

# Nonprofit Making Wine Inclusive Awards \$5,000 Grants for the Second Year

LIVERMORE, CA, UNITED STATES, October 16, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Association of African American Vintners ([AAAV](#)) today announced the five recipients of its 2024 AAAV Wine Entrepreneur Grant. Each winner will receive \$5,000 to positively impact their operations, marketing or innovation efforts to help grow their wine business. The awardees are:



- Marvina Robinson, B. Stuyvesant Champagne (New York): Brooklyn-born maker of Champagne that celebrates authenticity, empowerment and inclusivity. [www.stuyvesantchampagne.com](http://www.stuyvesantchampagne.com)
- Peter King III, Drew Ryan Wines (Michigan): An urban winery and vineyard in Detroit focused on using cold-climate varietals to make rosé and sparkling wines that highlight the Great Lakes region. [www.drewryanwines.com](http://www.drewryanwines.com)
- Aamira Garba, LoveLee Wine (New Jersey): Award-winning California rosé, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and red blends inspired by passion and purpose. [www.loveleewine.com](http://www.loveleewine.com)
- Ryann Casey, Mela Vino (California): Four lifelong friends making California rosé, white and red blends to honor connection and elevate their community's social experience. [www.melavino.com](http://www.melavino.com)
- Hilary Cocalis, Sipwell Wine Co. (California): Innovative Champagne-style sparkling canned wines sourced from organically farmed grapes and made in California's Central Coast. [www.sipwellwine.com](http://www.sipwellwine.com)

"We've made progress since 2020 when I said that far less than 1% of American winemakers were Black. Today, we are 1% of the industry and growing, thanks to programs like this Wine Entrepreneur Grant," said AAAV President Phil Long of Longevity Wines. "Now our challenge is to sustain the increase in awareness and support for people of color in the wine industry. We need

everyone's help to make wine inclusive."

The 2024 AAV Wine Entrepreneur Grant recipients are all current [AAAV Wine Producer](#) members. They were selected by a panel of industry leaders in wine retail or distribution who individually reviewed and rated every application. The evaluators were:

- Larissa C. Dubose, Senior Director, Vino Volo at Paradies Lagardère
- Alicia Elkins, Director, Supplier Business Development, Wine at Breakthru Beverage Group
- James Harris, CDP, Sr. Director, Diversity & Inclusion and Supplier Diversity at H-E-B
- Dwight Phyll, Head of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Total Wine & More.

The 2024 AAV Wine Entrepreneur Grant Program was made possible by individual donations and the support of industry partners, including Breakthru Beverage Group, H-E-B, Total Wine & More, Vino Volo and Uncorked & Cultured.

"Vino Volo is excited to support the impactful work that AAV provides our industry for a second year," said Dubose. "We align with their mantra, 'We Make Wine Inclusive.' Promoting producers from underrepresented communities adds incredible value to our quest to help our guests discover great wines."

#### About Breakthru Beverage Group

Breakthru Beverage Group is one of the leading alcohol wholesalers in the United States and the largest broker in Canada representing a full total beverage alcohol portfolio of spirits, wine and beer. Breakthru is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and supports a wide range of notable organizations as well as local charitable initiatives across its North American footprint. Across all markets, Breakthru aligns a nimble and insightful approach to sales, marketing and operations. Family ownership is active in the business and committed to being stewards of heritage and champions of innovation. For more information, visit [www.BreakthruBev.com](http://www.BreakthruBev.com).

#### About H-E-B

H-E-B, with sales of \$43 billion, operates more than 430 stores in Texas and Mexico. Known for its innovation and community service, H-E-B celebrates its 118th anniversary this year. Recognized for its fresh food, quality products, convenient services, and a commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability, H-E-B strives to provide the best customer experience and lowest prices. Based in San Antonio, H-E-B employs over 154,000 Partners in Texas and Mexico and serves millions of customers in more than 300 communities. For more information, visit [www.heb.com](http://www.heb.com) and the H-E-B Newsroom.

#### About Paradies Lagardère

Paradies Lagardère is a travel retailer and restaurateur that handles \$1.6 billion in annual sales from more than 700 stores, restaurants and bars in more than 90 airports across North America. Specializing in three airport concessions areas - Travel Essentials, Specialty Retail and Dining with expertise in international, national, and local brands - Paradies Lagardère's commitment to

exceptional customer service, superior design and award-winning retail and restaurant operations has earned the company numerous accolades, including Best Airport Retailer for 27 consecutive years and Best Brand Restaurateur by Airport Experience News. For more information, visit [www.paradieslagardere.com](http://www.paradieslagardere.com).

#### About Total Wine Spirits Beer & More

Total Wine Spirits Beer & More has an extensive selection of over 8,000 wines, 4,500 spirits, and 2,500 beers, all at exceptional prices. Additionally, Total Wine Spirits Beer & More is committed to giving back to the local community. In 2023, Total Wine Spirits Beer & More contributed over \$13.5 million in monetary and in-kind donations to 16,000+ organizations helping those organizations raise in excess of \$85 million to support their good works in the community.

[www.totalwine.com](http://www.totalwine.com)

#### About Uncorked and Cultured

Uncorked & Cultured™ is a media company connecting multicultural audiences worldwide by intersecting culture, food, wine, and travel. By creating original lifestyle content that amplifies entrepreneurs and facilitates global wine culture, we advocate for equity in wine and empower consumers. Our media company creates a sense of belonging within luxury wine and travel for everyone. [www.uncorkedandcultured.com](http://www.uncorkedandcultured.com)

#### About the Association of African American Vintners

Founded in 2002, the Association of African American Vintners stands as the go-to resource for advancing equity in the wine industry. Our mission is to provide comprehensive education, advocacy, and community support not only for Black vintners but also for wine brands and industry professionals. Visit [www.aaavintners.org](http://www.aaavintners.org) for more information and to purchase many AAV member wines.

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Note: Please email [tamikellypr@gmail.com](mailto:tamikellypr@gmail.com) for awardee headshots.

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