

8 picked for California North Coast Women in Wine Awards

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North Bay Business Journal announces the winners of its first Women in Wine Awards.

The eight professionals to be celebrated this fall come from various fields within the industry, from winemaking to hospitality.

“The women being celebrated have pioneered sustainable wine production practices, promoted inclusivity and diversity within the industry, and spearheaded projects that support local communities and environmental conservation,” said Publisher Lorez Bailey.

With this new recognition program, the Journal builds on its legacy over the past two decades of its [Influential Women Awards](#) and for notable individuals as part of its [Wine Industry Awards](#).

Here are this year’s Women in Wine Awards winners by category:

Excellence in Winemaking Award

Heidi Bridenhagen, director of winemaking, Dough Wines and Distinguished Vineyards; winemaker, MacRostie Winery and Vineyards

Sarah Wuethrich, winemaker, Maggy Hawk Wines and WindRacer Wines

This accolade recognizes female winemakers who have demonstrated exceptional skills, innovation and consistency in producing high-quality wines.

Impactful Leader Award

Karissa Kruse, CEO, Sonoma County Winegrowers

This award recognizes a woman in the wine industry who has significantly influenced and positively transformed her field. Through her actions, innovations, and dedication, she has made a profound difference, leaving a lasting mark on the industry and inspiring others to drive meaningful change.

Rising Star Award

Riley Flanagan, vintner and assistant sales manager, Flanagan Wines and Riley's Rows

This recognition goes to a promising newcomer who has already shown remarkable potential and early accomplishments in any area of the wine business.

Heart of the Community Award

Carrie Mauritson, director of hospitality, Mauritson Wines

This celebrates a woman who has made significant contributions to her local wine community through advocacy, events and outreach efforts.

Excellence in Sustainability Award

Mari Jones, president, Emeritus Vineyards

This recognizes a woman who has made significant strides in promoting and implementing sustainable and environmentally responsible practices within the wine industry.

Trailblazer Award

Ivonne Dresser, director of technical product support and development for fermentation, Gusmer Enterprises Inc.

This celebrates a woman's pioneering spirit, groundbreaking contributions, and forward-thinking innovations that have pushed the boundaries of winemaking, viticulture or the business generally. It honors her role as a visionary driving positive change and setting new standards within the wine world.

Inspirational Leader Award

Tracy Sweeney, vice president of direct to consumer, Treasury Wine Estates

This honors a trailblazing woman who not only excels in her role but also serves as a source of motivation and empowerment to others.

North Bay business people were invited to nominate candidates for these awards, starting in mid-August. A panel of judges assessed their achievements, leadership examples and career impacts before choosing winners Oct. 4.