensively promoting Torres wines, first in Spain as the company's export director and later in North America, when California became her home in 1975. At that time, shipments of Torres wines to the U.S. totaled 15,000 cases; ten years later they reached 150,000.

In 1986, Marimar began planting the Don Miguel Vineyard, a 56-acre property in a cool microclimate in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley ideally suited to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Today the property encompasses 81 acres, planted with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and the Spanish varieties Albariño, Tempranillo and more recently, Godello. Also planted to Pinot Noir are 20 acres of a 180-acre property in West Sonoma County, between Freestone and Occidental. In 1992, a 15,000-case winery was built and the estate's first Pinot Noir was produced. Recently, her daughter, Cristina Torres, has taken over the day-to-day winery operations as General Manager while Marimar continues to be an enthusiastic ambassador for her unique wines and cookbooks, which highlight Spanish cuisine.

George Christie

Founder and CEO of Wine Industry Network and Partner of Saini Vineyards  
Innovator

George Christie, a New Jersey native, settled in Sonoma County in 1991 and quickly realized that the wine industry was where he wanted to concentrate his efforts.

Since then, he has been involved in nearly every aspect of the industry, from winery management, vineyard operations and grower relations to distributor management and national marketing campaigns. George has held board positions with the Russian River Wine Road, Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma County Vintners, Sonoma State Wine Business Institute, and WineAmerica.

In 2008, George and his wife Tami partnered with the Saini Family, fifth-generation Sonoma

County grape growers, to create Saini Vineyards.

In 2009, Wine Industry Network (WIN) began as an online directory. It has evolved over the years into a leading B2B marketing and media company and primary business resource for the North American wine industry.

WIN works with over 600 industry vendors and produces the North Coast Wine Industry Expo (WIN Expo), the Wine Sales Symposium and educational webinars. WIN also produces the Wine Industry Advisor, an online news publication, the Afternoon Brief, a daily wine business newsletter with over 38,000 subscribers, and WIN Jobs, an industry employment resource.

Trade registration for the 2024 10th Anniversary Sonoma County Barrel Auction is by invitation only and open now. This year's auction lots will be announced in March.

Amy Patrick  
Sonoma County Vintners  
[email us here](#)

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